12

Women Body Screeners and the Securitization of Space in Indian Cities

Winifred R. Poster*

Introduction

Cities are becoming increasingly securitized. As these spaces become targets of political attack by militant groups, they also become sites of highly organized manoeuvres by the state and private industries.

* A previous version of this paper was presented in *The City Seminar* at Washington University, St. Louis. I'm grateful to a visiting professorship at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, where I discussed women workers and the state with Kiran Mirchandani, Helen Colley, and Shahrzad Mojab, and surveillance in India with Zaheer Baber. Thanks to Ketan Jain-Poster for assistance in interpreting during the fieldwork. Much appreciation goes to the participants for offering their time and stories for this analysis. All opinions expressed herein are my own.

In India, there have been many such jarring acts of urban violence in urban spaces by militant groups. Especially since 2000, bombings have occurred in most major Indian cities, including Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Mumbai. They take place at governmental buildings like the High Court, Parliament buildings, etc., and often in crowded markets, bus stands, commuter trains, cinemas, universities and hotels.

This comes at a time when governing bodies at local, regional, national and global levels have joined in anti-terror campaigns. There has been a growing international rhetoric of 'security' and policies like the 'War on Terror' from the US. Following this trend, Delhi police began waging a campaign called 'Let's Fight Terror Together' in December of 2001, after attacks on the Red Fort and Parliament (Mehmood 2008). Then in 2002, the Indian government passed POTA, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, on the heels of the US Patriot Act in 2001, a sweeping policy that legalized surveillance and other anti-terrorism measures in the US.

As a result, checkpoints have diffused throughout Indian cities, becoming normalized and integrated as features of urban spaces. These checkpoints constitute 'architectures of security', as Jones (2009) argues. Here, the movement of people through the entrances of buildings serves as a geography to regulate terrorism. Curiously, these checkpoints have also become a driving source of women's labour.

In this chapter, I describe how the growth of the security industry is pulling women into new jobs in Indian cities. Occupations in body screening at public and private checkpoints represent more than an emergent employment sector though. They reflect the changing nature of the city itself, which is reorganizing to accommodate militarisation, surveillance, and technology. They also reflect an emergent field of cybersecurity and how it is incorporating women globally. After outlining the details of these jobs, and what it means to be a security screener in India's expanding cities of Hyderabad, Delhi, and Gurgaon, I discuss the opportunities and challenges for women.

Theorizing cybersecurity, labour, and gender

Body scanning reflects a form of labour within the nascent industry of cybersecurity. As I have been charting in a larger analysis (Poster 2012a), cybersecurity involves the use of technology to advance military activities and installations, and the use of the military to protect information and data.

The term sometimes appears in the media to describe the specific act of securing of online data. I use it in a broader manner, however, to describe the variety of ways in which militarism, security, information and technology intersect in the contemporary economy. In this chapter, I explore the labour of cybersecurity in protecting and managing urban spaces.

The work of cybersecurity

Cybersecurity applies to jobs with a range of capacities with technology, levels of authority and skill, and gender compositions. I turn to the literature on information and communication technologies (ICTs) and labour to develop a framework of how these occupations are arranged and inter-related (Table 12.1).

Table 12.1 The Information Hierarchy of Cybersecurity Work

		Level of Hierarchy	
Feature of Work	**Networker**	**Networked**	**Switched Off**
Relation to Internet	Sets Connections Designs Virtual Spaces	Online Interactive	Offline Non-interactive
Relation to ICTs (Hardware and Software)	Developer Maintainer	User of Advanced or Specialized ICTs	User of Basic ICTs
Female Composition	Low	Variable	High
Representative Cybersecurity Jobs	Info-Czar Security Engineer	Cyberspy Call Center Worker	Flight Attendant Transit Screener

Note: This framework integrates and elaborates conceptualisations from Castells (2000) and Montagnier and van Welsum (2006). Responsibility for the final form is my own.

Individuals who work and interact through the internet, satellite phones, etc., have different capacities 'to link up with other workers in real time' (Castells 2000, p. 260). Castells describes this as a 'network' relation in the development of ICT work. These individuals are grouped on a scale, from 'the *networkers*, who set up connections on their initiative ... and navigate the routes of the network enterprise; the *networked*, workers who are on-line but without deciding when, how, why, or with whom; the *switched-off* workers, tied to their own specific tasks, defined by non-interactive, one-way instructions'.

From this perspective, the ability of workers to *access the network* is central to the conceptualisation. The most privileged workers are not only able to

connect to the internet, but they are responsible for developing the network infrastructure itself. Mid-level workers are the subsequent users – those who navigate it on a daily basis (participating in collective forums, communicating with others, joining virtual worlds, etc.). Marginalized workers are excluded from the network altogether, or else integrated very sparingly. For instance, they may transfer information in a singular direction (e.g., downloading documents), without communicating to others through the network in the process.

