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Splintering spheres of security: Peter Sloterdijk and the contemporary fortress city

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Abstract. The paper brings together Peter Sloterdijk's 'theory of spheres' with urban studies literature on the forms and effects of the contemporary urban security agenda, in order to investigate the relationships between the material and (atmo)spherical dimensions of the splintering spaces of security in the contemporary fortress city. The paper hence seeks to conceptualise securitisation strategies not only as spatially articulated measures of surveillance and separation but also as sphere-creating forces in their own right. In this view the paper places particular emphasis on Sloterdijk's conceptualisation of 'foam', thus elucidating the contemporary fortress city as a highly fragmented, polyspherical patchwork of more or less hermetically enclosed and purified security spheres. These spheres are bound together by relations of cofragility and reciprocal implications, and are to different degrees oriented towards the more or less economically motivated collection and management of co-isolated individuals.

Dating from 1563, Bernard Palissy's essay *De la Ville de Forteresse* [1] provides a powerful starting point for the problematic of this paper, which is to reflect upon the 'splintering spheres of security' in the contemporary 'fortress city' (Davis, 1990; Low, 1997). A first-generation Huguenot and one of the most renowned artists and scientists of the French Renaissance (Lefaivre and Tzonis, 2004, page 138), Palissy was heavily exposed to the ferocious Catholic persecutions of the time. The aim of his essay, a study of the "design and arranging of a fortress city that is the most unassailable ever heard of" (Palissy, 1988[1563]), was thus driven by the immediate need to protect both his own life and his coreligionist community in the city of La Rochelle.

> "Have you ever seen anything made by the hand of man that it fits so precisely as the two shells and attachments of the aforesaid cockles and scallops? ... Do you think that fish which erect their fortresses in the form of a spiral or an Archimedean screw do so without reason? ... And I began to think that I could find no better counsel for the design of my Fortified Town and began to observe in order to find the fish that are the most industrious in Architecture and to take counsel from their industriousness. ... And having seen this, I found no better solution for the construction of my Fortified Town than to take as my example the fortress of the aforesaid purple whelk and therefore took up my compasses, ruler and other necessary tools to make my drawing thereof. Firstly, I drew the plan of a great rectangular square around which I drew a great number of houses, to which I added windows, doors and workshops all facing towards the outside of the plan and streets of the Town. At one of the corners of the aforesaid square, I drew a great doorway on which I marked the plan of the house or residence of the principal Governor of said Town in order to ensure that no person should enter said square without leave from the Governor. ... I drew the beginning of a street starting from the aforesaid gateway, surrounding the houses I had drawn around said square, setting out to build my Town in spiral form and line, following the form and

industriousness of the purple whelk. ... I found that the walls of all the houses served as so many fortifying spurs and whatever side cannon were fired against the Town, they would encounter walls everywhere. ... Any city that will be built according to my model and portrait will be unassailable
by large numbers of people
by large numbers of cannons
by fire
by tunnel
by ladder
by treachery
by undermining." (2)

As we see in Palissy's enumeration of the defensive functions of his ideal fortress city, the shell metaphor expresses a double, morphologically articulated problematic of security. First, Palissy was confronted with the challenge of creating the spatio-architectural conditions that would guarantee the unassailable physical defence of his imaginary shell city. Second, in order to prevent any treachery or undermining, Palissy's ambition also involved the creation of a walled sphere of togetherness for its Protestant inhabitants. The shell image stands not only for the city's physical defence, but also for its residents' psychopolitical self-encapsulation. Bernard Palissy had in mind a shared sphere of protection, spread out above the walls of his 'one-gate-all-wall city'. In this picture the city's outside wall is intended to create a spatially anchored difference, which articulates not only two physical spaces but also two distinct psychopolitical atmospheres. The wall, for Palissy, figures as the territorial engagement and mediator of the residents' jointly inhabited life-world.

In this paper I suggest reflecting upon this double problematic of security, as both a condition of being protected from physical threats (Zedner, 2003, page 155) and a state of being immersed in a psycho-immunological sphere of protection (Sloterdijk, 2004). I propose to explore this question by bringing together Peter Sloterdijk's 'theory of spheres' (Sloterdijk, 1998; 1999; 2004) with urban studies literature on the forms and effects of the contemporary urban security agenda. In line with the growing body of research relating to the current proliferation and intensification of policing and surveillance, the 'urban security agenda' is here defined as the ensemble of practices, technologies, and architectures of policing, surveillance and enclosure spread out across the urban environment (Coaffee and Wood, 2006; Davis, 1990; de Cauter, 2004; Franzen 2001). On this basis my aim is to conceptualise contemporary security efforts not only as an ensemble of spatially articulated practices and techniques of surveillance and separation but also as (atmo)sphere-creating forces in their own right. I hereby use the term '(atmo)sphere' not in its physical sense but in its psychopolitical meaning, as developed by Sloterdijk (1998; 1999; 2004).

