Finding a Place in the City: Spatial Securitization in the Western World

Mara Duer *

I. Introduction: The Power of Place[1]

This study applies Dolores Hayden's concept of the "power of place" (1997) by exploring how a building can question core American values and principles. A community's right to belong to the city is here explored solely on the praxis of its location. When Muslim-American property developer Sharif El-Gamal bought 45-51 Park Place, New York City to make a community center, he was challenged as not "knowing his place." His projected Park51 Community Center became a model case that contested the paradigm of Muslim communities' relationship with the city. It demonstrates how even the legal civil rights of citizenship are not sufficient to gain a practical right to the city space and landscape. In this dispute, two forms of governing confront each other: one is the state of exception, specifically the implementation of extraordinary executive power by the sovereign in the wake of the 9/11 attacks; the other is the normal state of governing in which the division of powers of the democratic system provide a constraining mechanism. The controversy over Park51 led to many elements in American society challenging the quintessential American notion of private property. The sacralization of the former World Trade Center site, Ground Zero, as a result of the collective trauma developed after the attacks, enabled certain actors to claim the surrounding area should be administered as if

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(1) Title belonging to Dolores Hayden (1997).

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* Research Associate, Social Science Research Institute, International Christian University
  E-mail: mara.duer@gmail.com

it were public space. On the other hand, an opposition confronted the community center by campaigning to push the state of exception to its limits, and thus the affirmation, at local level, of the public enemy in the form of the Arab/Muslim.

On a global scale, economic and financial globalization in the form of transnational companies and cheap labor is welcome and promoted by a neoliberal model. Nevertheless the same model rejects the democratic pluralism and urban diversity that are the side-effects of this transformation. The manipulation of fear and an increase of uncertainty over the proliferation of violence is capitalized upon by state and non-state actors to promote a new form of state terror in which places, rather than people, are targeted. The depoliticization of society through the use of a state of emergency (Agamben, 2005) is operationalized using the language of security. Therefore the process of securitizing Muslim buildings is purposely targeted by state and non-state agencies as part of a social construction applied in the form of security, both on a local and global level. This mechanism is contributing, however, to a larger goal, named by Agathangelou and Ling in *Transforming World Politics* (2009) as the "Neoliberal Imperium." Hegemony is pursued through the use of practices and institutions that "legitimize[s] neocolonial strategies of power based on race, gender, sexuality, and class to privilege the few at the expense of the many…" (Agathangelou & Ling, 2009, p.2).

The events of September 11 demonstrate the transformation of the concept of sovereignty, in which the idea of boundaries seems to disappear. The global nature of the enemy—the premise of the War on Terror—challenges the principle of state sovereignty, shaking the core of the modern state, which in American geopolitics means a challenge to their global empire. Given the new conditions of friend and enemy (Schmitt, 1996) explained by G. W. Bush in his speech[2] of September 2001, Homeland Security was left with the parameters to identify the antagonist. Regardless of his or her nationality, any human

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(2) For a deep analysis of G. W Bush speech on 9/21/01 see "Power, Borders, Security, Wealth: Lessons of Violence and Desire from September 11" (A. Agathangelou & L. Ling, 2004).

displaying a questionable attitude or behavior can be profiled as a potential terrorist. In this scenario, marginal groups such as migrants and minorities are thereby disenfranchised from their place, and rights of citizenship are immediately in doubt as individuals are identified as threats to the state.

From this perspective the securitization of Park51 Community Center targets the minority, which functions to reinforce perceived American exceptionalism driven by a desire for hegemonic power. At the individual level this process functions through an appeal to patriotism, safety and pride: mainstream American ideals. Huysmans explains this process as "construct[ing] political trust, loyalty and identity through the distribution of fear and an intensification of alienation" (Huysmans, 2006, p.47). The tragic irony, however, is that the mechanism to secure American society functions by making it more insecure.

In this context, this study explores mechanisms by which Islamic spaces are securitized. Then, through the case study of Park51 Community Center, it investigates how the location of an Islamic cultural center became portrayed as a threat to American society.

II. Methodology

This paper is the result of a larger project in which several methodologies were applied. Two quantitative surveys were designed and implemented. One analyzed the most recent demonstration against Park51 Community Center on the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the second was for attendants of PrayerSpace, the prayer space in the Park51 complex. Both surveys were analyzed using SPSS. Other qualitative research included analysis of hearings organized by Community Board 1 of New York City—a key stage in the Park51 controversy.

