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Link to publisher's version: <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azw029>

Citation: Barker A (2016) Mediated conviviality and the urban social order: reframing the regulation of public space. *British Journal of Criminology*. 57(4): 848–866.

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Mediated conviviality and the urban social order: reframing the regulation of public space

Abstract

The regulation of public space is influenced greatly by debates about crime, disorder and (in)security. This paper challenges certain assumptions that inform a number of competing mentalities regarding the regulation of public spaces drawn from within the fields of criminology and urban studies, notably 'preventive exclusion', 'reassurance policing' and the 'right to the city'. It harnesses inter-disciplinary insights from real world examples to re-frame and advance debates about the future regulation of public space, conceptualised in this paper as 'mediated conviviality'. It argues that social order is not spontaneous but needs to be facilitated. This perspective simultaneously de-centres crime and (in)security as central organising concepts and recognises the importance of safety to the development of a convivial public realm, with implications for practical strategies of urban governance.

Introduction

Crime, anti-social behaviour and perceptions of (in)security have become organising objectives of urban governance (Simon, 2007) with distinct implications for the manner in which public spaces are planned, designed and regulated when inflected through mentalities of risk and reassurance. Critics argue that everyday urban spaces where people gather and go about their daily routines have become militarised and fortified as authorities act pre-emptively to forestall the threat of terrorist attacks and crime (Coaffee, 2009; Graham, 2011). It is contended that the hyper-regulated city is being stripped of spontaneity, sociality and cultural diversity, lacks distinctive, authentic qualities and can be characterised by public spaces that are bland, homogeneous and sterile (Davis, 1992; Koolhaas *et al.*, 1995; Sorkin, 1992; Zukin, 2010). Consequently, one outcome of the perceived obsession with designing-out crime and attempts to maintain a certain vision of order and civility on the streets is that contemporary cities are characterised as 'non-places' of secure consumption which are 'post-social' and 'post-political' (Raymen, 2015), existing purely for the purpose of circulating goods, consumers and workers (Levi, 2008). Moreover, this securing of the city has led to charges that the 'right to the city' for certain marginal groups have become significantly curtailed fuelling debates about the decline of civil liberties and 'the end of public space' (Sorkin, 1992; Mitchell, 1995; 2003). Furthermore, it is suggested that in this process people harden their attitudes towards 'others', which have the counter-productive effects of producing even greater demands for security and more intrusive and intolerant forms of policing (Crawford, 2008; Bannister and Kearns, 2013).

This paper develops upon these well-established critiques by harnessing inter-disciplinary perspectives and utilising contemporary real world examples to re-frame and advance debates about the future regulation of public space. To capture the novel synthesis of ideas presented here, I outline and advocate a conception of 'mediated conviviality'. At its core, it conceives of social order not as spontaneous but rather as something needing to be facilitated and mediated in a manner that is responsive to the context, situation and conduct of those social groups and individuals being regulated. Mediated conviviality seeks to negotiate the tense relation between the idea of convivial public space, on the one hand, and the deployment of minimal rules and the use of enforcement as a last resort, on the other hand. Ensuring this fine balance, it suggests an

important role for what I term ‘skilled mediators’ in public spaces. This alternative mentality simultaneously de-centres crime and (in)security as central organising concepts and recognises the importance of safety to the development of a convivial public realm, with implications for practical strategies of urban governance. In so doing, I deploy the term mentality following Johnston and Shearing to denote ‘a mental framework that helps shape the way we think about the world’ (2003: 29). In presenting this argument, I engage critically with ideas that inform the regulation of public space drawn from within the criminological field, notably ‘preventive exclusion’ and ‘reassurance policing’ which have come to be dominant frames in these debates. Preventive exclusion assumes that maintaining order requires excluding ‘risky’ people from public space. An alternative, rights-oriented mentality, drawn from the field of urban studies, emerges in opposition (Harvey, 2008; Mitchell, 2003). Here, securitisation and regulation are viewed as threats to the democratic functions of public space, wherein claiming one’s ‘right to the city’ may involve breaking laws and creating disorder. It is argued that these mentalities undermine rather than promote conviviality in public spaces.

This article first considers three competing mentalities regarding the regulation of public space and draws out their implications for our understanding of urban social order. It then seeks to re-frame the debate, presenting an alternative perspective that challenges these assumptions and related developments in urban policy that promote prohibition, enforcement and exclusion as solutions to the problem of order in everyday life. What becomes clear through these discussions are the ways in which mentalities of public space regulation diverge along two key axes: first, the relative importance attributed to security as an organising conceptual frame and feature of regulation and, second, the degree to which the rules and norms of governance are inclusive or exclusive. These will be discussed in the second part of the article.

Mentalities of public space regulation

Table 1 compares and contrasts the philosophies, strategies and practices of four differing but interconnected mentalities that underpin approaches to the regulation of public space in contemporary cities. These frameworks are understood as ‘ideal types’ in the Weberian sense. They do not conform directly or simplistically to reality. In practice, mentalities interact and overlap; they rarely exist in pure forms. Rather, they are analytic tools used to illustrate and illuminate contrasts and variations between different ways of thinking. As such, they deliberately underplay links and connections between them. As Table 1 suggests, these frameworks begin from very different premises and imply quite distinct objectives in relation to the visions, functions and qualities of public space. *Philosophies* convey the core ideas and intellectual heritage. *Strategies* refer to the mechanisms or tactics through which the mentalities work to achieve their *objectives*. We can infer from these strategies the underpinning *rules* of governance. Hence, the rules of preventive exclusion are based on a concept of ‘risk’ while reassurance policing is informed by local ‘public perceptions’. Mediated conviviality advocates minimal, harm-based rules, whilst the right to the city implies the absence of rules. *Practices*, by contrast, are the physical, legal, symbolic and personal tools deployed by institutions and agents to regulate the conduct of users in public space. Practices do not align with mentalities in any simple way. For example, electronic surveillance cameras could be underpinned by a public reassurance mentality, but also they could be used as a profiling tool to assist preventive exclusion. Hence, practices can be underpinned by different mentalities, to achieve different objectives. A notable contrast

relates to the roles and functions of ‘policing’ agents in public spaces: as risk profiling ‘border guards’, as visible ‘control signals’ of authority and as ‘skilled mediators’, or implies the absence of personnel with coercive powers. The above are important in understanding the contrasting ways each mentality deals with *social conflict and crime risks* in public space: by designing it out/excluding it; by symbolic management; through persuasion, mediation and problem-solving; and by celebrating and embracing it.