Towards a spherical understanding of the urban security agenda

In recent years a growing interdisciplinary literature has sought to explore the question of how contemporary security policies permeate the production and management of everyday urban spaces such as city squares, streets, and parks (Coleman, 2004; Klauser, 2007; Koskela, 2000), alongside shopping malls and other publicly used, yet privately owned, places of consumption and leisure (Mitchell, 2003; Sorkin, 1992). These literatures have sparked a remarkably diverse range of investigations into the importance of urban space as the locus, medium, and tool of security policies, and into the critical influence of surveillance and securitisation strategies with regards to the

transformation (splintering, fortification, and privatisation) of the contemporary urban environment (Graham, 2002; 2005; Gregory and Pred, 2007; Marcuse, 2002; Raco, 2003; Turner, 2007). As set out by Steve Graham and Simon Marvin,

> "The *physical fabric* of many cities across the world is starting to fragment into giant *cellular clusters*—packaged landscapes made up of customised and carefully protected corporate, consumption, research, transit, exchange, domestic and even health care spaces. Each tends to orient towards highway grids, global telecommunications connections, premium energy and water connections, whilst CCTV and security guard-protected 'public private spaces' mediate their relationships with their immediate environments" (2001, page 5, my emphasis).

My paper follows on from this account. Yet, I suggest adding a further dimension to Graham and Marvin's understanding of the physical fabrics of the city as an ensemble of more or less secured, monitored, and privatised spatial entities, by placing explicit emphasis on the atmospheric attributes of spatial enclosures and separations. This is where Sloterdijk comes into play.

Sloterdijk's 2500-page long *Spheres* trilogy, although not yet translated into English, has recently been the object of much acclaim in special issues of *Cultural Politics* (van Tuinen, 2007) and *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* (Elden et al, 2009). Undoubtedly, one of the most important qualities of Sloterdijk's "philosophy of space/spatial philosophy" (Thrift, 2009, page 120) lies in the fact that "reading the work of Sloterdijk incites us to ask strange questions" (ten Bos, 2009, page 73). In this paper, the 'strange' question I want to address is: how can Sloterdijk's work on the "cheerful thought figure of foam" (Sloterdijk, 2004, page 26) help us in understanding the logics and effects of the contemporary urban security agenda?

Rethinking spatial metaphors

My investigation is motivated by the felt lack of a vocabulary adequate to the sphere-creating forces of contemporary surveillance and securitisation strategies. Generally speaking, this stand derives inspiration from Sloterdijk's critique of the network-metaphor. Sloterdijk claims that the metaphor fails to grasp the intrinsic *volume* of the interlinked entities, by overstating the *linear* connections of unextended *points* within supposedly planar *surfaces* (Sloterdijk, 2004, page 257; see also Morin, 2009, page 67).

Contemporary literatures on security, surveillance, and the city are—with notable exceptions such as Don Mitchell's (2005) analysis of the "S.U.V. model of citizenship" and Lieven de Cauter's (2004) work on the "capsular society"—almost exclusively based on two-dimensional planar metaphors. A wide range of work is exploring the security and surveillance issues related to various kinds of *networks*, from transport systems (Coaffee and Wood, 2006; Gorman, 2005) to water, electricity (Wekerle and Jackson, 2005), and IT infrastructures (Debrix, 2001). Other literatures focus on the securitisation and surveillance of border *lines* or access and access control *points* (Franzen, 2001). Yet, whilst these studies offer important insights into the filtering and management of inner urban and/or interurban flows of various kinds, little attention is paid to the inherent atmospheric volume of the thereby created spaces of security.

In short, the relationship between the physical protection and the atmospheric self-encapsulation created by securitisation strategies has been neglected both analytically and in terms of the applied terminology. For example, transport *nodes* such as railway stations and airports have been studied almost exclusively as control and filtering *points* for the procession of mobility (Castells, 1996; Fuller, 2002), without according the same type of attention to these places as 'security bubbles' in their own right.

If we want to capture the various processes of atmospheric insulation and separation inherent in contemporary urban security policies—such is my basic assumption—the traditionally two-dimensional vocabulary of urban studies literature based on planar spatial figures such as *rings*, *circles*, *networks*, *border-lines*, or *access points* and *passage points* needs to be extended. Hence my interest in Sloterdijk's work on the "cheerful thought figure of foam". As Neil Smith and Cindy Katz have noted, "a metaphor works by invoking one meaning system to explain or clarify another" (1993, page 69). Through the discussion of the foam metaphor, I seek to emphasise the sphere-creating forces inherent in spatially articulated security measures.

Content

To do so, my analysis is divided into two main parts. The paper starts with a general outline of Sloterdijk's theory of spheres, an endeavour that also includes a more specific discussion of the German philosopher's work on 'foam' and the 'foam city'. This initial reading of Sloterdijk's 'spherology' will also help to specify its potential contribution to the problematic of the contemporary fortress city as put forth by Mike Davis (1990), for example.