Fieldwork was done from September to November 2011, when the author worked as Media and Cultural programmer as part of the Park51 Community Center team. Semi-structured interviews were realized with different actors involved in the development of Park51 and PrayerSpace, and representatives of the city's Muslim community, and the Jewish Community Center—Park51's

inspiration.[3]

III. Shaping Social Relations

This study uses the theoretical framework of Critical Security studies to explain the securitization of Islamic spaces in the Western world. The process occurring at the proposed Park51 Community Center's site has been one of securitization, utilizing Islamic exceptionalism as its argument. This form of neo-Orientalism, in the context of the global War on Terror, according to Pasha "ensures that *Islamic* identity appears as a monolithic label defying space and time" (Pasha, 2007, Ch.12, p.181; author's italics). According to the argument, Islam could be changed neither by modernization nor assimilation—in spite of attempts. "Islam's 'repellent' (Al-Azmeh, 1996) otherness as a conglomerate of religious, cultural, racial and above all, political correlates congealed in Islamic exceptionalism" (Pasha, 2007, Ch.12, p.187).

The new scenario of glocal distrust against minority and migrants justifies the use of extreme political measures as if it were the existence of the state under threat. Thus, urgent military practices are brought to the local population. A set of governmental criteria defines a division among the population, now organized between the holders of rights and those who are reframed as threats.

The state's structural relationship with its citizens is based on legitimization bestowed by them. The state thus represents the people's will. When it is threatened, the rhetoric of "national interest" arises, to defend its population from what is constructed as external aggression (Shani et al, 2007). However after 9/11, the imposition that humans live in a world with global threats—xacerbated by globalization, which frees the market but not the people, and in which system international terrorism has no boundaries—gives place to a form of security founded on a state of emergency. The foundation of the modern state

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(3) Interviewees were: Imam Khalid Latif, Imam Shamsi Ali; JCC executive director Rabbi Joy Levitt; AMC representative Asad Bajwa; CAIR president Zead Ramadan; Park51 co-founder Nour Moussa; Park51 owner/developer Sharif El-Gamal; Park51 chief of staff Katerina Lucas; Park51 administrative assistant Sadaf Choudhry; Park51 architect Leopold Sguera.

is transformed. The securitization of the process comes from the presumption that not all people commit to giving all their power to the state in the same way, when they establish the social contract. "Society" is broken into pieces, dividing members into individual atoms to be controlled—the "docile body" (Foucault, 1979, p.135) at the service of capitalist governmentality (Shani, et al, 2010).

Since 9/11 agencies like "Homeland Security" have been established as a local adaptation of pseudo-military policies. The *good citizen* is the subject of terror while the other becomes the *terrorist*, the agent seen as potential betrayer. This is the subject who, from a marginal, second-class societal place, becomes target and threat at the same time. His mere daily life and activities are seen as potentially associated with different loyalties from the national one; loyalties that could threaten the citizens, the nation, and the world.

For new ethnic and religious minorities arriving in the country,[4] industrialization had the effect of erasing differences and unifying society in capitalist terms of class division. However, with the arrival of the *Global City* (Sassen, 1991), national economies built during the industrial era are displaced by quasi-independent and financially globalized cities, which acquire a strategic position in the world economy as service-industry and financial world centers. In this context ethnic differences are brought back and reinforced (Cesari, 2005 from Jaillet 2001; Sassen 1991).

In addition to the transformation of the economical system, forms of warfare have also evolved (Dillon & Reid, 2009). A new dynamic of war has come into being, a transnational form of guerrilla warfare in which the enemy is not a state but someone inside a state. Based on Hobbes, the two biggest threats faced by a Leviathan are the rebellion of its subjects, and the attack of another Leviathan. The United States, as the only hegemonic power—and therefore the strongest Leviathan—has reestablished the terms of the social contract, on a global scale, confronting other states as if they were its subjects.

States thus become subjects themselves, and are subjected to open their

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(4) Immigration and Nationality Act 1965

borders to put their own citizens at the disposal of the ultimate sovereign. The higher power goes beyond identification and passports, or other forms of national legitimization, nullifying those to define the ultimate distinction between not just citizen and non-citizen, but human and non-human.

At the crossing point of the global War on Terror and the Global City— where migrant minorities are mostly concentrated—the symbolic border is no longer defined by spatial references and frontiers. As the War on Terror is borderless, the division is based on the premises of *The Liberal Way Of War* (Dillon & Reid, 2009, p.7), in which the other is dehumanized. The search is within, for the *terrorist*, a figure that possesses no more framework/protection than his bare life (Agamben, 2005).