Employees also vary in their *tools* for connecting to the network and doing ICT work (Montagnier and van Welsum 2006). High-level workers have a wide spectrum of hardware and software at their disposal as they develop and maintain ICT systems. Mid-level workers often have access to specialized types of software and hardware, especially for their particular industry. Low-level workers have access to, at best, basic software and other simple hardware technologies.

The gendering of cybersecurity

Women have become a conspicuous feature of the labour constellation in this information hierarchy. Cybersecurity has become an occupational niche for women, and alternatively, women have become an integral factor in cybersecurity.

This may seem counterintuitive. After all, both of the fields from which cybersecurity originates – the military and information technology – are egregiously lacking in women. In India, for instance, women's representation in the ICT workforce is at best 35–40 per cent (Poster 2013), and their role in the military is considerably smaller.

The answer lies in seeing these two spheres as dynamically inter-related rather than as separate. First, there is an integration of ICTs into the military. The job of militarism is shifting in the information age. Daily activities are occurring at computers in offices rather than just in the field with guns. The tasks are becoming technical rather than just physical. The bodies needed for these jobs are increasingly mental and gender-neutral, and less linked to brute force strength and masculinity. Furthermore, cybersecurity involves ICT skills in networked communication and interpersonal relations, which women may be socialized towards through early education, and drawn to in their career choices as adults.

The second trend is the reverse – an integration of militarism into the information economy, largely through technology. Increasingly, the work of

fighting 'terrorists' is done in everyday life – especially where women are. It is done in transportation, service industries and even people's homes. Thus, while the military and IT sectors may repel women on their own, their recent *merging* has created a formulative mix to make them more inclusive. As illustrated in Table 1, it starts with 'networkers' at the top, i.e., the women info-czars who lead the nation's agencies for military and information security, and engineers who design the military technology systems. In the middle 'networked' level, are the women cyberspies (posing from their homes as militants on the internet) and customer service workers (enforcing state security policies on the phone with the public). At the bottom, are the 'switched off' workers – women flight attendants and transit screeners, who use security information embedded in computers for the surveillance of people's bodies. My larger project considers each of these jobs in detail, and the unique ways that they impact women in cybersecurity (Poster 2012b).

For this chapter, I focus on this lowest level of the hierarchy.[1] As switched-off employees in the information hierarchy, security guards represent women's agency in working with ICTs, as end-users of surveillance technology on the ground. They have less authority than the other categories of info-workers above, in that they are offline. Still, their role is critical in a different way. If networkers are the 'minds' of cybersecurity, this last group of switched-off workers represents the 'eyes' and 'hands' of the cybersecurity infrastructure.

The bodily labour of cybersecurity

What's distinctive about the work of the scanning in the field of cybersecurity is its corporeality. The main task is the surveillance of people's bodies and the objects they carry with them. Women are highly linked to this switched off level of cybersecurity because of the connection of the body to three components of the work – surveillance, information, and services.

To start with, security falls in the category of *service* occupations. 'Interactive' services in particular involve dealing directly with customers and the public. These jobs often require providing physical or emotional care of customers. Employers typically feel these qualities are more suited to female workers. Consequently this sector of the labour force has historically been associated with women (Korczynski and Macdonald 2009; Leidner 1993; MacDonald and Sirianni 1996).

An additional component of security work is *informational* labour. On one level, information drives the practice of surveillance, in that the purpose may be administering watch lists or other databases. As such, security guards are

often asked to enforce policies of the state on the bodies of the public. They use specified technology and information embedded in computers (sometimes from the military) in order to monitor everyday citizens and look for potential targets. Alternatively, information is also an outcome of surveillance. Scanners use the body as a source of collecting data. Kirstie Ball notes how: 'the human body and the information it yields, in terms of its make-up and movements, is the starting point for the creation *of* surveillance practice' (2003, p. 126). In security work then, the informational requirements of the job are intertwined with the corporeal.

Third, and critically for the case of security, is the gendering of surveillance (Ball, Green, Koskela, and Phillips 2009). In many instances, surveillance of women's bodies requires surveillance *by* women's bodies. Social conventions dictate that touching and attention to women's bodies in public places is to be performed only by other women. Accordingly, female workers are needed to do the part-downs and hand-scans of female subjects.