1. Preventive exclusion

Preventive exclusion embodies a risk minimisation philosophy in which security and order act as organising concepts. It seeks to anticipate and forestall crime before it occurs, rather than enforce the law and prosecute offenders (Crawford, 2011). Driven by a precautionary logic (Sunstein, 2005), strategies are pre-emptive, instrumental and proactive. They encompass both universal and targeted strategies designed to keep out individuals/groups (potential offenders) from public locations as a way of preventing the occurrence of certain behaviours or events from happening in the future. This mentality instils a general distrust of everyone as a potential threat to safety. As Felson (1998: 11) suggests, ‘Everybody could do at least some crime some of the time’. Informed by the philosophy of situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1995), universal forms of preventive exclusion have been designed into the physical environment of many cities across the world. It is becoming commonplace to supplement and reinforce universal strategies with those that identify and target certain groups and seek to exclude them on the basis of risk factors. Hence, individuals identified as risky can be excluded, pre-emptively, for behaviour that has not yet taken place or has not yet had any harmful effects, if it is deemed likely that it *might* do so, often because they possess certain characteristics or have previously engaged in offending (von Hirsh and Shearing, 2000: 78). A dominant assumption therefore is that social order requires the exclusion of certain risky people from public space, even if it is not certain that harm to others will materialise.

Targeted forms of preventive exclusion originate in private policing under trespass laws. Property owners do not require grounds to exclude persons and denial of access may be enforced by coercive state powers. Such legal tools are a mainstay of functionally public, albeit privately-owned and regulated ‘communal spaces’, such as shopping malls (Kempa, *et al.*, 2004; Wakefield, 2000). There has been a ‘cross-fertilisation’ of private and public modes of policing (Crawford, 2011: 487) in ways that extend the powers of street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980), such as the police and council officers, to remove or exclude risky individuals and groups from public locations on pre-emptive and precautionary grounds, often for behaviour that is perceived to be anti-social rather than criminal. The most notable of these legal tools in England and Wales include police powers to ‘disperse’ individuals and groups from a specific location for a period of 48 hours, and anti-social behaviour injunctions and criminal behaviour orders which can contain not insubstantial restrictions on movement and behaviour in public spaces.¹ The capacity to comply with an exclusion directive is limited where it constrains access to services, amenities and social connections. This is a particular issue in the US where multiple exclusion orders can restrict access to significant parts of a city and public transport (Beckett and Herbert, 2008).

¹These were introduced under reforms by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Table 1 Governing Mentalities

	1. Preventive exclusion	2. Reassurance policing	3. Right to the city	4. Mediated conviviality
Philosophies	Risk management and situational crime prevention.	Signal crimes perspective.	The right to the city.	Urban tolerance, responsive regulation and procedural justice.
Objectives	To secure the city by pre-emptively excluding individuals (potential offenders) or designing out behaviour perceived to be risky.	To manage impressions of order and safety in public spaces and build confidence in the police.	To protect the rights for unmediated social interaction and user determination of space.	To mediate between diverse users of public space in a manner that is responsive to the context and the conduct of the regulated.
Strategies & practices	<p><i>Physical strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - De-differentiated exclusion by design, guarding and surveillance e.g. barriers, access control systems, security patrols, CCTV, gates of public parks locked at night. - Targeted exclusion e.g. risk-profiling security patrols/border guards/CCTV operatives, ‘mosquito’ ultrasonic deterrent. <p><i>Legal strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted exclusion by rights e.g. private trespass laws enacted in functionally public spaces - Targeted exclusion by innovations in the legal powers e.g. police dispersal powers, banning orders, civic injunctions. 	<p><i>Symbolic strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reassurance by formal ‘control signals’ to strengthen the appearance of order e.g. uniformed foot patrols by authority figures, environmental clean ups, street lighting, alley-gating, signs denoting the presence of capable guardians. - Reassurance as a latent or secondary benefit of informal ‘control signals’ e.g. well-tended gardens, mothers and children using parks, dog walkers. 	<p><i>Physical strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid designs that prevent inhabitation/use of public space by marginal groups e.g. metal spikes, ‘anti-loitering’ benches. <p><i>Legal strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absence of agents with coercive powers. - Decriminalise ‘status laws’ e.g. sitting on sidewalks. - Reform property rights. - Reverse privatisation of space. <p><i>Symbolic strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collective action by marginalised groups e.g. Occupy Movement - Absence of signed regulation 	<p><i>Physical strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion by design - Facilitate voluntary compliance e.g. litter bins, public amenities, signs communicating minimal accepted norms. <p><i>Legal strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restrictions on behaviour limited to those that risk harm to others. - Enforcement as a last resort. <p><i>Personal strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mediators skilled in persuasion, negotiation and procedural justice who prioritise voluntary/normative compliance with minimal rules. - Tolerance to difference alongside amelioration e.g. plastic cups, graffiti walls. <p><i>Symbolic strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural surveillance.
Rules	Risk-based, pre-emptive	Informed by public perceptions	Absence of rules	Minimal, harm-based
Social conflict and crime	Design out/exclude	Manage symbolically	Celebrate/embrace	Negotiate/mediate/persuade