In this scenario the state must reorganize its own space in order to reaffirm its own sovereignty. In Michel Foucault's terms, discipline over space spreads out to guarantee social control of everyday lives. "The aim of such a technology is to create a 'docile body' through the enclosure and the organization of individuals in space" (Low & Zuñiga 2003, Intro, p.30). Which follows that "they can be made to function in such a manner that efficiency, docility, and hierarchy are simultaneously achieved (Rabinow, 2003, part VI, p.357).

Following Balzacq's perspective of securitization theory, social actions that come as part of a securitization process do not necessarily come from premeditated design. Actions from various agents can push in a similar direction without the agents being in coordination between each other. Although this paper will subsequently dismantle the concerted efforts of the "Islamophobia Network" in politicizing this conflict, it will also emphasize that the power of securitization comes from the combination of certain agents' perceived legitimacy and the language used, to create a "formula" that resonates strongly in society (Balzacq 2011). The focus will then be drawn to any institutional or individual actor who communicates an imminent threat, resulting in an emergency response.

IV. Spatial Securitization

The link between nation and state, from which the idea of a national

homogenous ethos is born and nurtured, was weakened by the mass increase in global migration following World War II. In Arjun Appadurai's description of this phenomenon, migrants become a threatening presence to the alliance between soil and citizen that in the past assured the state's existence (Appadurai, 2003).

In The *Anthropology of Place and Space* (Low & Zuñiga, 2003) Zuñiga argues that these diasporic centers that she referred to as examples of reverse colonialism and spatial appropriation, bring new spatial inscriptions in which Western dominance is moved from center stage, and space is produced in an alternative, cognitive and esthetic way. Alternative global loyalties represent a threat to the "state-sponsored idea of sovereignty" (Appadurai, 2003, Ch.16, p.342).

Considerations of national unity have historically taken into account cultural unity, love for the country, and a common ideology. In current times, however, after Slavoj Žižek (2010), no ideological wars are fought, and the only reason of existence left to the state is the protection of its boundaries and the administration of the country in the service of corporations. Žižek explains that "the only way to introduce passion into this kind of politics, the only way to actively mobilize people, is through fear: the fear of immigrants, the fear of crime..." (Žižek, 2010, para 6).

Governing fear creates a desire for homogeneity. Thus, security becomes a main resource of the state. Cultural reification takes place as if social life had an end in itself, as a finished product that defines the nation and the citizens within it. In this context, cultural differences are treated as a threat. Arab and Muslim populations, regardless of their condition of citizen or immigrant, converts this "homogenous other" to become — in Schmitt's terms — the enemy.

Sally Merry explains management over space as the modern technology of governance. Instead of a direct targeting of the individual (the offender) by the state and punishment by incarceration, the whole population is targeted by "postcarceral forms of discipline" (Merry, 2001, para 6). According to Merry, the post-industrial society is characterized by self-management citizenship,

meaning that the state delegates to each individual the responsibility to be a citizen—rather than using disciplinary methods for social control. Neoliberal governance is the mechanism by which people re-contract with the state. "As states endeavor to govern more while spending less, they have adopted mechanisms that build on individual self-governance and guarded spaces. They establish areas to which only people seen as capable of self-governance have access and incarcerate those who cannot be reformed" (Merry, 2001, headnote, para 7).

Places and timetables are established and regulated for specific actions like prostitution and smoking. Country clubs and private neighborhoods become exclusive, and public movement is monitored by CCTV. From this perspective, the city becomes a commodity to which capital and proper behavior grant you access. "This control is promotive rather than reactive, voluntary rather than coercive, based more on choice than constraint. Power appears to disappear behind individual choice" (Ewick 1997, p.81 from Merry, 2001, para 7).

In an individualist neoliberal scenario, self-governing citizens—rights holders—initiate an entrepreneurship to campaign against a building seeming to defy social order. Mosques are spatially defined as places requiring an invisible or marginal status, like prisons and asylums. Any attempt to break out of this requires a reaction.

For US Muslim communities, spatial securitization has emerged as resistance to mosque development, vandalization, police surveillance, obstructions to movement (e.g. airport security), and so on. Restricting freedom of movement is a disciplinary measure, so the *docile body* will learn society's invisible boundaries. In this vigilant society, US Muslims and Arabs have to learn to invisibilize their existence. This is a form of securitization, in which the individual is coerced into changing his appearance (body) and movements (public space) to avoid being targeted. Otherwise, he will become a public enemy.