The case of scanning therefore elaborates on the kinds of bodily labour that have been theorized in feminist scholarship. Lan (2001) has illustrated how 'body control' is an integral part of the labour process in the service economy. In this formulation, the body is a primary component of the production process – not just a tool for carrying it out, or a source of labour power. Rather, the body is integral to labour in four ways – the 'exploitative body', offering physical labour and strength for the job; the 'mirroring body', embodying images to display brands and products; the 'disciplined body', performing service identities through gestures and behaviours; and the 'communicative body', imparting emotions and feelings for the job.

The field of cybersecurity offers an additional category for the typology, what one could call the 'surveilling body'. The worker's body, and especially the *female* body, is an integral part of security. It serves a dual purpose – to carry out the physical monitoring of another body (which may require direct touch), and to serve as a gender-appropriate (and therefore 'safe') complement to the body of the surveilled. Thus, when it comes to public security systems, both the body of the worker and the body of the surveillor are key. This contrasts to Foucault's account of the panopticon (1979), where the body of the surveilor is not even necessary for the surveillance process. Here, both are integral to the construction of the job and the carrying out of the monitoring on the public.

Quite in contrast to the middle-tier jobs of the info-hierarchy above (i.e., the networked women who do virtual work), switched-off workers are very

closely aligned to the world of the real and the material. Ultimately, the end target of the body is what lowers the status of switched off work in the information network hierarchy.

In the analysis below, I'll show how scanners perform critical functions of surveillance of Indian cities. Through scanning jobs, we see how women's bodily labour is increasingly central to the cybersecurity infrastructure. Yet, the rewards for these jobs do not approximate those of other – higher level – cybersecurity positions.

Women body screeners in Indian cities

The job of security in India: Growth and change

India, like many other countries, has experienced a rapid growth in security occupations. It has an estimated five million security guards, working for 50,000 agencies, as noted by the Central Association of Private Security Industry (Oommen, Undated). Worldwide, the industry generates an estimated $140 billion in revenue annually, and in India, $2 billion (Timmons 2009). While other sectors are laying-off workers, firms in this field continue to hire steadily. Insiders are calling this job 'recession-proof', with a seemingly endless demand. Agencies are reporting boosts in hiring by 10–35 per cent in recent years.

There are several reasons for this boom in the context of India. One is economic. The massive expansion of the economy in the last decade has prompted a parallel geographic trend: outward pressure from Indian metropolitan areas. Demand for residential and business property has ignited urban and suburban sprawl (Ghertner 2011). Land developers have bulldozed farmlands to build shopping malls, office enclaves, and factory parks in the areas surrounding Delhi and other major cities. In turn, there are rising needs for personnel to guard them.

Second, there has been a shift in the kinds of personnel who do security, given the trends of privatisation (Higate 2011). Rather than turning to governmental units, employers are hiring security personnel from private companies. Such private security in India now outnumber police by 2:1, and will soon do so by 3:1 (Oommen, Undated). They make up a labour force that is 1.3 million greater than India's police and armed forces combined (Timmons 2009). Furthermore, private security is likely to take on an even more central role in the future, given that India has a much smaller police

force for its population relative to other countries; 'there is one officer for every 1,000 people in India, [which is] less than half the United States average and one-tenth the average in China' (Timmons p. 1).

The Indian state has been sponsoring this trend by passing legislation like the Private Security Agency Act of 2005 and The Private Detectives Agencies Bill, 2007. Under planning is the establishment of the Central Private Detective Agencies Regulatory Board and state regulatory boards, which will standardize the certification and training processes for new employees.

Women securing the city

Guarding the security of Indian cities is increasingly falling in women's hands. In the last few years especially, there has been a sharp upswing in the proportion of women guards. While the percentage of female security guards was roughly 20 percent in 2005, it has since risen by 25 percent in some firms (Subramanian 2009). Moreover, industry experts predict this figure will rise to 50 per cent in the next ten years (Oommen, Undated).

Women have become more and more qualified for these jobs through improved gender access to higher and technical education. In addition though, their role has expanded through targeted recruitment by training companies. Security firms are reaching out to rural areas to attract, train and hire available labour forces, sometimes seeking female candidates in particular (as I discuss more below).

In addition, a key factor in the Indian context is the growth of women as consumers and mobile participants in the city. With the expansion of the middle class, and the relaxing of social rules governing women's mobility in the public sphere, women are now much more active in urban spaces (Poster 2013). Women are working more, entering markets, living alone, travelling at night and generally participating in the social life of the city (Basi 2009; Patel 2010).

As women visit these spaces, their entrance is now monitored and surveilled in the same way as men's. Convention says, however, that women personnel should be the exclusive providers of security for (and surveillance of) women's bodies. This is the narrative that most security companies use to explain the rising trends in women's security employment.

