

Domestication by *Cappuccino* or a Revenge on Urban Space? Control and Empowerment in the Management of Public Spaces

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Summary. This paper explores some of the more extreme tendencies in the management of public space to consider whether current policy directions, in this case in central Scotland, are driven by a desire to empower or control users of such spaces. The title of the paper is taken from the theoretical lenses provided by Neil Smith and Sharon Zukin in their differential views on trends in the management and control of public spaces. The paper focuses on two local case studies to examine the possibility that a ‘revanchist’ element is emerging in policies towards public spaces in Britain. The paper concludes that programmes designed to deal with urban and public space are a reaction to both real and perceived problems. However, there has been a privileging of a policy discourse which celebrates the displacement of social problems rather than their resolution. It is argued that such a discourse cannot ultimately provide sustainable policies for the regulation of public spaces and threatens the inclusion of some users of public spaces who may not be considered to be legitimate patrons. While this does more to foster fearful than inclusive public spaces, a thorny question remains over whether some degree of exclusion is a necessary price for policies which seek to secure public space and maintain a wider quality of life.

Introduction

The role of urban design and management in securing public spaces and reducing social exclusion is an explicit part of the government’s urban agenda (Rogers, 1999; DETR, 2000). Current proposals for public realm strategies and neighbourhood wardens are typically presented as empowering investments in deprived areas. In the case of the latter, however, one person’s benevolent guardian might be interpreted by others as a form of unwarranted intrusion.

This paper tries to answer two questions, is a ‘vengeful’ public policy emerging in British public spaces; and, if so, how can we

begin to explain this? The importance of this question lies in whether developments in the public realm can be seen as a programmatic extinction of the poor, as writers such as Mitchell (1997) have suggested, or whether such changes represent a more complicated or unintended outcome of the attempt to secure public spaces. While issues of justice and exclusion have characterised treatments of the wider city realm (Fainstein *et al.*, 1992; Merrifield and Swyngedouw, 1995; Sibley, 1995), the role of the spaces in between, a city’s public spaces, has not been considered in detail.

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The increasing commercialisation of public spaces has been a familiar explanation for the increasingly restrictive codes which filter access to public spaces (Hannigan, 1998; Sorkin, 1994). However, it is not immediately clear to what extent public space has been eroded in Britain in the way commentators from metropolitan North America suggest (Sorkin, 1994, Davis, 1998, Mitchell, 1997, 1998a, 1998b). This paper looks at competing understandings of what is happening to policies which aim to secure public spaces in the context of this 'revanchist urbanism' (Smith, 1996). This term refers to a vengeful reaction against positive and anti-discriminatory social policies that emerged in the 1960s in particular. Smith's definition of a 'revanchist city' refers to

Revenge against minorities, the working class, women, environmental legislation, gays and lesbians, immigrants became the increasingly common denominator of public discourse. Attacks on affirmative action and immigration policy, street violence against gays and homeless people, feminist bashing and public campaigns against political correctness and multiculturalism were the most visible vehicles of this reaction. In short, the 1990s have witnessed the emergence of what we can think of as the *revanchist city* (Smith, 1996, p. 45; italics as in original).

These developments strike a chord with current political thinking on such issues as asylum seekers, aggressive begging, child curfews and cracking down on a street culture of yobbishness that holds the lives of decent citizens to ransom. However, can we really talk of the emergence of vengeful or revanchist programmes emerging in the British context? It is likely that part of the reality behind these programmes is mundane; organisations and people simply doing their job and trying to make places safer for their users, even if this means the exclusion of certain groups on the utilitarian grounds that doing so enables the majority to use those spaces.

Public spaces such as streets, parks, public

toilets and play areas provided through municipal benevolence are now the stages upon which some of our worst personal and media nightmares are enacted. Cutbacks in local spending have left some of these spaces damaged and untended, furthering the image, if not necessarily the reality, of a dangerous space. A folklore has developed around such spaces but, in contrast to this, a lively debate has arisen on our public parks which stresses the need for their enhanced role and use by a wider public in order to maintain natural levels of surveillance and, thereby, security.