These real world examples variously testify the manner in which this mentality deals with social conflict, crime risks and uncertainty in contested public spaces by designing it out or excluding it. Those people deemed to be a 'risk' may be interpreted loosely - on the basis of perceived disorder rather than harm to others - such that exclusion is applied broadly, to 'undesirables' and the like. Ironically, tolerance to risk increases in relation to consumers of the night-time economy who city managers are aware may cause more harm (Crawford and Flint, 2009). Once excluded, a person is may be subject to arrest merely for re-entering a public space even if they desist from the behaviour in question. Hence, preventive exclusion has the potential for extensive net-widening where accompanied by the routine use of criminal sanctions for breach (Beckett and Herbert, 2008). Preventive exclusion makes no attempt to seek voluntary compliance, inculcate social values, appeal to normative standards or seek ways of modifying public expectations and ameliorating behaviours to make them more tolerable. Instead, it merely removes or excludes the individual, dispensing with long-standing legal norms and undermining established criminal justice principles (Crawford, 2009).² This way of regulating public space denies certain people, often defined in subjective terms as risky, opportunity to be part of a convivial public realm.

Some commentators support preventive exclusion as a way of 'improving' the quality of public spaces and to control crime theorised to result from non-intervention in disorder (Kelling and Coles, 1996). Others argue that the benefits of a highly regulated environment – predictability, cleanliness and safety – outweigh effects on cultural diversity and spontaneity (see Banerjee, 2001: 13-14). However, critical urban scholars criticise these practices for producing 'interdictory spaces' of selective exclusion (Flusty, 2001) in which there can be no *modus vivendi* (Bauman, 2003). Where the objectives are to keep out certain individuals and groups, this effectively surrenders social difference at the gate, to paraphrase Flusty (2001: 659). Perhaps the most cogent critique of preventive exclusion is that it significantly diminishes the rights of those it targets and intensifies their marginalisation on the basis of little evidence that these practices enhance security and reduce crime. On the contrary, attempts to design-out crime may perpetuate individual and rational harmful subjectivities that create crime (Raymen, 2015: 11). For these reasons, free movement in public space should be given priority over the pursuit of crime prevention and the regulation of disorderly behaviour (von Hirsh and Shearing, 2000). This idea is a fundamental starting point by which to consider alternative ways of regulating public space.

2. Reassurance policing

For at least the first decade of the millennium, a mentality of public reassurance assumed a prominent place in the policing of urban spaces in the UK. The National Reassurance Policing Programme 2003-2008 in England replaced a narrow focus on controlling crime with a broader emphasis on communicating security (Barker, 2014; Home Office, 2007). Reassurance policing is underpinned by a philosophy of impression management in which fostering perceptions of security and order in public spaces have become a centrally important function of urban governance. The management of impressions are also thought to be essential to public confidence, on which effective policing relies.

²The ultrasonic deterrent, known as the 'mosquito', that emits an unpleasant high frequency sound audible only to young people is an extreme example of this strategy (Little, 2014).

Signal Crimes Perspective (SCP), developed by Martin Innes and colleagues, conceptualises how the reassurance function of the police may be most effective (Innes, 2007), albeit practice has not wholly followed theory (Herrington and Millie, 2006; Povey, 2001). The theory attends to the manner in which signals of control and disorder are interpreted by citizens in ways that undermine or enhance their sense of security. A core contribution has been to identify that incidents of crime and disorder are important not just in terms of their seriousness or the harm done to the victim, but also in terms of what they signify and communicate to people about their sense of safety and the orderliness of public spaces. Applying insights from Goffman (1972), the central proposition is that particular incidents act as ‘warning signals’ (Innes, 2004: 347) which shape how people think, feel or act. The rules of governance focus on engaging with the signals that matter most to people, based on their subjective perceptions. Hence, it is the *local* norms that define the social order and inform the subjects and targets of police regulation of public space.

There is a key role in this mentality for policing and the police. SCP proposes the enactment of signs and symbols of formal authority (Innes, 2007: 133), conceptualised as ‘control signals’, to enhance impressions about the degree of ‘guardianship’ in public places. A key strategy, pursued until the cuts to police budgets from 2010 onwards in England and Wales, involved expanding the number of policing personnel on the streets to counter, symbolically, the negative signals sent by visible acts of crime and disorder (Barker and Crawford, 2013). A pivotal innovation in policing practice was the introduction of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by the Police Reform Act 2002 dedicated to ‘highly visible patrol with the purpose of reassuring the public’ (ACPO, 2008: 6). As such, this mentality relies heavily on *symbolic* practices to manage social conflict and crime risks in contested public spaces.

The empirical realities of reassuring the public using visible police patrols are complex. Police control signals are double-edged; they are interpreted as reminders of potential threats as well as convey protection from harm (Barker, 2014). Ironically, police patrols convey little additional reassurance in the kinds of vibrant and well-populated public places envisaged by Jane Jacobs - where there are already high levels of ordinary people acting as capable guardians (Crawford *et al.*, 2005: 58) - yet they may remind us of the threats we face in places that are vulnerable to crime. Nonetheless, this mentality demonstrates the importance of engaging with perceptions given their capacity to shape behaviour and influence the trajectory of neighbourhood change.

3. The right to the city

The right to the city embodies a political-economic philosophy in which rights are a central organising concept and public space acts as a barometer of social justice (Van Deusen, 2002). Lefebvre argued for ‘a transformed and renewed right to urban life’ (1996: 158) that is not based on traditional conceptions of citizenship. Rather, Lefebvre bestows a legitimate right to the city to its everyday users. This Habermasian conception of the public sphere is universally accessible and shaped collectively through participation in deliberation. Hence, the right to the city is more than simply a right of access; it enables ordinary people ‘to claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanisation’ (Harvey, 2012: 5) and to have a stake in making the rules that will be treated as the norms of governance.