Of course, not all spaces are checked and surveilled. Rather, specific geographies of the city are focal points for this monitoring of women. Firms are hiring women security guards to scan women visitors in high-end hotels, banks, gymkhanas; mid-range retail stores, cinemas, and malls; corporate

parks and offices; and some manufacturing sites.

There is also special attention given to transportation sites like airports and the metro. Since 2013, the Delhi Metro Network has hired women as 16 per cent of its 5,000 guards, at 800 women (Fig. 12.1). Plans are to raise this to 25 per cent (Pardaphash Today, 2013). The Metro, which serves a predominantly middle and upper class of passengers, is better protected than the bus system, which is used disproportionately by the working class and poor, and which has recently been the site of brutal abuses against women passengers.

Fig. 12.1 Women security guards for the Delhi metro

Source: Pardaphash Today, 2013

Significantly, however, the demand for women guards runs from the lowest to highest echelons of the socio-political spectrum of city life. For instance, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is training victims of sex trafficking in the security industry (Sangh 2010). These women have been kidnapped from northern India and taken to Delhi and Mumbai to become prostitutes or domestic workers. Upon rescue, the Indian government and UN prepares these women to patrol stadiums and guesthouses, as a means to uplift them in society.

At the elite level, the Indian state has initiated its first female unit of the National Security Guard. These women are charged with protecting female VIPs, as members of the country's top security team (Asia Daily Wire 2012). They will provide security for the women chief ministers and heads-of-state who pass through Delhi, the administrative capital of the nation.

In this way, the global city is marked by circuits of labour mobility at both the top and bottom of the class structure (Sassen 2008). With a widening range of women to be guarded and to do guarding, we see how the field of security in India is increasingly feminized.

What women guards are doing: The skill and work of body scanning

In India, there has been a profound change in what guards do. They used to be primarily 'fetchers of tea at government offices and car washers at wealthy homes', but are quickly 'becoming corporate India's de facto police force' (Timmons 2009). They decide who should enter a designated space. They are pivotal for crisis situations, whether this is in their job description or not. Security guards are often first on the scene for fires and accidents given the slowness of ambulances and fire engines in many parts of India.

Women are now acquiring physical skills for security work though training in fitness and procedures on handling tense situations. They learn how to perform evacuations and how to respond to threats. Some learn mob control, prevention of stranger attack, and weapons use (Secura Security Solutions 2013). Those in certain government sectors learn advanced military procedures and undergo combat training.

Indeed, the military is often a feeder into security professions. My interview with Geeta in Hyderabad revealed that women in airport screening typically work for state military forces, and get six weeks training with these units (Fig. 12.2). In the US as well, 25% transit screeners are ex-military (Transportation Security Administration 2009). In India, women also have a notable history in the police (Pande and Joshi 2000). Many security staff aspired as children to be in either the police or state security units (Subramanian 2009). However, security is becoming more legitimate than police work, in the eyes of parents and family members, as a career for their daughters.

Fig. 12.2 Woman screener at Hyderabad airport from the military

Source: Photo taken by author.

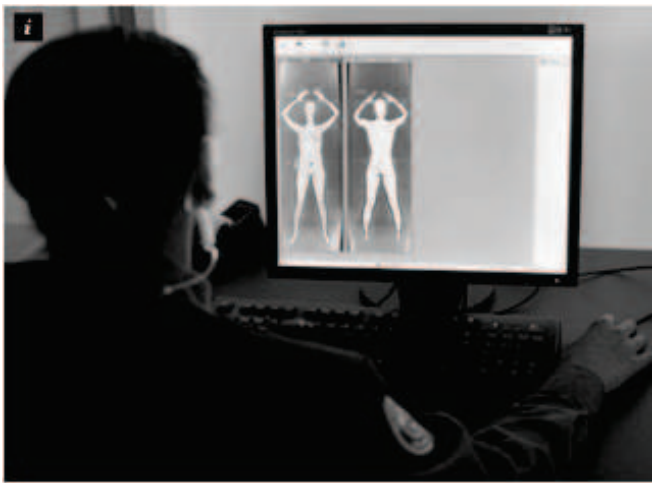
Technology is another key component of security work. The job is becoming highly computerized, and the devices increasingly sophisticated. Many women guards operate small devices like hand-held wands that scan bodies (Fig. 12.3). Other devices are larger, like walk-thru metal detectors. Some are more complex, like video systems which display the contents of baggage (Fig. 12.4).

Fig. 12.3 Woman screener at a Gurgaon mall using a hand scanner

Fig. 12.4 Using video monitors a hotel in Hyderabad

Source: Photos take by author.