The paper then turns to discuss the spherical attributes and logics of four highly secured urban security zones—gated communities, bunkered financial districts, shopping malls, and fan zones at sport mega-events, thus aiming to provide a geographical interpretation of Sloterdijk's double problematisation of foam as an ensemble of more or less hermetically enclosed spheres of togetherness (1) that are, essentially, composed by co-isolated individuals (2). Essentially programmatic in its ambition, this discussion should be read primarily as an invitation to further analytical inquiry.

The paper then concludes with a preliminary assessment of the foam metaphor's relevance for an understanding of the atmospheric logics, forms, and effects of the contemporary urban security agenda.

Peter Sloterdijk's spherology

Concerned with the "vital spherical geometries of human being-together" (Sloterdijk, 1998, page 12), "the sphere", Sloterdijk states, "is the intimate, enclosed and shared round shape, spread out through joint inhabiting" (1999, page 1011).[3] A sphere, according to Sloterdijk, can be understood as a socially created, self-animated space, in which a commonality of experiences is rendered possible and where human beings find protective refuge from the outside world. "This lieu or space I call a sphere in order to indicate ... that we are ourselves space-creating beings, and that we cannot exist otherwise than in these self-animated spaces" (1998, page 28). For Sloterdijk social forms of togetherness thus acquire a somewhat 'morphological' connotation. Being-in-the-world, for the German philosopher, is always being-in-spheres: that is, living under commonly spread-out "semiotic skies" (page 58) in self-animated spaces of togetherness.

Yet, to use the self-reflective words of the painter Paul Klee, Sloterdijk is not "concerned with form as an immutable value, but with formation as a process" (Klee, 1956, page 11). Sloterdijk claims that a theory of spheres always converges with a theory of mediation (Sloterdijk, 1998, page 31). His main emphasis lies on the processes and modes of mediation of the human relationships that create and articulate the "vital spherical geometries" of individuals and social groups (page 48).

Sloterdijk's exploration of the spherical conditions of life is based on three main thought figures: bubbles, globes, and foams. The bubble metaphor, for Sloterdijk, describes the fragile space of resonance between people as we find it in symbiotic relations (1998).

[3] Sloterdijk's quotes have all been translated by the author.

Whilst the first volume of Sloterdijk's spheres trilogy thus proposes a detailed analysis of dyadic microspheres, from the foetus in the maternal womb to the intimate relation between god and the hermit, the second volume focuses on the thought figure of the globe as a symbol of totality. Sloterdijk here develops a cultural history of the macrospherical imaginaries and ontologies in Western culture (Sloterdijk, 1999).

The foam metaphor

The foam metaphor ultimately stands for the pluralism of contemporary world creations and sphere creations, allowing Sloterdijk to formulate a philosophical–anthropological interpretation of modern individualism in spherical terms. Drawing upon Sloterdijk's spheres trilogy, the foam metaphor can be conceived through at least four crucial attributes. In view of the analysis that follows in the rest of my paper, it is important to explore these in further detail here.

A first quality is that the foam metaphor—generally defined as an "aggregation of gas bubbles in a liquid or solid material" (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1993)—figuratively stands for the intrinsic volume of each self-animated, more or less inclusive and stable, bubble of togetherness in the postholistic world. Comparable to Palissy's shell metaphor, foam implies a three-dimensional voluminosity, a delicate structure of "airy hollow spaces" (Sloterdijk, 2004, page 28) that stands metaphorically for the polysphericality of contemporary being-in-the-world.

Second, foam as per definition comprises a large variety of bubble sizes and shapes, without presenting a clear centre (page 50). For Sloterdijk the foam metaphor thus figuratively captures the pluralism of contemporary world cretaions and sphere creations, allowing the interpretation of modern individualism as multiplicities of loosely touching cells of life-worlds (page 64).

Third, the foam metaphor conveys in its core a double meaning of co-isolation and cofragility:

> "In the spatial structure of foam each individual cell shares a wall with its adjacent cells. This produces a simultaneous isolation where each cell defines a world of its own and a state of cofragility since the annihilation of one cell will also affect its neighbouring cells" (Sloterdijk, 2008, page 53).

The foam metaphor thus implies a set of apparently opposing qualities. Each cell in the structure of foam constitutes a self-animated world of its own, whilst being defined by the fragile border it shares with its adjoining neighbours. Sloterdijk's emphasis on the resulting state of co-isolation and cofragility highlights each cell's need to establish and maintain mediated relationships with exteriority. Following Claude Raffestin, I speak here of 'exteriority' in order to indicate that individuals' or social groups' self-encapsulation can be opposed to any "outside 'topos': that is, any place, any other community, any being or abstract space such as institutional systems, etc." (Raffestin, 1977, page 130).

Fourth, as a substance that is formed by trapping many gas bubbles in a liquid or solid material, foam, per definition, implies a creation process (Sloterdijk, 2004, page 49). In line with Sloterdijk's general emphasis on the processuality of human sphere creations, the foam metaphor thus naturally directs our attention towards the multiple processes of mediation inherent in the sphere creations of human being-together.