The following sections consider what marks revanchism as a distinctive policy formulation and how this might relate to British notions of public space. The second part examines other developments in the control of public space which have emerged in recent years including the use of CCTV. The third part includes two brief case studies: the Hamilton Child Safety Initiative, often called a curfew; and, policing and begging in central Scotland. These examples arguably seek the same end—the safe use of public spaces by all citizens. However, this legitimate objective may be undermined if safety comes at the cost of excluding groups defined as dangerous or non-consumers; public space has become a contested and relative idea. In conclusion, the paper discusses the benign and unintended outcomes of policies designed to secure public space.

1. Revanchist and New Urbanist Images of the City

What is public space? The idea of a single public itself is difficult to sustain (Bridge and Watson, 2000). If public space is defined as space to 'which normally people have unrestricted access and right of way' (Fyfe and Bannister, 1996) it is difficult to make the argument that any space has ever held such a status. This clearly problematises the notion of a public or citizenry whose membership of a geographical area is based on rights of universal access. Places at different times may change in their role for accommodating different social groups—for example, a city

square may serve as a place for lunching office workers while providing a place for skateboarders or potential muggers as the day progresses. There are many publics and their legitimacy may as much be defined by the context of the place as by the social character of these individuals. This is well articulated by Zukin who argues that

There is no single overriding vision of the city's public, no vision of how to balance the needs of the 'public' and of 'space' in the symbolic economy ... While neighbourhood groups representing 'the people' urge more access to parks, conservancy groups representing 'the parks' urge more restrictions on public use (Zukin, 1995, p. 266).

More than anywhere else, the idea of the street is permeated by a sense of the public. Freedom to move and to speak is enshrined in the French and American constitutions while the idea that Britain is a 'free country' is seen as such a fundamental aspect of our rights that it has not been felt necessary to write this down. However, in moves towards securing public space, the sanctity of democratic access is questioned. Should everyone be allowed access to these spaces at all times or should this be restricted to ensure safety? This question suggests a tension between the rights of citizen access and safety.

Smith (1996) describes a city administration intent on the elimination of the undesirable. This seems to have come about in order to increase the marketability of the city in a highly competitive global industrial climate, but it is also backed by an ideology which seeks to displace rather than tackle social problems in order to 'clean up the city'. Lower crime rates and the absence of visible poverty have enabled the legitimisation of administrations, like New York's Mayor Giuliani, who has seen successive re-election based on a popular stance of 'zero tolerance' and the apparent effectiveness of such policies in making the city safer for its residents.

From this perspective, policy legitimates an ever-increasing revenge on the poor, minorities and progressive movements in an

attempt to perform what Davis (1990) has referred to as 'the securing of public space'. Davis himself views such a project as doomed to produce an ever-increasing escalation in urban conflict represented by such policies as anti-homeless laws in the US and that of the Criminal Justice Act in Britain. These programmes appear to represent moves towards the displacement and a passing of problematic social bucks. Problem people and social problems rooted in the structure of capitalist relations are moved on.

Contrasting ideas about what is happening to public space in North America can be observed. Zukin (1995) cites the example of a revitalisation and design-led strategy in Bryant Park, New York City, as 'domestication by cappuccino'. Here, the park was improved through expanding its consumption uses and expectations of behaviour through better maintenance and surveillance by guards. Elsewhere in Manhattan, at the Port Authority bus terminal, a variation on the strategy can be found in the quietly piped classical muzak in its waiting rooms; seemingly there to civilise its users. Such strategies have long been used by the Muzak corporation to provide aural scripts for shops and malls (Lanza, 1994).