The new wave of surveillance technology is biometric authentication – through iris, retinal, fingerprint and voice scanning. Soon, personnel will be using facial recognition software (Capsi 2013). Some Indian firms already use night-vision goggles and IBM surveillance systems. These technologies are so complex that employers bring in experts from the Israeli military and US marines to train security employees (Timmons, 2009). In the future, personnel in India, like the US and the UK, will be using computerized bio-scanners which look *inside the body*, not just inside the clothes (Domer 2012; McSmith 2013) (Figs 12.5 and 12.6). Inevitably, technology will increase the skill demands on the workers who operate these devices. In this way, the methods for surveilling bodies in India are becoming more complicated and intrusive.



Figs 12.5 & 12.6 The future of security scanning for women – under-clothes body monitoring

Sources: Domer 2012; McSmith 2013.

The job of the security is also becoming more mental and technical than just physical. The core tasks are placing fewer corporeal demands upon workers. Either the devices are smaller and more agile, freeing the user from the need for strength, or the technology is more dependent upon interfacing with software and other visual media than engaging in live combat. These factors increase the social acceptability of women in security.

Discussion

Implications for women workers

Security scanning has provided many opportunities for women in India. For one thing, it offers rural women a chance to earn a living in urban jobs. Many of the recruits, male and female, are from villages where jobs are scarce and many families are impoverished. Rinki, whom I interviewed at a mall in Gurgaon, had migrated from Bihar. Like many other women in security, this is her first paid job (Fig. 12.3).

The industry also appears to be pulling women out of lower paid sectors of the labour market into higher ones. Many women come to this profession from previous jobs in female-dominated services, like beauty industries and retail sales (Subramanian 2009). Men, alternatively, tend to come from higher status jobs in the police and security. Some women are giving up their

part-time studies (that they do alongside part-time jobs) to enter these more secure, full-time positions.

In turn, women are earning wages for the first-time, or else greater wages than they had been accustomed to. Plus they sometimes earn more than their male colleagues. Several companies report higher salaries for women than men in the same job. Securitas, for instance, pays women 8,000–10,000 Rupees per month, versus men's 6,500–7,000, for a 12-hour shift. Jupiter Administration and Security Services pays women on average 20 per cent more than men (Hannon 2009). Of course, this trend may be fleeting. The low numbers of women applying to these jobs, in combination with the high demand for female guards, may be momentarily redirecting the 'gender queue' away from men (Reskin and Roos 1990). History shows, however, that the wage differential is likely to swing back towards men after women enter the job in bigger numbers.

Agencies are offering a range of other incentives to entice women into the occupation – refresher courses, bonuses, maternity leave, provident fund (retirement and other social security accounts), etc. (Natu 2005). In some cases, women are able to leverage benefits like jobs close to their homes (Subramanian 2009). These security firms, it seems, are structuring these jobs to ease commuting and help women manage work-family responsibilities.

More indirectly, but still significant, is that Indian women are experiencing empowerment with respect to their familial, social, and economic situations from urban work in security. As one observer notes, this job offers a release from over-restrictive families, "For these women, putting on a uniform was like coming out of their own skin … They saw it as a way of gaining some form of independence" (Bearak 2012, p. 1). Employment in security may help provide unique opportunities for marginalized groups of women, as in the case of UNDOC guards above. Shunned from their home communities due to their histories as trafficked women, they may have few other options and find security work advantageous for more than just the job.

There are drawbacks, however. Despite women's gains, there are vivid signs of gender segregation within the profession. Women tend to be excluded from sectors of the city associated with finance or production, like guarding automatic teller machines (ATMs) and manufacturing plants (Natu 2005). In addition, the job is generally low-paid. Some earn as little as Rs 4000 a month (or $65, at the current exchange rate) (Timmons 2009). This contrasts with other kinds of cybersecurity personnel, like those at the "networker" level of the information hierarchy. An example is software engineering, and those who design and protect internet systems. As one of the higher paying IT

professions, a network or system security administrator in the US earns on average $100,000 a year (Lee *et al.* 2009).

With respect to the typology in Table 12.1, this means that women at the 'switched off' level are not benefitting from lucrative, data-intensive sectors of the industry. This is ironic, given their location in the 'Hi-Tech Cities' of India. Cities of Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Bangalore, etc., are known as regions where IT jobs are relatively plentiful. Yet, these women are not accruing similar rewards as their 'Hi-Tech' counterparts. Furthermore, security jobs come with added stresses and personal risks. Workers are placed directly in threat as the 'frontline' staff against criminal, militant, and other kinds of violence.

Lack of labour representation is another problem in these jobs. Rinki and her colleagues in Gurgaon told me that they have no union to negotiate on their behalf. According to a local worker's association, the need for this is critical. Gurgaon Worker's News (2013) reports that employers are forcing security staff to stand for 12-hour shifts, with penalties for taking a rest to sit. Some employers even beat employees when criminal acts occur on their shifts. Especially when there is property damage, employers blame workers for their failure to stop or prevent the incidents.