This philosophy has been revived following the observation that access to and use of public spaces is increasingly becoming a 'privilege' rather than a universal 'right' (Banerjee, 2001; Appleton, 2015). The preoccupation of urban governance with security and order is seen as a consequence of global capitalism in which there is an emphasis on generating revenue from investment in space. In the wider trend of urban renaissance through inward investment, this frequently means that the right to the city is 'manifest largely as a mode of conduct – namely, consumption' (Bannister *et al.*, 2006: 924). Thereby it becomes legitimate to exclude people who do not share in this neoliberal vision (Van Deusen, 2002). As state authorities and corporations engage in practices of reassurance and securitisation, it is argued that democratic ideals are silenced and other norms, including the right to the city, are trumped: 'The universal consequence of the crusade to secure the city is the destruction of any truly democratic space' (Davis, 1992: 155). Following Davis's (1990) reference to the emergence of anti-homeless barrel-shaped bus stop benches,³ some 25 years ago, numerous examples of the policing of social boundaries have emerged. These include shop fronts and railway stations lined with metal spikes to prevent beggars and big issue sellers from loitering and the 'mosquito' device, noted earlier, that emits an unpleasant high frequency sound audible only to young people. Other contemporary examples include Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) introduced under s.59 of the 2014 Act which allow municipal authorities to prohibit a range of behaviours that are not in themselves harmful to others, including rough sleeping, unlicensed busking, skateboarding, gathering in groups, begging and consuming alcohol because they are seen to have a 'detrimental effect' on quality of life.⁴ This mentality illustrates how public spaces have become hostile towards marginal groups and non-consumers, such as the homeless, the poor, youth, street vendors and ethnic minorities. This hostility is captured evocatively by Smith's (2001) notion of 'the revanchist city', which describes a discourse of revenge against the 'public enemies' of the political elite.

The means for translating the right to the city into a set of strategies and practices of governance remains far from clear. At its most radical, it necessitates a reimagining of the capitalist world order and a fundamental reorganisation of current social relations (Purcell, 2003; Harvey, 2012). It implies a far-reaching strategy of reform to private property laws in order to recognise its social functions and a more inclusive conception of citizenship. Moderate positions argue for an extension of legal rights of access to private property which has public functions, such as shopping and leisure centres (von Hirsh and Shearing, 2000). These rights, therefore, seek to reorganise control over the production and use of urban space.

Given the objectives of this mentality are to transform rights to protect unmediated interaction and user determination of space, regulation is seen to constitute a threat to these goals. Mitchell's work is a good exemplar of this: 'The central contradiction at the heart of public space is that it

³ In a contrasting development, The Bench Project has explored the values of bench-users and has developed a manifesto for a 'good bench' to facilitate sociality in public spaces (Brynon and Rishbeth, 2015).

⁴ See The Manifesto Club (www.manifestoclub.com) who has been monitoring the implementation of PSPOs.

demands a certain disorder and unpredictability to function as a democratic public space' (2003: 130). This unruly and unregulated vision of public space implies an absence of personnel with coercive powers. Social conflict is celebrated and embraced: 'Different people with different projects must necessarily struggle with one another over the shape of the city' (*ibid.*: 18). Indeed, where people are seen taking claim to public spaces (e.g. Occupy movement), they are intimately involved in the production of space. This loud demand for a new order is thought to necessitate some degree of violence and crime: 'The only way to transform, and even to overthrow, the *order* – and hence the interests encapsulated in that order – has been to defy that order, to break laws, to act without proper decorum' (*ibid.*: 230-1 emphasis in original).

However, there is potential to see the right to the city as 'an empty signifier' since 'everything depends on who gets to fill it with meaning' (Harvey, 2012: xv). Harvey illustrates: 'The financiers and developers can claim it, and have every right to do so. But then so can the homeless and the *sans-papiers*' (2012: xv). What about the street dealer, the robber or even the sex offender - do they also have the right to participate in and appropriate the city's public spaces for their own desire and needs? There is confusion about how to interpret the philosophical framework which has led some to argue that its implementation is fraught with challenges and contradictions (Brown, 2013). Mitchell acknowledges that 'the ideal of an unmediated space can never be met' (2003: 233-4) just as the ideal of an entirely secure and risk-free public space is an unobtainable fantasy. Both positions represent dialectical social utopias. Yet it is these 'utopic possibilities' (*ibid.*: 236) that defenders of the right to the city hold as their lodestar.

4. Mediated conviviality: reframing the regulation of public space

The alternative perspective advanced in this paper of 'mediated conviviality' reframes the debate away from a dominant perspective in criminology that social order requires excluding, preemptively, certain people from public space and from a rights-oriented perspective that regulation and security are opposed to democratic and convivial public spaces. The contention here is that the quality and inclusiveness of public spaces, its social and political use values and safety among citizens can be enhanced and expanded by certain regulatory principles and practices that are responsive to the context/situation and conduct of the regulated. Drawing selectively from distinct intellectual strands of thought, I argue that deliberate strategies are required for facilitating co-mingling and mediating interactions between loosely connected strangers for their convivial and peaceful coexistence. As such, the focus is on thinking about the everyday regulation and policing of public space (Crawford and Hutchinson, 2015) rather than a broader political-economic project. The concept of mediated conviviality put forward in this paper draws together and develops upon philosophical ideas on urban tolerance and diversity (Bannister and Kearns, 2013), ethnographic observations of public spaces (Jacobs, 1961; Worpole and Knox, 2007), theoretical models of responsive regulation (Ayles and Braithwaite, 1992) and the findings of studies on the use of procedural fairness by street-level bureaucrats when enacting authority (Tyler, 2013). It also takes inspiration real world examples, including

City Park in Bradford, where the local authority has made deliberate attempts to develop an inclusive approach to regulation of this new urban space (Barker *et al.*, 2014).⁵

