

*Terrorism, Risk and the Global City: Towards Urban Resilience*. Jon Coaffee. Ashgate: Aldershot, 2009, vi + 361 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7546-7428-3, £60.00 (Hardback)

Counter-terrorism efforts in the United Kingdom have materialized in a number of ways since the first IRA bombings in 1972 in Belfast in Northern Ireland. A protracted conflict with the IRA placed Belfast at the forefront of security planning as early as the 1970's as the city struggled to maintain a sense of calm and community cohesion while simultaneously confronting domestic threats and protecting the citizenry. More recently the scale of the plane attacks on September 11th in New York City and the public transport bombing attacks on July 7th in London has changed the manner in which national governments confront terrorism. In this volume Jon Coaffee provides a detailed account of the evolution of coordinated reactions to both internal and external acts of violence primarily in the UK but by drawing upon lessons learned in the United States after September 11th. The book's structure begins with a lengthy but valuable recounting of urban security discourse and resiliency planning within the context of Belfast in Northern Ireland and Los Angeles in the 1980's before moving on to describe how the City of London responded to the bombing campaign efforts of the IRA. In that section Coaffee also describes the process of risk based upon Beck's (1992) understanding of the notion and how risk calculations changed for companies in the business of underwriting. Coaffee then brings us to the macro debate by situating security in the City of London and London as a whole within a broader context even if it remains fixated on Western city responses to terrorism. The last sections of the book deal with framing the debate in the larger context of the 'global city' speculating about what lessons can be implemented from previous experience.

Beginning with an examination of the intersections between urban design and urban security, the author describes the rise in the *defensive and resilient city* in the wake of a campaign of bombing by the IRA in Belfast during nearly two decades of terrorist acts. For Coaffee the defensive city is theorized as a way to protect potential strategic targets. Belfast city centre

was therefore militarised and strategic targets were *hardened* through the creation of the *ring of steel* as a way to deter future attacks. The author rightly points out the radical change in discourse as a result of terrorist acts. Coaffee argues that such acts bring about a profound alteration in the way that both the government and public view civil liberties and our security. Additionally, he argues that the creation of such militarised zones to protect sensitive targets creates anxiety in the public through the differentiation of public space that is perceived to be more or less protected. Coaffee refers to Paul Valler (1999) of the *Independent* who suggests that new enclaves are created whereby urban renewal favours wealthy commercial and business districts whilst leaving low-income areas untouched. These insights about the conflict between civil liberties and security are significant and helpful yet in some ways do not go far enough. Although the book intentionally focuses largely on western cities, examples of cities in the global south that have experienced terrorism would have been welcome.

The City of London and the Docklands in East London also experienced terrorist acts in the 1990's. The author uses both areas of London as examples underscoring the tensions that arose between businesses and the surrounding community as well as different London borough administrations. As terrorist acts were perpetrated in London, the local and national government turned to an increased militarisation through surveillance as a principal line of defense. Modeled from the British experience in Belfast, the City of London prepared a cordon limiting access in and out whereby vehicles were subject to search by Metropolitan police. Yet, despite the area being a largely commercial district where major corporations in global finance are located, community reactions to this increased presence elicited similar responses to those in Belfast during the previous decade. The balancing act of providing security for residents and those that worked in the City of London and adhering to the established standards of civil liberties continued. My only criticism here is that although the reader gains a deep understanding of the issues, the author only shows us a glimpse of the conflicts that arise. Perhaps the most edifying moment for corporations in the

borough came when residents and other London boroughs complained about the planning process in which the City of London unilaterally decided to impose security measures aimed at deterring would-be bombers. Various London boroughs felt that the change in the City of London would affect traffic patterns in adjacent and neighboring boroughs but also the method in which other boroughs were left out of the decision-making process disturbed the standard procedure. This, they argued, constituted a breach of how the nexus of London boroughs operate; chiefly by consulting one another on decisions made by any individual borough particularly when these changes are dramatic and can have consequences for the others. Institutional critiques of the schemes were fully explored, giving the reader the opportunity to decide on their own what is important about these debates and what is irrelevant. However very little information about arguments made by other civil society organisations against the new securitisation schemes are reviewed. A more robust explanation outside of the borough to borough conflicts would have been highly relevant and useful in analyzing the situation as a reader.

The creation of what Coaffee describes as a panopticon of CCTV's was yet another method that was implemented by the City of London. London as a whole began incorporating CCTV as an environmental and transportation scheme with the introduction of the congestion zone in central London. The author notes that the launch of this technology as both a security measure as well as a transportation scheme had many community groups firmly condemning its widespread use as an abuse of police and state power to undermine the right to privacy and civil liberties but yet again not enough of these critiques are explored. The City of London further incorporated urban design as a way to deter would-be attackers in an attempt to 'harden' highly valuable and/or vulnerable targets. Waste bins were replaced with specially designed bomb containing bins, buildings erected barriers to ensure vehicles could not be placed within a certain distance, and the buildings themselves began incorporating increased design materials such as reinforced glass and stronger building materials tested to withstand blasts from certain distances.

Coaffee's book offers an excellent purview into security planning and its evolution in the wake of multiple bombing campaigns by the IRA and new responses to the threat of both domestic and international terrorism. Using the examples of Belfast, the City of London, and the Docklands in East London Coaffee provides a unique perspective regarding the planning efforts. The author describes the inherent problems in securitising public spaces and achieving balance between public safety and individual and collective rights to privacy. He also spells out the process in which terrorism and security begin to become incorporated in the way that planners design and manage global cities. Overall the book gives us valuable insights into how planning processes have evolved and the criteria that are used to make decisions about future urban growth. It is clear that security planning has gained a significant role in the overall planning process even while it continues to struggle with fundamental issues of balance between the protection of the people and civil liberties.

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