In "Mosques as American Institutions" it is contested that "there is nothing inconsistent with the mosque and American democracy, and in fact, that religiosity fosters support for American democratic values" (Dana, Barreto,

Kassra, 2011, p.505). Nevertheless, becoming a member of society has many levels of acceptance. Formal legal recognition as a citizen is just one step, but achieving acceptance of foreign practices requires more than liberal tolerance. Beyond providing a place for new immigrants, ethnic community organizations have had the traditional dual role of fostering connection with the larger society. If they are *Islamic* religious organizations however, they are presented, by contrast, as having a dissociative effect.

Resistance to mosque construction has been a norm across the Western world. However, since 9/11, and particularly during the Park51 controversy, the rhetoric built by politicians, bloggers, various commentators and other media has framed Islamic prayer sites as untrustworthy, and above all anti-American, institutions (Dana et al, 2011). In an acceptance of mosques there is a symbolic recognition of the alien population. Receiving immigrants should add their cosmology to the so-called melting pot of American society. Politically, the promotion of an American Muslim immigrant to the status of "good citizen" would open the door to a new actor in the political arena. Losing the stigma of second-class or unreliable citizen would allow a legitimate voice in the political realm.

Conversely, as long as the American Muslim is maintained in the inferior part of the spectrum, his place is the one of the stranger. "The stranger is by nature no "owner of soil"-soil not only in the physical, but also in the figurative sense of a life-substance which is fixed, if not in a point in space, at least in an ideal point of the social environment" (Simmel, 1964, p.403).

Georg Simmel defines "the stranger" as a figure who has the freedom to move and leave, who does not carry the same ties to the group. As a group member rather, he is near and far at the same time (Simmel, 1964). The unspecific place given to the stranger provides the group with a definition of itself. However, the stranger's role in society is not as an individual, but as a group — his identity is not relevant. In the anonymous sphere of the city, Simmel is interested in his communalities, "strangeness of origin, which is or could be common to many strangers" (Simmel, 1964, p.407). For this article, the Muslim/

Arab is this stranger whose humanity is ignored. His origin, real or socially constructed, places him as someone who cannot be trusted, because he does not belong. Just as medieval Jews were not permitted to possess land because of their "ambiguous loyalty," so too are Muslims not entitled, in the view of some, to possess certain areas of New York City. However, as Simmel explains, the stranger provides something to his society, serving to reassert the group's identity.

1. American exceptionalism and its partner, Islamic exceptionalism

How a stranger is placed can be a reflection of how a society is defined. In the same way, to better explain Islamic exceptionalism, it is necessary to explore American identity further. Based on Seymour Martin Lipset's book *American Exceptionalism* (1996), the voluntary will with which the country was born became a key element of its identity. Compared with European countries founded out of common history, the United States purports an ideology of liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire (Lipset, 1996). However, "the American Revolution … had enormously strengthened the individualistic, egalitarian, and anti-statist [ideas]…" (Lipset, 1996, p.31).

American exceptionalism refers to the distinctiveness of the nation's history, political system and values, and is associated with the holy mission of spreading, defending and establishing its views all around the world, to the benefit of all. A long line of presidents have applied different rhetorical discourses to imply this exceptional condition: defining America as the "empire of liberty" (Jefferson, 1780); the "shining city on a hill"[5] (Kennedy, 1961; Reagan, 1989); the "last best hope of earth" (Lincoln, 1862); the "indispensible nation" (US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, 1998); and, underlying the States' mission, "We have a calling from beyond the stars to stand for freedom" (Bush, 2004).[6]

When the imaginary of American exceptionalism starts failing, the

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(5) Referring to a religious phrase used in 1630 by Protestant priest John Winthrop based on the idea that the New World would be God's country, and an example to all.

(6) All quotes can be find in Walt's article "The Myth of American Exceptionalism" (2011)

hegemonic machinery comes into action. The creation of an arch-enemy has been a classic strategy in the reinforcement of the concept: Japan in Pearl Harbor, the fight against Nazism, and the ideological war against communism-embodied by the Soviet Union. These constructions allocated inherent characteristics to each of these. However, the "new enemy" adapts to a new scenario, marked by the contingency of a financial global crisis and a disintegrating global order.

Global governance and democratic imperialism is the path that has been chosen in order to survive as a world power. In this new framework the racial Arab and religious Muslim are indistinguishable and possessed of a single "criminal record," and a diffuse location which fits perfectly with the role as arch-enemy of the chosen nation. For American exceptionalism a perfect match was thus Islamic exceptionalism. As Nadine Naber wrote in the introduction of *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11* (2008), the place of the Arab in the United States mutated from invisible citizen to visible subject. However, this study believes that in the imperial chase the Arab/Muslim was instead transformed to a publicly exposed global enemy. This casts Islam from a neo-Orientalist position as having "a constitutive affinity to politics and violence; unspoken pathologies of Islamic culture and collective psyche; and strategies to civilize populations mesmerized by that religion's vast and seemingly irrational appeal" (Pasha, 2007, Ch.12, p.177).