The notion of conviviality proposed in this paper is close to its etymology '*convivir*' meaning to live together or to coexist. It also derives from *convivium* meaning a feast or banquet, implying social gatherings and events. From the eighteenth century, conviviality took on a wider meaning related to sociality. Dictionary definitions note its qualities, including that of being friendly, jovial, lively and welcoming. Conviviality is therefore closely connected to the lived experiences and inclusive 'feel' of public space by its users. Sociologically, Gilroy moves the idea of conviviality beyond festivity and cheerful bonhomie to describe 'the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multicultural an ordinary feature of urban life in Britain' (2004: xi). Conviviality therefore relates to sustained social practices which function as a kind of social lubricant and are not dependent on homogeneity, sameness or 'community' (Putnam, 2000), as some social capital theorists espouse. By contrast, convivial public spaces are exemplified by 'affectively at ease relations of coexistence and accommodation of multicultural' (Wise and Velayutham, 2014: 407). Convivial public spaces are not closed off to cultural differences, informal and improvised performances of art and music, the distribution of leaflets, the gatherings of (young) people, political speeches, petitioners, sellers of homemade goods or food, and the like. Indeed, it can be these kinds of authentic activities by local populations that attract a diversity of users to a space (Jacobs, 1961) and may stimulate conviviality. Such experiences, even if short-lived, limited or fleeting, provide a 'brush with multiplicity' that has potential to be interpreted as 'a promise of plenitude' (Amin, 2008: 19). Hence, convivial public spaces provide hospitality for marginal groups despite their exclusion elsewhere in the city. In this way, this perspective has similarities with the right to the city objective of 'making the city a site for the cohabitation of differences' (Mitchell, 2003: 18). The nature of the rules of governance is explicitly inclusive. A key difference is the assertion that convivial public spaces require proactive management and facilitation and a degree of mediation to enable people to co-mingle confidently and harmoniously.

Conviviality relates to the 'autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment' (Illich, 1973: 11) and therefore cannot be 'designed-in' through changes to the built environment in a similar way that proponents of situation crime prevention suggest crime can be 'designed-out'. For Amin, conviviality is both a 'virtue' and 'a form of solidarity with space' (Amin, 2008: 18) that emerges depending on the situational specifics of how people, matter and technology are 'thrown together' in a particular time and space (*ibid*). Whilst 'conviviality cannot be coerced' (Peattie, 1998: 248), it does require rules and conditions to facilitate it, some of which relate to physical infrastructure, land use planning and how the built environment circulates people through an area (Jacobs, 1961), but a key element is the way in which regulators of public space facilitate co-mingling and mediate between diverse users of the city where there are potential for conflicts.

⁵ City Park, opened in 2012, has been the scene of much relaxed conviviality amongst socially diverse groups despite a wider social context in which Bradford is used to denote a segregated city, divided by ethnicity and faith (Cantle, 2001: 9).

The notion of ‘mediated’ conviviality derives from the idea that social gatherings and living together with ‘lightly engaged’ strangers may not always be festive and harmonious. Public space may not be convivial if all have untrammelled rights - or that *anything goes* - as implied by a right to the city mentality. The effects of ‘unqualified multiplicity’ can be observed in the ‘daily abuses suffered by vulnerable people such as migrants, minorities, asylum seekers, women and children, those who look different; all victims of the cruelties that unregulated co-presence can bring’ (Amin, 2008: 15). Feminist perspectives highlight how unregulated public space is often to women’s detriment, as women are more likely to avoid using such spaces if deemed unsafe (Valentine, 1990). For public spaces to be genuinely convivial they must be welcoming to diverse potential users not simply attuned to those that on account of laissez-faire non-interventionism have come to colonise and claim that space. To make public spaces convivial for women to ‘reclaim the night’ and streets of the city, they cannot remain totally unmediated; to do so would leave power differentials unfettered. Moreover, a ‘rights discourse’ is fittingly the subject of critique by many feminists as paying insufficient attention to relationships and to an ‘ethic of care’ (Gilligan, 1982 Sevenhuijsen 1998). Equally, the pre-emptive exclusion of certain individuals and groups from public space and restrictive rules on behaviour may not be congenial to a convivial, lively and welcoming public realm (Shaftoe, 2008). Indeed, securely-designed urban spaces are criticised for being overly sanitised, sterile ‘dead’ public spaces (Sennett, 1974) that are used only to move through, not to be in. Strategies for regulating public space based on these two opposing mentalities arguably fall outside of what might be considered a convivial public realm. The contention here is that active management and forms of mediation are required in so much as it facilitates conviviality and enables the safe gatherings of people, but no more. Security and crime control are de-centred; they are to be balanced and managed alongside other social goods. Whilst ‘too much security’ (Zedner, 2003) is self-evidently problematic, so too is not enough security. A foundational element of safety, after all, is a pre-requisite that enables social interaction and without which convivial co-mingling is unlikely to occur.

The first strategy of mediated conviviality is to ensure that the rules and codes of conduct governing behaviour in public space are minimal and based on a principle of harm to others (Mill, 1859).⁶ Harm-based rules are important because they commit to a presumption in favour of liberty and are not based on support for a particular group of interests or values, be they those of a social group, corporation or political elite (Feinberg, 1984). Hence, restricting rules to those that cause harm helps to define and structure public spaces as socially inclusive meeting places where there is parity of participation and access. Indeed, such rules empower individuals and groups, rather than marginalise one by or for the other. A good example is provided in Jones’s research *On South Bank* where he observes, contra to the numerous signed regulations now found in public spaces, that: ‘the imagination for the visitor of what might be legitimately possible is less constrained, and he or she is granted some agency in deciding whether or not a planned activity is socially (un)acceptable (at that particular time and place)’ (2014: 103). On a practical level, people are less likely to comply voluntarily with rules and laws that they perceive

⁶ It is not my intention here to list those behaviours that are harmful to others as to do so would involve empirical assessment (see, for example, Nutt *et al.*’s, 2007 assessment of the harms caused by drugs) and a careful analysis of the concept and sources of harm.

to be made for reasons other than their own and others' safety (Holland *et al.*, 2007: xi). Where people agree that a rule is reasonable and just, they will be more likely to comply with the law (Tyler, 1990). Slightly looser, minimal restrictions on social behaviour – a feature of regulation on South Bank in London and in Braford's City Park - are a deliberate way of maximising usage and broadening inclusivity, which has potential benefits for crime prevention and public safety, as Jacobs (1961) concept of 'the eyes on the street' testifies. Hence, the nature of the rules are constructed in a way so as to 'build on the large degree of self-regulation of public behaviour that already exists' (Worpole and Knox, 2007: 14). This acknowledges the manner in which a great deal of the everyday policing of society is done by citizens themselves (Shapland and Vagg, 1988). As everyday order is held by a web of public respect and trust, formal authority is best restricted to where order has been seriously breached or irretrievably broken down.