Another drawback of this emerging labour niche is how it repositions women's relation to the state. While women may gain independence from patriarchal families, they may instead become subordinated to the state. An observer of a female security team for the government reports – "Some of the recruits were simply replacing duty to family with duty for country… They often think it's a massive privilege to serve for the nation with almost the same conviction in the way they would serve a man" (Bearak 2012, 1).

Finally, their work aids in the process of surveillance for the state and private sector. Even if these women are not employed directly for the government, their work facilitates and carries out the technological monitoring of the public by elite institutions. Gender is a critical component of this process. The hiring of women reflects a common state administration technique, in which marginalized segments of the workforce are recruited to enforce government policies against groups of their own kind. An example is how women are hired overwhelmingly as social workers for welfare programs that serve largely female and young populations. In this way, women scanners become agents of the state and private enterprises. They are also enforcers of surveillance against a female public, whether or not they are conscious of or agree to it.

Conclusion

The case of body scanners illuminates a growing convergence of information and militarism in Indian cities, and in turn, a reversal in women's traditional job roles. Women are entering jobs with technological responsibilities and risky tasks of policing which had previously been associated with men. The advantages for Indian women are many. This security industry provides not only new employment avenues for women, but in some cases, higher pay than men in the job. In this sense, it is possible that technology has helped to break some of the gender barriers in ICT-based occupations.

Focusing on the recent field of cybersecurity, I have described how body scanners represent an important labour niche in the contemporary information network hierarchy. As 'switched off' workers, they are the eyes and hands of surveillance on (often female) citizens for the state and private sector. Scanners represent the lowest level of this hierarchy, as their access to data is offline rather than connected through the internet. Yet, their jobs are increasingly technological, with continually upgraded devices for the direct surveillance of the public.

A distinctive feature of the switched-off tier is the way women's jobs are linked to the monitoring of the body. As scholar Pramod Nayar observes, 'the increased use of biometrics … announces the arrival of India as a technological society' (2012, p. 17), and 'the culmination of a surveillance culture where the body returns as the key figure in any identification' (2011, p. 413).

Accordingly, these security staff in Indian cities perform what I have called here labours of the 'surveilling body'. They provide a dual service to the security infrastructure – performing corporeal monitoring of the public, on one hand, and functioning as gender-appropriate bodies for interaction with female citizens, on the other. Beyond just the labour implications then, this analysis reveals the curious intermediary role of these women in the urban landscape of India. Security personnel are simultaneously protecting and monitoring citizens as they 'guard' the city.

The technologies themselves hold further ironies from a feminist point of view. Indeed, female security personnel are the physical agents of new technologies in the public that some women have found to be exploitative (Redden and Terry 2013). Technologies like metal detectors and full-body scanners are said to constitute a 'virtual strip search' of their bodies. In turn, women have been engaging in covert and overt acts of resistance against these devices, from refusing to walk inside to disrobing completely as a symbolic gesture of protest.

At the same time, other women have found surveillance technology to be liberating. For women trafficked as international brides, these walk-thru metal detectors have also served as a path of women's liberation out of abusive situations. In a recent trend, South Asian women fearful of impending forced marriages have placed metal spoons in their under-garments. The idea is that security guards in the UK would stop them at airport checkpoints, thereby creating an opportunity to escape their captor husbands (McSmith 2013). Body surveillance technology in this case, along with the security employees who attend to it, can help in signalling and rectifying globally coercive experiences for women.

In this light, the work of female security employees may be seen as positive, i.e., in enabling women residents to travel safely in urban spaces. This is especially important in cities like Delhi, which has among the highest rates of gender-based crime in the nation. Consider the case of the Delhi Metro, which as Baber (2010, 480) observes, is helping to improve women's mobility in the region:

> Gender relations, unlike in the larger Indian cities, always under strain in Delhi, are undergoing a subtle but noticeable transformation. 'Eve teasing' or the misleadingly benign euphemism for the rampant sexual harassment of women by so-called roadside Romeos appears to be on the decline. In the past, such harassment of women thrived on the relative spatial as well as the social segregation of the sexes and was a nightmare for single women trapped in overcrowded buses. The Metro brings the sexes together which, while it can create further problems down the road, is, for the moment at least, literally creating new forms of gendered sociality that was unthinkable in Delhi barely a few years ago.

As I have shown, women security guards participate in this new "gendered sociality." While these personnel are certainly protect the transportation system from infrastructural damage, they are also protecting women's bodies from harassment by other passengers. The outcome is creating safer spaces for women's movement in the city.