In proposing a mosque in the proximities of Ground Zero—though it was a proposal from a small group—the stranger as a unity challenged the social configuration of a place already being contested. Just as Jews before the State of Israel's existence, so too are Muslims able to achieve unity without having a definite location, city or country. The American state fears holding a wounded symbolic center-New York City after 9/11-in contrast with the Muslim *umma*[7] that exists, and is growing, all over the world.

Following Salman Sayyid in *Beyond Westphalia: Nations and Diasporas-the Case of the Muslim Umma* (2000) Islamism undermines and transcends the

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(7) Community of Muslims.

logic of the nation.[8] The Global City is where diasporic communities are mainly to be found, making them "homeless in this world- that is, those for whom the global hegemonic order is not an echo of their subjectivity" (Sayyid, 2000, Ch.2, p.46). The political power of the diaspora is one that can disarticulate the relationship between the political and the nation.

V. Process of securitization

The case study is one of *spatial* securitization that responds to the Global City's process of deterritorialization that in an emergency scenario can be seen as a form of internal invasion. When spaces' associations with the nation-state become blurred by the transformation of the landscape, then spatial securitization is a tool to recover the city's "original identity." Carroll (2012) suggests the importance of landscape when talking about religious communities in the United States: "Any attempt to understand … religion must begin by recognizing that it is fundamentally spatial" (Carroll, 2012, p.310). For Foucault, spaces are where social interaction takes place and power dynamics materialize (2007). Carroll emphasizes that communities ground their identities in places, creating emotional attachments (2012). In the religious sphere, especially for migrants, the community center becomes the nodal point of belonging. However, the competition for giving meaning to places creates contention, such as in the cases of the Cologne mosque (2007), and the prohibition of minarets in Switzerland (2009). These are exemplary of Western communities fearing for the identity of their cities based on the challenge of the visual presence of Muslim communities.[9]

1. Islamophobia Network

Defined as a compound of "so-called experts, academics, institutions,

(8) This is based on the idea of "nation" as territorial space. For a different interpretation, see Shani (2010).

(9) For more on cases of resistance to mosques in Europe see Allievi. S (2009)'s study "Conflicts over Mosques in Europe: Policy issues and trends" – NEF initiative on religion and democracy. United Kingdom: Alliance Publishing Trust.

grassroots organizations, media outlets, and donors who manufacture, produce, distribute, and mainstream an irrational fear of Islam and Muslims" (Wajahat, Clifton, Duss, Fang Keyes, Shakir, 2011, Intro p.9).This wide range of societal actors organized in a network pushed to define the national agenda and promote state policies driven by a set of racist ideas. Park51 Community Center became the first successful manufactured conflict produced by the "Islamophobia network," to gain national and international attention.

This section introduces the significant controversy that erupted over Park51 Community Center's location, and led to the media giving it the inflammatory name "Ground Zero Mosque." Naming is a central tool to analyze processes of spatial securitization, and the struggle of Muslim communities to "find their place in the city."

The term "Ground Zero" was coined by the Manhattan Project during the Second World War as the target of the atomic bomb in Japan. After 2001's terrorist attacks, Manhattan became host of its own incarnation. The imposition of this term onto the mosque implies a dislocation of Park51 from its origins as community center, transforming its identity, connecting it permanently with the terrorist attack, and robbing it of any other meaning.

The manufacture of the anti-Muslim/anti-Arab industry requires the participation of several actors all working in an interconnected manner on certain topics, summarized as follows:

— Establishing the idea that most mosques in the United States are radical.
— Establishing a line of discourse for anti-Muslim hatred framed under constitutional rights
— The First Amendment, free speech, and the right to assembly are in danger-citing Islam as a political presence, not a religion.
— Establishing a direct link between all Muslims, Islam and Arabs with anti-Israel feeling.

Treated as a political campaign, maintained as a social club and supported

by conservative foundations with large resources blogs, publications, websites, and grassroots organizations became a successful innovative model of political activism. This organizational structure is reminiscent of a new, self-empowering social contract in which people define community and society though their actions. Another self empowering strategy is the use of localize groups that take the lead in their communities, and support the campaign through attending rallies, making phone calls, participating in local politics and raising funds.

The media coverage of the war was a significant step in the construction of a new reality. By creating new boundaries, threats and reinforcing the definition of "the other," the media has played an important role in the crystallization of this construction It became a key elements for spreading the idea of a homegrown threat based on the mere existence of an American Muslim community, and specifically the development of an Islamic community center near Ground Zero.