The idea of restricting formal rules and regulations to those behaviours that are harmful or seriously offensive to others also begins to define and pattern the limits of tolerance. Avoidable behaviours that cause the direct production of serious harm to others or create unreasonable risks of harm clearly should not be tolerated (Feinberg, 1984). Even a libertarian perspective does not tolerate a position of non-intervention in which everyone is free to do whatever one chooses in public space, but neither does this position suggest that what behaviours we merely dislike or which cause a small degree of offense/annoyance should be prohibited and formally regulated. This recognises that in urban policy what is considered 'disorderly' is often conflated with or mistaken for cultural and lifestyle 'differences'. Contrary to the dominant assumption underpinning some contemporary policing developments that seek to sanitise and cleanse public spaces of 'otherness' for the enjoyment of consumers and the perceived safety of its 'legitimate' users (Kelling and Coles, 1996), mediated conviviality seeks to foster an 'ethic of care towards to the stranger' (Amin 2010: 1). By advocating harm-based rules, it is accepted that in cosmopolitan cities there are likely to be times at which we observe behaviours that we dislike because it goes against our tastes and preferences, experience behaviours that we object to because it infringes our quiet enjoyment of space, and be offended by behaviours that go against our cultural, moral or value framework (Bannister and Kearns, 2013).

A second and related strategy of mediated conviviality involves actively fostering tolerance towards and engaging with cultural differences. Contemporary theorising has made a valuable contribution to thinking about the kinds of regulatory responses that may assist in building urban tolerance. Bannister and Kearns (2013) define three dynamic strategies: psychological, cognitive and ameliorative. Psychological strategies help us to cope with the conduct by raising our threshold of tolerance. Cognitive strategies reduce disapproval of the conduct by developing an increased understanding of the 'need' or 'right' to engage in a variety of behaviours. These might include, for example, intergenerational mediation that seeks to counter the 'problematism' of young people hanging around in public space. Lastly, ameliorative strategies foster toleration combined with attempts to moderate the expectations, attitudes and behaviours of diverse users of public spaces so that they 'get along' better. A good example from the City Park research that illustrates an ameliorative approach relates to the local authority's management of public drinking (Barker *et al.*, 2014). It's not a dry zone, like many public spaces, but glass items are prohibited around the fountains, as they are designed for children to play in. The local authority developed a strategy of providing plastic cups to drinkers coupled with advising people about the potential

harm to children of using glass items. The offering of plastic cups by park wardens provides both the opportunity and means for adapting behaviours to make them less harmful, ameliorated the concerns of parents and was a way of leveraging conformity to the rules on drinking in return for the benefits provided by the park, whilst also allowing for lifestyle preferences. This perspective therefore advocates a position of inclusion on the basis of minimum conditions (White, 2003).

Mediated conviviality reframes the governance debate away from the extremes of intensive / punitive or 'light touch' mechanisms of control towards a strategy of 'responsive regulation' which originated in the context of business regulation (Ayres and Braithwaite, 1992). Responsive regulatory theory does not assume that all people will either self-regulate or can be persuaded to comply voluntarily with minimal rules. Neither does it assume that individuals will comply only when confronted with punitive sanctions. Responsive regulation, rather, prioritises a strategy of persuasion and normative compliance in which as far as possible the regulation of behaviour is to be achieved consensually through dialogue following some kind of negotiation: 'We should be cooperative at first to give others a chance to put their cooperative self forward' (Ayres and Braithwaite, 1992: 33). This means that however serious the offence, from dropping litter to wielding a knife, the normal response is to try dialogue first. This is not to say there is no place for coercion, punishment or exclusion, but these are tools of last resort and are not invoked as pre-emptive and precautionary measures. Ayres and Braithwaite's (1992: 6) theory embodies an escalatory framework of intervention depicted as a pyramid in which street-level bureaucrats have at their disposal 'a range of interventions of ever-increasing intrusiveness' yet it is assumed that these will be 'matched by ever-decreasing frequency of use'. There must be potential for using coercive tools, otherwise there is likely to be no willingness to cooperate (*ibid*). Hence, movement up the pyramid ought to be incremental and only after dialogue fails which means that 'enforcement has the virtue of being highly selective in a principled way' (Braithwaite, 2002: 33). There is pressure downwards to foster regulation at the base of the pyramid. By assuming that most people will respond positively to dialogue, whilst retaining criminal sanctions for the most intractable, it is contextually sensitive to the agency of the individual and builds on the virtues of self-regulation which resonates with the principles of 'policing by consent'.