Cybersecurity, in the process, creates a new and perhaps undefined gender role for these women workers. They are neither hyper-*feminized* as victims of male violence, like the other women in the city who are seen as passive and agentless, nor are they hyper-*masculinized* as male military personnel who are seen as domineering and aggressive. Women guards are intermediaries in the gender continuum. Perhaps the growth of this profession will help mitigate

the gender binaries that are so pervasive in mainstream society worldwide (Blackwood and Wieringa, 1999).

Thus, the issue of empowerment for women in the security industry of Indian cities is multi-faceted. As a technology-based field, it has opened new employment paths for women. Indian women are becoming trained in both security technology and self-defence. This job has also become a means of upward mobility for Indian women who were previously unemployed, earning sub-standard wages, and/or facing limited job markets in rural areas. Women are getting training in both security technology and self-defence. In a few cases, employers in this industry are even creating special programs to help women with their work-family balance. All this can provide leverage for women in circumventing patriarchal situations and gaining independence from families. By doing this work, moreover, such workers are also aiding *other women* in metro areas, by facilitating their movements on public transportation and around the city.

Still, there are many costs for women in this profession. They experience segregation into female-typed assignments from employers, and physical risk of violence from the public. And, while body scanning may involve the use of sophisticated equipment, women workers are not necessarily gaining the full rewards of the larger technology infrastructure. Rather, as they enforce cybersecurity on the ground, these women are shielded from many of the benefits (financial or otherwise) of India's 'Hi-Tech Cities' that are afforded to their counterparts up the info-hierarchy, both male and female.

Endnotes

[1] This analysis draws from my on-going research on ICT employees in India and the US since the mid-1990s. For this particular study, I conducted interviews with women and men in security industries. I focus on the cities of Delhi, Gurgaon and Hyderabad as regional urban centres for the high tech industry, and sites where surveillance technology is deployed widely. These are also sites of recent militant violence.

Between 2009 and 2012, I talked with security staff of airports, malls, and hotels. (some of their names have been changed for anonymity). Many of the photos in the analysis are taken from these interviews. The interviews were in English or Hindi, with the assistance of an interpreter.

I also examined a variety of materials (websites, newsletters, power points, photos, etc.) from security companies, industry associations, employee representatives, surveillance retailers, research organizations, etc. Finally, I gathered statistical data on women's participation in ICT and military occupations globally from a range of state, inter-governmental, and non-governmental sources.

References

Asia Daily Wire. 2012. *Indian VIPs Wary on Women Guards*. www.asiadailywire.com, October 17. Accessed March 12, 2012.

Baber, Z. 2010. 'Public Transportation in an Era of Neo-Liberal Privatisation – the Delhi Metro'. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 11(3): 478–80.

Ball, K. 2003. 'The Labours of Surveillance.' *Surveillance & Society*, 1(2): 125–37.

Ball, K., Green, N., Koskela, H. and Phillips, D. J. 2009. 'Surveillance Studies Needs Gender and Sexuality.' *Surveillance & Society*, 6(4): 352–55.

Basi, J. K. T. 2009. *Women, Identity and India's Call Centre Industry*. London, UK: Routledge.

Bearak, B. 2012. On India's Border, A Changing of the Guards. *New York Times,* www.nytimes.com, October 1. Accessed March 12, 2012.

Blackwood, E. and Wieringa, S. E. (Eds.). 1999. *Female Desires*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Castells, M. 2000. *The Rise of the Network Society, Second Edition*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Domer, T. 2012. Cancer Concern Over Newest TSA Airport Body Scanners. *Wisconsin Workers' Compensation Experts,* www.wisworkcompexperts.com. Accessed June 11, 2012.

Foucault, M. 1979. *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage Books.

Gurgaon Workers News. 2013. *GWN Newsletter*, gurgaonworkersnews. worldpress.com, October 18. pp. 1–59.

Ghertner, D. A. 2011. 'Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi.' In *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*, edited by A. Roy and A. Ong, pp. 279–306. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley and Sons.

Hannon, E. 2009. 'Central and South Asia Demand Up for Female Guards in India.' *PRI's the World*, July 17.

Higate, P. 2011. 'In the Business of (In) Security? Mavericks, Mercenaries and Masculinities in the Private Security Company.' In *Making Gender, Making War: Violence, Military, and Peacekeeping Practices,* edited by A. Kronsell and E. Svedberg, pp. 182–96. London, UK: Routledge.