The "misinformation experts" (Wajahat et al, 2011) are the main producers of anti-Muslim/Islam content. Backed financially by conservative philanthropists, they form think tanks, directed by purported academics[10] who form the intellectual arm of the Islamophobia Network.

The theoretical background supporting the paradigm of a irreducible confrontation between a Western civilization and a non-Western civilization is largely based on Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (1996). His theory has been questioned and criticized by prominent scholars (Sen, 2006; Said, 2006, 2007) appealing to the very classification of civilizations and the reification of the idea of civilization which ignores the dynamism of this concept. Although academically disqualified and accused of racist, politicians, civil society and media picked up on Huntington's paradigm and established it as a truth. With

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(10) Key figures include Frank Gaffney from the Center for Security Policy; David Yerushalmi from the Society of Americans for National Existence; Daniel Pipes from the Middle East Forum; Robert Spencer, director of Jihad Watch and Stop Islamization of America (SIOA); Steven Emerson from the Investigative Project on Terrorism; David Horowitz, founder of the David Horowitz Freedom Center. Although not an academic, Pamela Geller from SIOA is also frequently referred to as an expert.

the help of agents like the Islamophobia network, this paradigm became part of the language of politics and a new way to concentrate votes.

The fourth pillar of the Network is made up of the political actors who have benefited greatly from its profitable political use. It is relevant to see how the glocal and national narrative is mixed up and used to gain political attention. The direct use of the ballot box[11] is an effective strategy to ensure that Muslim initiatives are not treated the same as those concerned with other minorities or religions.

The controversy over Park51 Community Center also achieved an increase in funding from conservative pro-Israel philanthropists, who found a way to gain support from new sectors. The confrontations could be used to mirror the broad conflicts of Israel vs. Palestine, and the USA vs. the Islamic threat. According to this narrative, Palestine and global Islam belong to the same entity, who share the same destructive mission towards the Western world.

The Islamophobic network developed in such a way that it acquired the scale of a Western global policy going beyond national limits. The glocal campaign generated by website, blogs and organizations proved efficient when Norway mass murderer Anders Breivik quoted Geller, Spencer and the Horowitz center among others in his own manifesto. Although the connection with Breivik, who murdered 69 people in July 2011, and the use of direct violence was condemned by the mentioned groups, the construction of a global Western paradigm manifested a desired reality of the imperial hegemon. The connection with parallel European groups and movements attempts to give a wider justification and profile to the social fears of the American grassroots movements, creating a Western collective movement against a common enemy. By unifying the discourse of threats of the degradation of "European culture" and "American identity" by the immigrant infiltrator, the campaign against Islam belongs to the Western world.

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(11) I.e: The case of the minaret ban in Switzerland (2009)

2. Legal Framework

While diversity is invisible, it is not seen as a threat. If, however, a group wishes to establish their mosque, then diversity comes to view, and a perceived homogeneity is broken. This kind of opposition is known as "NIMBYism" ("Not in my backyard"). Though Park51 is not located in the suburbs, and therefore is not in any local community's "backyard," its location was taken as a symbolic backyard by the wider community. Therefore, the visibility, location and design of the community center were reasons for wishing to ban it or move it away-to "invisibilize" it in some way.

The first official public questioning of the project took place on May 25, 2010 in the public hearings organized by Community Board 1 (CB1). [12] The hearings took the form of a court in which Islam was on trial. It took around five hours and more than 50 people spoke in favor and against the community center. However these hearings showed a different set of arguments from what has is normally heard in other mosque building contentions in the Western world (Allievi, 2009; Foley, 2010). None of the speeches appealed to technical aspects such as traffic, building measurements or sound pollution and esthetic issues. This line of obstructionist arguments was not employed, perhaps because Park51 was known to not require zoning approval of any kind.

The location represented the key topic of the contestation. The area covered by the cloud of dust caused by the destruction of the Twin Towers was mentioned as a spatial reference to mark the area in which it is inappropriate to establish the community center. The community center is objectified as that which can desecrate this space, causing this building and any local/international Muslim space to be seen as immoral.

(1) A Legal Attempt: Landmark Preservation Commission

A second formal attempt to block the construction of Park51 Community Center was via the City Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC).

When the planes crashed into the World Trade Center on September 11,

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(12) Local representative body of Downtown Manhattan

2001, part of the one of the hijacked plane landed in the building.[13] This provided a justification for blocking the construction, on the basis that this was part of the "sacred zone" created by the attacks.