For Sloterdijk the "foam-cell society" (2004, page 61) is built on a double process, "the dismantling of social conglomerates into individuated, complex entities, and the recombination of these entities into cooperative ensembles" (page 607). In this sense Sloterdijk's foam analysis is situated on two intertwined scales, relating to individuated entities on the one hand, and to the collection of individuals into larger cooperative ensembles on the other.

"Whatever the degree of isolation established by respective individuals, they are always co-isolated islands that are momentarily, or chronically, connected to a network of adjacent islands constituting mid-sized or larger structures—a national assembly, a 'Love Parade', a club, a Freemasons' lodge, a workforce, a shareholder meeting, a concert hall audience, a suburban neighbourhood, a school class, a religious community, drivers stuck in a traffic jam, a convened federation of taxpayers. If we describe these ensembles in their episodic clusters and enduring symbioses as foams, it is also to make a statement of the relative density of co-isolated conglomerates or confederations of life" (page 604).

From a macroviewpoint, the foam metaphor figuratively expresses the various ensembles of cooperation, contemplation, communication, etc in the contemporary, postholistic world. In this reading, 'foam' stands for the accumulation of myriads of mid-sized or larger spheres of togetherness, created by multitudinous "groups of resonance" (page 498). Yet, whilst these "bubbles of togetherness" (page 260) exist as more or less volatile spheres of analogous rituals, instruments, emotions, and aspirations, they are, essentially, nothing but volatile spherical clusters teeming with individuated subjects.

Immunity and integrity, in this individuated mode of existence, are not embedded in, or expressed through, collective solidarity; nor are they grounded in an all-encompassing metaphysical whole. Rather, they become the fragile creation—a local 'yes to oneself' (page 539)—of each co-isolated, self-affirmative subject.

"Integrity is not any longer to be understood as something that can be achieved through devotion to an all-encompassing, charitable whole, but only as the outcome of an organism's personal effort of seclusion from its environment. ... For this organism, the biggest part of his environment is either toxic or meaningless. He thus aims at establishing himself within a personal zone of strictly selected things and signals that are now coming up as his own circle of reference, as his personal environment" (page 195).

Sloterdijk's differentiation between the mid-sized cellular clusters of the foam-cell society on the one hand, and the individuated subject as its basic unit on the other, will be of major importance for the analysis that follows in the rest of this paper. With the help of this biscalar problematisation of foam, my paper suggests investigating the contemporary fortress city as an ensemble of spatially anchored, more or less hermetically enclosed, socially exclusive, and atmospherically active spheres of togetherness that are, essentially, composed by co-isolated, individuated subjects.

The foam city

Sloterdijk's theory of spheres not only comprises anthropological, immunological, and semiological meaning, but also conveys an explicit architectural dimension. Sloterdijk elaborates upon the idea of a corresponding relationship between the social production of space in its material and semiological dimension on the one hand, and the creation of psychopolitical or immunological spheres on the other. This same relationship is at the core of Palissy's shell city.

In his analysis of the "foam city", Sloterdijk (2004, page 605) provides a suggestive account of how modern society architecturally supports both the isolation of individuals in built microcells (eg in the apartment) and the concentration of isolated entities into collective ensembles of cooperation and contemplation such as stadiums and, political assemblies as the basic cellular clusters of the "urban macrofoam" (page 655).

With his spherology of the apartment, Sloterdijk approaches the problematic of security in a way that urban studies have neglected, namely by investigating the immunological value of physical enclosure and separation. For Sloterdijk, each apartment constitutes a spatially anchored immune system *en miniature* and thus, immunologically

speaking, a sort of preventive security construction (page 535; see also Alliez, 2007, page 322).

Although Sloterdijk is not referring explicitly to literatures of criminology and security studies, this analysis is hugely suggestive and can be brought into parallel, as Christian Borch has done convincingly, with approaches such as Oscar Newman's *Defensible Space* (1972), as an (albeit limited) model for the creation of atmospherically active residential space for crime prevention purposes (Borch, 2008).

My paper draws upon, but also aims to extend, Sloterdijk's analysis of the foam city. While Sloterdijk's discussion focuses almost exclusively on the apartment and the stadium, my investigation is centred on the spherical qualities and logics of the securitisation of everyday urban spaces more generally, from shopping malls to city squares, and gated communities to bunkered financial districts.

With this wider focus on the spaces of the everyday, I expect to raise further questions with regards to the corresponding logics of security as physical protection and psycho-atmospheric self-encapsulation. This will in turn generate a discussion of the spherical multiplicities created by security policies that are in complex and contingent ways permeating the production and management of the contemporary urban environment.