A strategy of persuasion works towards fostering normative compliance as opposed to instrumental compliance (Bottoms, 2001). Whereas preventive exclusion removes any opportunity for normative compliance in its command to 'keep out', mediated conviviality places an emphasis on inculcating norms and social values that will be effective at building a future commitment and desire to self-regulate, alongside situational strategies that facilitate individuals to follow rules voluntarily, such as the provision of plastic cups to drinkers as illustrated above. An important implication is that this approach recognises the capacity of the regulated for self-regulation (Braithwaite, 2002: 29). Hence, styles of regulation that inculcate self-regulatory norms may alleviate pressures on the police and produce longer-term benefits in terms of crime reduction and public safety. Persuasion ('speaking softly') may be more effective if street-level bureaucrats carry 'big sticks' (criminal sanctions) but keep these firmly in the background (Braithwaite, 1997). A key challenge of this approach is that it relies significantly on the skills of street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980) who interact directly with citizens in implementing public policies while have some discretion in performing their jobs. In practice, street-level bureaucrats

may adopt the easiest or quickest option to resolve an issue at the time, which may not build a future commitment to comply. It may be easier to threaten punishment, rather than use moral suasion, to secure compliance. One solution to this has been the creation of dedicated policing agents with limited powers - such as the PCSO. The role of the PCSO recognises that order is largely maintained through 'soft' policing (Innes, 2005) without recourse to the use of force wherever possible (Bittner, [1974]1990). The potential for PCSOs to deploy creative skills of negotiation and persuasion of others, rather than 'hard' powers of coercion and enforcement, has been thus identified as a critical institutional strength for policing local communities (Innes, 2005).

The incorporation of 'responsiveness', 'normative compliance' and 'procedural justice' as core principles of regulation suggests an important role for what I term 'skilled mediators' in public spaces.⁷ Skilled mediators will have an unthreatening but authoritative manner. They will understand and be able to clearly explain in a procedurally just manner why any given rule exists (its potential for harm) to persuade a reluctant non-conformer. They will work on the presumption that persuasion and offers to cooperate will work in the most cases combined with an expectation that persuasion may fail and they will need to escalate. The principle of procedural fairness has important implications for how skilled mediators can reduce the likelihood of conflict escalating and, by consequence, ways in which more of the interactions can be channelled towards the base of the pyramid. According to Tyler (2013), preserving the perception of fairness during encounters with street level bureaucrats lowers hostility, minimises conflict and nurtures a voluntary commitment to comply in future. Even when persuasion fails and the response is escalated, people are more motivated to cooperate if carried out procedurally fair way. Hence, street-level mediators need to be skilled not only in the importance of persuasion but also in the procedurally fair process of resolving disputes and managing interactions with the public. Impediments to street level bureaucrats acting responsively would need to be removed. For example, private security agents who are paid on commission for the number of fixed penalty notices issued.⁸ The range of sanctions available must be suitably varied for street-level mediators to escalate up or down. If they feel that the only option available is recourse to a harsh sanction, they may refrain from utilising it resulting in a lack of credible enforcement. They will be trained on when to persuade and when to enforce and punish, using a range of likely scenarios they may encounter during the course of their work. Most types of street level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980), including police officers, PCSOs, special constables,

⁷ Responsiveness and normative compliance can also be built into regulatory technologies. For example, an electronic roadside speed indicator device that displays the vehicle speed, registration number (signalling the potential for sanctions but keeps these firmly in the background) along with an 'emoji' symbol. The emoji acts to remind people of the speed at which they are driving and gets them to consider whether this aligns with accepted norms/rules. It fosters normative motivations to comply (a sad face indicates that the driver needs to slow down due to potential harm to others). Of course, there is nothing stopping drivers from continuing to exceed the speed limit and more coercive sanctions may still be required.

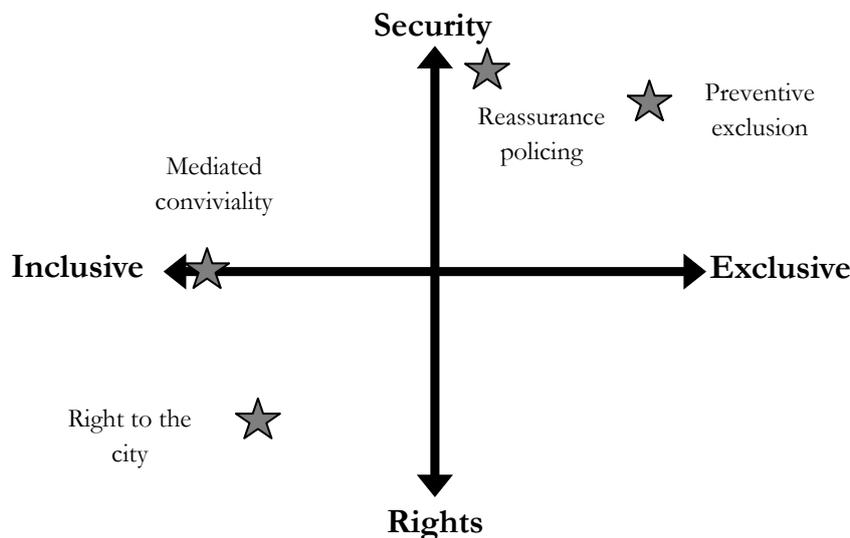
⁸ Bournemouth Council, for instance, permit private security patrol officers to issue fixed penalty notices for littering and dog fouling. The security firm is not paid directly, but is allowed to keep the revenue it generates from the £75 fines it issues.

neighbourhood wardens, environmental health officers, park keepers, traffic wardens, private security guards, housing officers etc. have some capacity and discretion to act responsively. However, there is no place in this framework for street level bureaucrats whose job is to act purely in an enforcement capacity (e.g. civil enforcement officers).

Core axes of divergence

From the above analyses, we can see how these governing mentalities diverge along two key axes (see Figure 1). The first relates to the relative importance of security as a rationale of governance, and the extent to which concerns about crime side-line other values and trumps other norms. A brief qualification is needed here. It should not be implied that security and rights are inversely related in a zero-sum manner. Nevertheless, in public and policy discourse it is often argued that promoting security requires rebalancing rights (Moss, 2011). The second relates to the extent to which the norms of governance are inclusive or exclusive and exclusionary. We cannot interpret the degree to which urban spaces are inclusive simply by its legal ownership status. The simplistic relationship between public/private ownership and associated inclusive/exclusive regulatory practices has been questioned and challenged (Langstraat and Van Melik, 2013). Indeed, some public spaces employ regulatory regimes that are as or more exclusionary than those under private ownership or management. The norms of governance are a more reliable determinant of inclusivity than ownership (Ruppert, 2006). All mentalities involve some notion of social order from which we can infer whether the norms of governance are intended to apply equally or target only certain members of a society. Another indicator of inclusiveness is the extent to which a variety of users are an explicit policy goal of governance (Langstraat and Van Melik, 2013).