Jones, R. 2009. 'Checkpoint Security: Gateways, Airports, and the Architecture of Security.' In *Technologies of InSecurity*, edited by

K. F. Aas, H. O. Gundhus and H. M. Lomell, pp. 81–101. New York, NY: Routledge.

Korczynski, M. and Macdonald, C. (Eds.). 2009. *Service Work: Critical Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lan, P. C. 2001. 'The Body as a Contested Terrain for Labor Control: Cosmetics Retailers in Department Stores and Direct Selling.' In *The Critical Study of Work,* edited by R. Baldoz, C. Koeber and P. Kraft, pp. 83–105. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Lee, J., Bagchi-Sen, S., Rao, H. R. and Upadhyaya, S. J. 2010. 'Anatomy of the Information Security Workforce.' *IEEE IT Professional*, 12(1): 14–23.

Leidner, R. 1993. *Fast Food, Fast Talk: Service Work and the Routinisation of Every day Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

MacDonald, C. L. and Sirianni, C. (Eds.). 1996. *Working in the Service Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

McSmith, A. 2013. 'Girls Escape Forced Marriage by Concealing Spoons in Clothing to Set off Metal Detectors at the Airport.' *The Independent*, www.theindependent.co.uk, August 15, pp. 13–14.

Mehmood, T. 2008. 'India's New ID Card: Fuzzy Logics, Double Meanings, and Ethnic Ambiguities', in *Playing the Identity Card,* edited by C. J. Bennett and D. Lyon, pp. 112–27. New York, NY: Routledge.

Montagnier, P. and van Welsum, D. 2006. ICTs and Gender: Evidence from OECD and non-OECD Countries. *Organization for Economic Cooperaiton and Development,* www.oecd.org. Accessed July 26, 2010, pp. 1–46.

Natu, N. 2005. 'Malls Seek Female Security Guards'. *Times of India,* www.timesofindia.com, February 2. Accessed February 22, 2013.

Nayar, P. K. 2011. 'Smile! You Are on Camera. The Rise of Participatory Surveillance.' *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 3(3): 410–18.

Nayar, P. K. 2012. 'I Sing the Body Biometric': Surveillance and Biological Citizenship'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47(32): 17–22.

Oommen, A. Undated. 'Security Services: A Sunrise Industry.' *Central Association of Private Security Industry* (*CAPSI*), www.capsi.in, pp. 57–60. Accessed June 27, 2013.

Pande, R. and Joshi, S. 2000. *Gender Issues in the Police*. Hyderabad, India: S. V. P. National Police Academy.

Pardaphash Today. 2013. 'CSIF Announces 25 Percent More Women Personnel to Guard Delhi Metro'. *Pardaphash Today,* www.pardaphash.com, January 13. Accessed June 14, 2013.

Patel, R. 2010. *Working the Night Shift*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Poster, W. R. 2013. 'Global Circuits of Gender: Women and High-Tech Work in India and the U.S.' *Gender, Sexuality, & Feminism*, 1(1): 37–52.

Poster, W. R. 2012a. 'Info-czars, Airport Screeners, and Online Spies: The Gendering of Cybersecurity'. Presentations in Germany: Paderborn and Humboldt Universities.

Poster, W. R. 2012b. 'The Case of the U.S. Mother/Cyberspy/Undercover Iraqi Militant, or How Global Women Have Been Incorporated in the Technological War on Terror'. In *Globalization, Technology Diffusion, and Gender Disparity: Social Impacts of ICTs*, edited by R. Pande, T. van der Weide and N. Flipsen, pp. 247–60. London, UK: Routledge.

Redden, S. M. and Terry, J. 2013. 'Feminist Understandings of Resistance to Full-Body Scanning Technology.' *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 15(2): 234–53.

Reskin, B. F. and Roos, P. A. 1990. *Job Queues, Gender Queues: Explaining Women's Inroads into Male Occupations*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Sangh, B. K. 2010. 'India: Trafficking Survivors Earn their Livelihood as Security Guards.' *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,* www.unodoc.org, February, 11–12.

Sassen, S. 2008. 'Two Stops in Today's International Division of Labor: Shaping Novel Labor Supplies and Employment Regimes.' *American Behavioral Scientist*, 25(3): 457–96.

Secura Security Solutions. 2012. 'Women Security Officers and Women Security Guards at Your Service.' www.securasecurity.com, November 1: 1–6. Accessed February 22, 2013.

Subramanian, S. 2009. *Spike in Demand for Female Security Guards*. www.livemint.com, January 23. Accessed December 3, 2012.

Timmons, H. 2009. 'Security Guards Become the Front Lines of India'. *New York Times,* www.nytimes.com, March 3. Accessed February 22, 2013.

Transportation Security Administration. 2009. *TSA Weekly*. www.tsa.gov, May 25–29. Accessed January 26, 2010.