Spheres of increased securitisation and surveillance

There is no dearth of illustrations to exemplify the heterogeneity of the splintering spheres of security in the contemporary fortress city. From gated communities (Connell, 1999) to shopping malls (Benton-Short, 2007); from airports (Adey, 2004; Salter, 2008) and other highly secured transport hubs to recreational facilities and leisure spaces; from CCTV-monitored city squares (Coleman, 2004; Koskela, 2000) to bunkered private homes, a growing body of literature powerfully emphasises the complex pattern within the urban environment of more or less purified insides and more or less dangerous outsides (Franzen, 2001, page 207). The contemporary fortress city is not structured monospherically and all-inclusively, as in Palissy's shell city, but rather as a highly fragmented, polyspherical patchwork of more or less detached and controlled enclosures. As Rowan Moore has put it,

> "each element creates a self-sufficient, artificial, all-embracing experience that is both controlled and controlling. The space between them is seen as background, as something you see through a car window when travelling from one such space to another" (1999, page 10).

In principle, each bubble within the fragmented urban patchwork of security could provide the basis for a detailed analysis of the double problematic of security in terms of physical and atmospheric separation. However, since it is not possible to give an exhaustive interpretation here, the following discussion is content to mention only four particularly illuminating examples: gated communities, bunkered financial districts, fan zones at sport mega-events, and shopping malls. The discussion of these examples—relating to secessionary residential, financial, leisure, and consumption spaces—aspires to provide an explorative foretaste of a potential spherology of the contemporary fortress city.

Secessionary residential space

Consider, first, the correspondence between physical protection and atmospheric self-encapsulation in gated communities, expressed in the following lines by Blake and Associates Inc., a company specialising in security consulting and investigative support:

> "The reasons for restricting access to residential property take many avenues. Some residents are concerned for the security of their property and residents because of demographics and crime trends in adjacent areas. Others believe that this type of community provides them with a prestige symbol. A third general category includes those individuals, who because of their occupation or public image require the protection to maintain a stable family environment" (undated).

The quotation provides a series of significant insights into the spherical attributes of "secessionary residential space" (Graham and Marvin, 2001). First, the quote reiterates the combined physical and spherical logics of enclosure and access control. Gated communities are associated not only with the idea of physical defence and separation, but also with the protection of the prestige and family environment of their residents. What matters is the development of a socially beneficial, prestige-boosting, and stability-stimulating sphere of togetherness, characterised by enhanced social exclusivity and isolation (Aksoy and Robins, 1997; Connell, 1999). The gated community is designed to offer both physical and atmospheric separation from the threatening, or apparently meaningless, outside world.

However, togetherness as mentioned here does not relate to metaphysically grounded existential solidarity, as in the case of Palissy's shell city. Rather, togetherness consists of shared economic privilege and social gratification. It is rooted in a set of pragmatically defined economic considerations. The single unit of residence is allowed to momentarily participate in, and benefit from, the gated 'community' as a collection of strictly selected and controlled things, signals, and people.

Yet, to return to Sloterdijk's understanding of foam as a structure of co-isolated and cofragile entities, it is important to stress that gated communities cannot be conceived as fully separate from the outside world. The very raison d'être of gated communities depends on their contrasting relationship with the rest of the city. Gated communities also rely upon a daily influx of energy and information, in the widest sense, from the outside world. Although their visible boundaries give rise to an appearance of physical and atmospheric separation between the inside and the outside, what in fact exists is an ambiguous continuity.

Similar comments could be made in connection with the attempts of enclosure and fortification on other geographical scales, from 'fortified streets' to 'fortress Europe' (van Houtum and Pijpers, 2005). To whatever degree specific spheres of security are isolated, their relationship to exteriority is essentially shaped by co-isolation and cofragility, which underlines the aptness of the foam metaphor as a tool of analytical enquiry.

Enclosed financial districts

It is important to stress that the relationship between securitisation strategies and atmospheric self-encapsulation cannot only be observed in secessionary residential space but also, as in the case of London's ring of steel, for example, in city centres more generally. Originally referring to the steel gates erected in the mid-1970s at the entrance points into Belfast city centre, the term 'ring of steel' has become most eminent in the City of London, following the IRA Bishopsgate bombing on 24 April 1993 (Coaffee, 2004).

Analogous to the example of gated communities, London's ring of steel was driven by the desire to create a spatially anchored difference, articulating not only two distinct physical spaces but also two distinct spatially anchored atmospheres. As Jon Coaffee argues, "the Corporation's response to terrorism after the Bishopsgate bomb was a result of severe pressure from the business community, especially the foreign institutions, to improve security. The Bishopsgate attack was widely seen as an attempt to

undermine confidence in the reputation of the City as a financial center" (2004, page 285). As London's Commissioner of Police asserted at the time,

> "some ill-informed people think that all we are doing is protecting those 'fat cats' in the City. The reality is that if the City of London is brought down economically, perhaps never to be recovered, then all of us ... will be the losers from the damage done to the nation's economy .... It would be difficult to overstate the importance of securing the City against that threat" (Police Committee, 24 November 1993, quoted in Coaffee, 2004, page 285).