The LPC hearings of July 12, 2010 lasted two hours, and were attended by 100 people. Arguments arose along the same lines as the CB1 hearings; from the offensive choice of location and questions over the project's financial backing, to a judgment on the morality of people involved in Park51. All these arguments were set out to propose the existing building remaining as a memorial of 9/11.

The LPC who specialize in knowledge of historical and aesthetic values in the city landscape, was attempting to found the discussion on whether the aesthetic value of the building[14] made it worth preserving (Bayles, 2011). The final decision of approval to tear down the original structure of the building from LPC was appealed via a lawsuit.[15] On March 11, 2011, New York Supreme Judge Paul. G Feinman finally dismissed the case.

VI. Collective Trauma to Securitize the City Landscape

After a traumatic event linear time narrative needs to be reconstructed. The way this is effected is that trauma is incorporated as part of the national narrative. As Jenny Edkins explains in *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (2003), the trauma lifts the veil on the irregularity, uncertainty and violence in life. The traumatized subject, as a result of the experience, allows a new perception of state and society; the ties that unify the individual to the community are plunged into murky waters. The trauma, unless controlled, can become a challenge to the state and its form of administrating power. That is why memorial places and national dates are so important. They represent the national landscape and official history of the nation. What should be

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(13) Then occupied by clothing retail store Burlington Coat Factory.

(14) Attributed to the Italian Renaissance Palazzo style.

(15) The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) brought a landmark lawsuit against Park51 in 2010.

remembered, and how, is a political decision; it is an affirmation of a national memory.

In order to survive, the state needs to eliminate the political from the traumatic by providing a linear narrative on which to place the suffered events. By doing so, the trauma can be depoliticized. Monuments and memorials transmit a discourse of memory, either of nationalism, patriotism, victimhood, or retaliation and revenge, and so on. This functions as a form of eliminating the uncertainty of everyday life for the traumatized subjects, and a link to absorb the traumatic incident into a narrative of normalcy. In the case of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the events were capitalized upon and reinterpreted to shore up the state's position and shape the landscape.

For Leoplod Sguera architect of Park51, the 9/11 Memorial, opened in 2011 on the tenth anniversary of the attacks "...should have been many multicultural institutes...More like Kenzo Tange [director of the post-atomic bomb reconstruction of Hiroshima], living the destruction in a way, and learning from it rather than erasing it and making this little perfect tribute" (Sguera; author's interview).

In Hiroshima, Japan, the location where the A-bomb was dropped in August, 1945 is now the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. The reconstruction of the whole city was made to incorporate buildings and public spaces to transit the memory, the pain—and the recovery. In comparison, Downtown Manhattan was not built to send a unifying message of peace to the world. The space left for the memorial is a dislocated island within the financial district. A visitor to the memorial must obtain a pass, and pass through a barrier—in part for security and in part because of surrounding construction work for the surrounding towers. The memorial has hours of operation, a list of rules and regulations—including limits to any form of demonstration, and a maximum group size of 16 people. Finally, something akin to airport security is required to finally access the "public" memorial. The 9/11 Memorial became a "place"—explained by Carroll as a form of reterritorialization, as opposed to an open and unmarked "space" (2012). In contrast to Hiroshima's Peace Park, intended as

an open space to all people, the 9/11 Memorial became a privatized enclave, producing a setting for specific social relations (Lefebvre, 1991). The memorial is thus commodified as one more property and invisiblized, not by its design but by the security measures which make it an immobile place.[16] In contrast, Park51 Community Center was planned as a high, bright and proud place for its community and for the larger New York City community; a place with no doors.

American citizens who had embraced the revenge discourse of the War on Terror as a response to the terrorist attack on 9/11 felt deceived by the state when the construction of Park51 was permitted. On the other hand, other American voices have found in this idea of a community center a space for grieving through non-violence and reconciliation. Park51 came to represent an alternative symbolic discourse. The non-official discourse offered a new understanding to a conflict that has been portrayed as a confrontation between civilizations. These articulations (or spontaneous alliances between grieving and community building), show how memory and trauma can be processed socially as an alternative to a nationally propagated discourse of war. It demonstrates the importance of communal autonomy in creating an urban landscape in which each community's identity can be reflected.

VII. Conclusion

The "power of place" (Hayden, 1997) has been proved innumerable times in American history. As when Rosa Parks refused to give her seat to a white person in the time of racial segregation in the US, the location of the Islamic community center, also mounted a challenge to the social assignment of spatial distribution. Drawing on *Transforming World Politics* (Agathangelou & Ling, 2009) both actions could be seen under the framework of the civil rights movement rather than the classic hegemonic vision of International Relations in which the

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(16) Contrary to claims that "Ground Zero is not a static shrine" (Hernandez, 2010; from Carroll 2012).

world is divided into a binary "us" and "them." [17] In the hegemonic post-9/11 public memory creation, Islam had been reinforced as a source of evil. In this contention, memorization was contested in order to include American Muslim voices who also want to have their own and chosen place in the American landscape.