Figure 1 Axes of divergence



As discussed earlier, security acts as an organising concept within a mentality of preventive exclusion. Security is given priority over other social values and public goods, including the right to free movement, the quality public space and its publicity. Preventive exclusion implies that order and safety is only possible by excluding certain people. Therefore, public space needs to be selectively exclusive, rather than open to all, to manage and minimise risks. Hence, practices of preventive exclusion include physical and legal tools that can be targeted at certain groups. It

does however remain inclusive towards those who do not fit risk profiles. In contrast, reassurance policing is citizen-focused, suggesting that the norms of governance are based on local perceptions. A core question is *whose* interests are consulted and given prominence in the policing of contested public spaces. Its position on the axis will therefore depend on the inclusiveness of public consultation that informs local policing practices. Millie notes, 'reassurance policing has the potential to be a model of democratic policing, but only if consultation is truly inclusive, for instance, including those that have been victimized and groups that have been targets of police activity such as young people, the homeless, and other minority and marginalized groups' (2014: 4327). Predictably, in practice, reassurance policing can be highly contested (Barker, 2014). The citizen-focused discourse evades the issue of police relations with disadvantaged groups who are the objects of police reassurance activities. The right to the city framework exposes the manner in which the above mentalities often feed into a neo-liberal agenda of consumerism which is preoccupied with the 'exchange value' of public spaces rather than with their socio-political use functions. The right to the city is an explicit critique of preventive exclusion on the grounds that it functions to exclude marginalised groups judged to be unsuitable to corporate and state interests (Flusty, 2001). In turn, the right to the city seeks 'to increase the publicity of the marginalized group by transgressing the exclusions that keep them out of the public' (Kilian, 1998: 123). Relative to the other governing frameworks, security is not an important feature. Indeed, rights trump security in this anarchical vision of public space that celebrates and embraces social conflict as representative of a truly democratic public sphere. Since public space is 'politicized at its very core' it 'tolerates the risks of disorder' (Mitchell, 2003: 128). Mitchell (1995) points to historical struggles to claim the right to the city - suffrage movements, free-speech fights, union strikes, feminist activism, homeless struggles - that have never been without the threat of violent interactions. Whilst it embodies a vision of creating 'spaces of justice' (Mitchell, 2003: 233) – inclusive not just of the wealthy, the consumer, but for all - this framework is marked out by an absence of regulation and policing mediating between diverse types of users and conflicts over public space. Anyone and everyone have the right to the city – a right to share in, make and produce space unconstrained by coercive institutions or personnel. It therefore represents a primarily laissez-faire or non-interventionist approach where an absence of rules means that *anything goes*. A legitimate question therefore is: where does this lead to? Arguably, the vision of a socially just or democratic city is likely to be overshadowed by territorialisation. In practice, public space will not be open to all because a lack of regulation allows spaces to be claimed, occupied and territorialised by the most powerful or violent. It therefore appears to present 'public space [a]s the site of endless Hobbesian struggle in which endless restless fighting is the only option' (Kilian, 1998: 123).

Mediated conviviality, by contrast, contends that security should not be treated as a good simply to be maximized. Security is one social value among others to be balanced and negotiated. It seeks a more complex and nuanced understanding of this relative balance compared to the other frameworks. Security and safety is a concern of this framework in so much as it facilitates more important primary values – notably the quality, use and inclusiveness of public space. As such, this framework suggests a parsimonious vision of security – one that entails just enough to security, but no more than is necessary. It is not an entirely non-interventionist framework, but one that suggests that the governance of cities require deliberate strategies and practices to

support its inclusive aims. It does not concede that such a balance necessarily makes a city less attractive to invest in and, indeed, it may even be a catalyst for economic growth.

Conclusion

This paper began with the aim of challenging competing approaches to the regulation of public space as presently centred on concerns with crime and (in)security. It has discussed how it has become common over the past decade or so for strategies of preventive exclusion and reassurance policing, drawn from criminology, have become dominant frames in these debates. The seeds of a new mentality of governance, conceived here as ‘mediated conviviality’, may be germinating in some places and contexts as a reaction to preventive exclusion. Moreover, it has the potential to contribute to the production of genuinely unoppressive, inclusive *and* safe spaces in the contemporary city. Ultimately, these might aspire to Young’s (1990: 241) definition of the ‘unoppressive city’ as locations where ‘the public are heterogeneous, plural, and playful, a place where people witness and appreciate diverse cultural expressions that they do not share and do not fully understand’. Such aspirations demand strategies that are responsive to context specificities, foster tolerance, broaden accessibility and inclusiveness and tame control-oriented tendencies by public authorities, so prominent in literature on the regulation of urban spaces nowadays, for blandness, homogeneity and sterility. Whilst this approach de-centres crime and (in)security, it recognises the importance of safety to the development of a convivial public realm. This alternative way of thinking about urban governance arguably presents regulators with a more challenging commitment to manage safety in diversity, albeit also the possibilities of a creative set of analytical tools and strategies for regulating public spaces. Additionally, it demands the development of practical skills, techniques and mechanisms that enable mediation between the convivial invitation to tolerant inclusion and the assurances of personal safety and collective security.

Acknowledgements

The conceptual utility of ‘conviviality’ owes much to my discussions with Adam Crawford about the governance of public space. The study of Bradford City Park was conducted with Ala Sirriyeh and Nathan Manning. I am grateful to Adam Crawford, Ian Burkitt and the two anonymous peer reviewers for their constructive comments on this paper.

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