As the quote shows, London's ring of steel aims to create and enclose an atmospherically active collection of individual companies. Its double objective is to physically protect and separate whilst also creating a spatially anchored sphere of reassurance and confidence. The result anticipated is a beneficial and stable microclimate which would benefit both individual companies and the national political economy more generally.

Secured spaces of the spectacle

Host cities of sport mega-events are also particularly shaped by physical and atmospheric separation, through the enhancement of sophisticated security systems that promise to shield the games against domestic or international security threats from land, air, or sea. As George V Voulgarakis, the Greek minister in charge of security planning for the Athens Olympics in 2004, stated,

> "we simultaneously created a security *umbrella* covering not only the five Olympic cities where sporting events took place but places throughout the country, on the high seas, and in international airspace. ... I believe that we can all benefit from the experience we gained from the Olympic Games and the procedures we have been through in order to create the *hospitable environment* that was needed to secure the success of this mass event" (Voulgarakis, 2005, my emphasis).

As with the examples mentioned previously, Olympic security operations were designed not only to physically secure the games, but also to create a hospitable environment, a climate of joy; in short, a jointly inhabited 'Olympic atmosphere'. To achieve this aim, toxic elements and people, as well as bad news and attempts at undermining, had to be kept out, in order to give the Olympic community a sense of physical and psychopolitical security and togetherness.

This problematic can be further refined by looking in more detail at the internal spatial organisation of the securitisation and surveillance of the event city. In Berlin alone, during the FIFA World Cup 2006 in Germany, fences 2.2 m high and 5.3 km long were erected, allowing the demarcation of a myriad of more or less hermetically enclosed security perimeters; from the World Cup stadium to the referee headquarters and from team hotels to specifically designed fan zones across the city centre (Klauser, 2008). The event city thus provides a particularly illustrative example of the splintering of the contemporary urban environment into a wide range of more or less hermetically enclosed and tightly controlled security enclaves that are supported by advanced surveillance technologies and architecturally designed "rings of confidence" (Coaffee, 2003).

A detailed analysis of the combined physical and atmospheric attributes of these security enclaves would be beyond the immediate scope of this paper. However, it is particularly striking to notice in passing the spherical attributes of fan festivals—so-called 'public viewing events'—designed to allow supporters to watch football games on massive video screens in public places across the city centre. Separated from their surroundings by fences, harbouring special legal regulations, and closely monitored by CCTV cameras as well as by private security agents and police forces, these predefined fan zones allowed, both materially and symbolically, the regulation of social life during the FIFA World Cup (Klauser, 2008). These 'stadiums transposed onto the

level of public space' constituted the territorial framework for the concentration of high densities of individuals into collectively inhabited spheres of emotions and analogous rituals. Fan festivals provided a space for the collection and integration of individual spectators into larger conglomerates of contemplative togetherness, moving beyond the traditional stadium in restructuring and appropriating urban public space more generally.

Sloterdijk himself provides a fascinating account of the spherical problematic and political rationale of the stadium as a mass collector of the nation (2004, page 626). Yet he underplays the predominantly commercial rationale of the contemporary event, a problematic that is of considerable importance for the discussion of fan festivals.

Fences around fan festivals not only separated specific spaces 'at risk' that were to become the object of increased securitisation and surveillance. The same fences also marked the spatial limits of FIFA's sphere of influence within the event cities, given that FIFA fully controlled the organisation and marketing of fan festivals (FIFA sponsors enjoyed exclusive advertising rights in the official fan zones; FIFA controlled the spatial dimensions of the festivals and was held responsible for their securitisation). The partitioning of the urban environment into highly secured spheres of emotion thus also stood for a specific set of relationships to the city, mediated through FIFA's intentions to create a clean environment for its official partners' branding and merchandise.

Purified spaces of consumption

Shopping malls, as commercialised spaces of consumption par excellence, are designed primarily to generate, accommodate, and regulate a constant flow of customers. They hence allow further exploration of the commercial rationale of contemporary sphere creations.

Shaped by the mall management's preferences and projects, the tightly controlled conjunctive communality of togetherness in the shopping mall is grounded in individualised consumption. As Frank Helten and Bernd Fischer conclude in their study of the functionalities of CCTV surveillance in Berlin shopping malls, the "centre management is interested in providing a general feeling of pleasure and convenience to the public, especially to potential consumers/visitors and to shop tenants" (2004, page 332). Roy Coleman and Joe Sim have drawn a similar conclusion from their study of CCTV surveillance in Liverpool's city centre:

> "CCTV cameras can be understood as helping to create public spaces for 'free', 'responsible', consumer-oriented individuals who independently choose their autonomous role in the life of the city. Thus CCTV is constructed around the idea of 'empowerment' and 'freedom', particularly the freedom and safety to shop" (2000, page 635).