The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center were specifically chosen as the target of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, 2001. These buildings were an iconic feature of the Manhattan skyline "as symbols of America's casual assumption of its global economic, political, and cultural hegemony" (Dodds, 2002, p.23). They also functioned as an instrument of the production of social relations, they were as Edkins (2003) calls it, cityscapes of imperial power. In a spatial sense, the buildings that held the World Trade Center served as a political means for the establishment of a social and economic structure (Low & Zuñiga, 2003).

Architects, urban planners, scientists, technocrats, and social engineers organize production in the city landscape, in order to establish the foundations of an hierarchical organization of space. Following the demands of the capitalist form of production and reproduction, the geographical order of the city is unevenly developed, and fragmented.

The social reproduction of people in the city is what Bourdieu (1977) calls the "habitus" of social practice. Marginal and subordinated groups, made as such by their financial resources, race or nationality, among other factors, are to be kept in an illusion of invisibility. When these groups attempt to transform themselves into anything more than a marginal actor, mainstream citizens react by attempting to maintain the status quo. Resistance to their integration into mainstream spaces in the city is normally controlled by the "invisible hand of the market." However, Sassen's concept of the Global City (1991) is a reminder that marginality and race no longer necessarily go hand in hand. The link between racial/ethnic group and economic position is dismantled. Entrepreneurs

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(17) The Muslim Public Affairs Council interpreted the Park51 controversy as part of the civil rights movement for Muslims in the US (from Carroll, 2012). Thanks to the anonymous reviewer for bringing this to my attention.

like El-Gamal can buy property in central locations of the Global City, testifying to the disarticulated relationship between ethnicity and capital. The War on Terror "transnationalizes violence and insecurity in the name of nation" (Agathangelou & Ling) to define neoliberal globalization under the framework of binary colonial power and the reinforcement of imperial power, in which Neo-Orientalism functions as the symbolic front line of the war.

The concept of US exceptionalism is embedded in the identity of the country. Using the analogy of the Jewish people, many elements in American society propagate the notion that they are the "chosen people." As former UK Home Secretary Sir Michael Howard's analysis goes, "the United States has always resembled rather a secular church, or perhaps a gigantic sect, than it has the nation-states of the world" (from Dillon & Reid, 2009, p.2). Their mission as such is to offer "human security" all around the world against the terrorist, the non-human among the people. The targeting of Arabs and Muslims throughout the world operates freely with the coerced blessing of other states. The "other" is *terrorized* though the global incursion into domestic citizens life, in which the "other" becomes completely dehumanized.

Marshal Berman wrote *All that is Solid Melts into the Air* (1988) after experiencing the trauma of the destruction of his own city of New York by Robert Moses, master-builder of the 20th century, whereby, to modernize the city and create buildings like the Twin Towers, traditional neighborhoods were bulldozed with a resultant destruction of communities. Martin Coward in *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction* (2009), following Berman, explains that destroying buildings is to destroy the city. "In destroying the city, such a substrate is lost and identity can no longer take root." (Coward, 2009, p.36). Park51 Community Center is an inverse story of the struggle of an identity that wishes to be born. The spatial securitization process does not destroy buildings but resists their birth. However, both the destruction of the city and the resistance of new construction respond to the same idea—the erosion of the city's heterogeneity.

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Finding a Place in the City: Spatial Securitization in the Western World

<Summary>

Mara Duer

After the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the agenda of the Western World became defined by security. The idea of "national security" became insufficient for the new dangers of global terror. While the paradigm of "human security" can be used as justification for the invasion of other countries, nevertheless at the same time the individual also becomes the target. The location of "the enemy" has no borders; he must be searched for even within the state — a search which undermines the rights of the citizens it is ostensibly protecting. From the perspective of Securitization theory, the internal enemy can therefore be invoked in order to securitize city space.

This case study looks at American Muslims, under increased scrutiny by security forces and non-governmental actors since 9/11. A focal point in this conflict has been the controversy over the construction of Park51 Community Center, a mosque and cultural center two blocks from Ground Zero, New York City. The core of this study looks at the project of the "Ground Zero Mosque" as an expression of the American Muslim community's right to belong to the city; and the resulting contention over it as a denial of this right.