Thus the atmospheric rationale of the mall—and to a lesser degree of the commercialised city centre—is above all constructed around the 'convenience' and 'security' of the consumer-oriented individual. Everything is arranged so that customers can shop as comfortably as possible, while at the same time enjoying protection from unexpected annoyances or 'destabilising differences'.

In contrast to gated communities or London's ring of steel, what is primarily at stake is not a form of togetherness grounded in a routinised spectrum of relationships between a relatively stable collection of neighbours (residing housekeepers or financial institutions). Rather, togetherness in the mall—as a place of perpetual transit—is defined in terms of analogous, tightly channelled and controlled social practices and rituals, which are developing in a purified inside that guarantees each individual customer's right to enjoy the mall's promise of enjoyable shopping whilst at the same time, if wanted, remaining undisturbed and left alone.

Conclusions

The conclusion of this paper is structured into two main parts. The first part aims to highlight three key lessons deriving from the aforementioned examples, which provide a series of fruitful avenues to explore in approaching the spherical attributes of the contemporary fortress city. Following on from this, the second part will point towards three additional issues that emerge here for further research.

Commercialised spherical multiplicities, composed by individuated subjects

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the discussed loci of increased securitisation and surveillance goes back to the question of the foam metaphor's adequacy for an understanding of the spherical attributes of the contemporary fortress city. Although the aforementioned spaces of security vary considerably in terms of public accessibility, functionality, and sociability, they all underscore in different ways the relevance of Sloterdijk's 'theory of foam' in the search for a vocabulary adequate to the sphere-creating forces inherent in the contemporary urban security agenda. The examples emphasise that securitisation strategies must be approached from a physical and an atmospheric viewpoint simultaneously, hence reiterating the need to think of the spatial articulations of security not only on the basis of two-dimensional spatial figures, but also in terms of three-dimensional spherical metaphors. Securitisation strategies not only separate, differentiate, and articulate distinct physical spaces; they also create and maintain carefully defended atmospheric differences. The importance of this point has neither been fully appreciated by the literature on the contemporary urban security agenda, nor has it been expressed adequately by the applied terminology.

Mapping onto this, the aforementioned spaces of security also demonstrate that the border in the contemporary fortress city is not a line that demarcates two distinct geographical areas—an inside of the city and an outside of the city, as in Palissy's shell metaphor. Instead, the border emerges as a complex pattern of spatially anchored control technologies and physical barriers (Graham, 2009). In line with Sloterdijk's theorisation of foam, the contemporary fortress city appears as a complex structure of more or less tightly regulated and hermetically enclosed spherical multiplicities that are formed by complex processes and bound together by relationships of reciprocal implication and cofragility.

The second conclusion of my analysis relates more specifically to the mediating mechanisms of the spheres of togetherness within the contemporary fortress city. In different ways, and to different degrees, the discussed examples show that a spherology of the contemporary fortress city must also be formulated in economic terms. In other words, economic considerations constitute a powerful mediator of contemporary sphere creations, based on enhanced security and surveillance.

Sloterdijk is himself well aware of the pragmatic driving reasons for the creation of specific spheres of togetherness in the contemporary consumer world. He repeatedly hints at this problematic, stressing, for example, the thermotropic sphere creations related to the attractivity of spatially concentrated property advantages (2004, page 402) and the profane atmospheres of 'fun environments' and 'adventure environments' (page 668). Sloterdijk also refers to "the primary trend of contemporary consumer society towards the creation of 'scenes', where atmospheres are made available as total settings of attractions, signs and contact opportunities" (page 180).

As my paper underlines, urban studies literatures and their insights into current processes of seclusion and commercialisation of space can be of major benefit for a greater understanding of this problematic. In the case of gated communities, what is at stake is a space of shared socioeconomic privilege and gratification. London's ring

of steel is at least partly responding to concerns regarding the city's financial aura and, more generally, to issues of national economic stability. Fan festivals must be understood as shared spheres of commercialised emotions, whilst in shopping malls or highly secured city centres, the commercial activities themselves constitute the conjunctive commonality, the mediating rationale of togetherness.

These comments forcefully reiterate the importance of an approach centred on the processes of mediation of human relationships that are creating and modulating the vital spherical geometries of human being-together. The key for the understanding of human sphere creations is to be found in the social codes and systems of values—in the semiosphere of the studied group or individual (Lotman, 1985)—that are conditioning the establishment and modulation of the group's relationships with exteriority and alterity (Raffestin, 1986).

These comments also lead towards the third major conclusion of my analysis. In all the four explored examples, the individual subject (the resident, the financial institution, the spectator, the customer) acts in his or her own self-interest more than for the community as a whole. Echoing Sloterdijk's biscalar problematisation of foam, the examples thus forcefully underline the essentially individualistic rationale underlying the highly secured "macrofoam" (Sloterdijk, 2004, page 655) of the contemporary fortress city.

Security measures (access control, surveillance, house rules, etc) aim at the episodic (and often economically driven) recapturing of individuals of similar appearance and socioeconomic belonging into more or less secluded spherical conglomerates of co-isolation. The intention of security and surveillance is not—and cannot be—to create and sustain real existential solidarity. As Sloterdijk notes, the "urban macrofoam" is a "world without lasting relationships; a world of interior spaces that are populated by human beings whose social relations are markedly easing, shifting from the existential standards of an economy of deprivation towards new experiments based on abundant resources" (page 664).

In this context of more or less tightly secured, spatially anchored clusters of togetherness that individuals can (or cannot) choose to temporarily join, immunity and integrity are not to be gained from the submission to a larger whole, but must be achieved as the outcome of a personal effort of seclusion by each co-isolated subject (Sloterdijk, 2004, page 195). Immunity is a personal affair. For the single housekeeper, financial institution, spectator, or consumer, what matters above all is the security cell's promise of untroubled cooperation and co-isolation with one's own kind; the promise, thus, to find beneficial conditions for one's own co-isolated self-encapsulation. Mitchell, in his analysis of the contemporary "S.U.V. model of citizenship" (2005), approaches the same problematic with the help of a different spherical metaphor.

> "We want—and expect—to feel safe at all times. ... are pushing towards a model of citizenship that matches the cars we drive. ... Cocooned in a sealed chamber, behind tinted glass, with the temperature fully controlled, and the GPS system tracking, and sometimes dictating, our every turn, our every stop and start, we are radically isolated from each other, able to communicate only through the false connectedness of the cell phone. We ride high and sovereign; we are masters of space; we are safe against all who might intrude, all who might stand in our way ... But never mind: that kind of connectedness (where 'individuals seem independent', but really aren't) is only a connectedness of the most abstract and distant kind. ... In our S.U.V.'s and with our S.U.V. citizenship, that kind of connectedness can always be banished beyond the shell of the Ford Explorer or the eight-foot bubble we now carry with us when we climb down out of the driver's seat and are forced

to walk. We are now, truly, the liberal, autonomous subject. We own ourselves and no one can intrude upon us without our permission. ... The 'right to be left alone' is at the heart of this kind of self-ownership" (2005, pages 96–97).

Mitchell's 'S.U.V. metaphor' is useful in that it stresses the combined physical and atmospheric dimension of the individuated subject's self-encapsulation. However, invoking an image of solid and somewhat rigid steel cocoons, it overemphasises the actual separation and stability of individual sphere creations. Speaking of 'foam' provides a more accurate account of the co-isolation, cofragility, heterogeneity, messiness, and processuality of the vital spherical geometries of contemporary individualism.

Critical issues for further research

It is worth pointing towards at least three critical issues that emerge here for further research. Firstly, it will be of major interest to seek more detailed insight into the ways in which people experience and cope with the splintering urban spheres of security on an everyday level. Indeed, despite the growing body of analytical work on the effects of surveillance and securitisation strategies, very few academics have provided detailed empirical accounts of the qualitative, microscale implications of these developments in terms of individual experiences of the city.

Secondly, the analysis of this paper could be broadened by investigating in more detail the complex relationships between the secessionary 'spheres of protection' and the remaining, seemingly unconsidered, 'spheres of insecurity'. A more detailed account of the functioning and experiences of the urban 'spheres of insecurity'—often termed as problem zones or no-go areas—could also provide greater insight into the spatial struggles between opposing interests and actors whose spheres of influence deform, restrict, and fight against one another (as with police and criminal gangs, for instance).

A third line of inquiry relates to the phenomenon of the deliberate destruction of others' spheres of togetherness and protection. Policing strategies, and more markedly military operations, often aim to create not only their own 'spheres of protection', but also to deliberately destabilise and destroy the life spheres of the 'enemy'. Consider, for example, the corresponding logics of 'infrastructure warfare' and 'sphere annihilation' in the Rapid Dominance strategy of the US military's Shock and Awe doctrine:

"By Rapid Dominance, we are seeking the capability to dominate, control, and isolate the entire environment in, around, over, and under the objective area as quickly as possible. ... It is clear that the targets in each category include military, civilian, industrial, infrastructure, and societal components of a country or group. ... Rapid Dominance will imply more than the direct application of force. It will mean the ability to control the environment and to master all levels of an opponent's activities to affect will, perception, and understanding" (Ullman and Wade, 1996, pages 8, 33, xxvii).

Once again, this quote expresses the corresponding relationship between a strategy that focuses on physical space (the destruction of military and civilian infrastructures) and the resulting effects in spherical terms (undermining the adversary's will and resistance, or, in sum, destabilising his sphere of protection). Contrary to the aforementioned examples, the aim here is not to create a sphere of protective refuge but a zone of increased exposure and vulnerability.

It is of major interest to investigate how these and other issues fit into the exploratory framework developed in this paper, and how the outlined arguments can be further extended and refined, in order to take into account the numerous aspects and directions of the contemporary geographies of security, power, and fear.

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