Zukin has stressed the role of multiple cultures and users of public spaces. For Zukin, "the democratisation of public space was entangled with the question of fear for physical security" (Zukin, 1995, p. 27). In *The Cultures of Cities* she sets out to consider the role of culture in the economic base of cities and how this may spill over into the privatisation and militarisation of public space. This landscape of fear and privacy is crystallised in Hannigan's fantasy cities (1998) where the desire for experience without danger, as he puts it, leads us to create urbanoid spaces (Goldberger, 1996). Here, a fusion of consumption, entertainment and popular culture have promoted a privatised sense of city living which appears to look like the traditional street but is devoid of the diversity that it used to support.

The Criminal Justice Act of 1995 split those who felt either that such laws were

wrong but were unlikely to be used and those who felt that they represented a real erosion of people's ability to express themselves and the principles underpinning these freedoms. The Act gave police new powers that were seen by critics as an attack on alternative lifestyles—namely, 'ravers' and new age travellers.¹ Provisions included the right to remove two or more people who might be deemed to reside on the land for any period, to remove people attending a gathering on land at which amplified music is played during the night ('music' was used to refer to repetitive beat-structured music).² The confiscation of sound equipment when preparing for a rave or where a rave was taking place, and the removal of unauthorised campers were also enabled. This latter measure was seen as an attack on more established Romany and traveller lifestyles. The precise impact of the Criminal Justice Act has been unclear, not least because the lifestyles it targeted seem to have faded from view, although it remains a discretionary tool whose principles incensed the citizen's rights lobby.

The loss of a public realm is not a new story. In Britain, a loss of public place started with the acts of rural enclosure, from the 13th to the 18th centuries, which put what was previously common land under private ownership (Hoskins, 1955), taking away spaces used by small-holders and subsistence lifestyles. Similarly, it is all too easy to imagine a halcyon era in which street crime was low and the working class was respectable and deferential.

In an exploration of the new public library in Vancouver, Lees finds tensions in the use of the space with both excluding and diverse processes at work which make analysis of whom the space is for more difficult to interpret (Lees, 1997). New spaces like these often have subtle codes such that the Vancouver public library while having no policy of exclusion is also a place which the disadvantaged might not enter simply through feeling uncomfortable in such a place. In this sense, more subtle modes of exclusion are woven into much deeper class

and cultural interpretations of whom a place is 'for'.

Histories of popular protest and poverty in Victorian Britain (for example, Stedman-Jones, 1984) indicate that mob rule and a fear of that power have existed for a long time. Roberts (1971), for example, recalls how in an Edwardian slum area of Salford

The groups of young men and youths who gathered at the end of most slum streets on fine evenings earned the condemnation of all respectable citizens. They were damned every summer by city magistrates and unceasingly harried by the police (Roberts, 1971, p. 155).

However, Roberts acknowledges that their vicious street gang warfare may well have warranted such action. This raises the question of whether certain contexts do create a need for 'tough' action. This is something that perhaps more liberal treatments of policing have ignored. Smith's revanchist city explains the increasing viciousness in the way non-adherents are dealt with in terms of a desire to eradicate those publics who represent non-consuming citizens. Not only do we increasingly have to conform or pay to use public space, but also for those who do not the penalties are increasingly severe.

Does the revanchist debate represent a theory with which to view policy on city spaces in Britain? The revanchist city might be understood as a number of different strands which are presented in Table 1. These separable strands allow us to see more clearly in what ways revanchism might present us with a tool for urban analysis in different national contexts. This material is reconsidered in the closing discussion.

2. Methods for Controlling Access

Examples of methods for controlling access to and behaviour in public spaces are not hard to find. The use of CCTV in public and private spaces is not a new phenomenon (Fyfe and Bannister, 1996), but remains a popular solution to dealing with social disorganisation. However, the outright popularity

Table 1. Competing strands in the understanding of the revanchist city

A **mode of governance** expressing connections between a number of agencies at different levels that seek to control the public realm and to dictate recognised or approved uses for such space. Increasing decentralisation and discretion may allow local authorities to act in coercive ways if they wish (Body-Gendrot, 2000)

A **set of programmes** designed to secure public space or the behaviour of users of such space, such as zero-tolerance policing or anti-begging drives by government

A **prophetic and dystopian image** of a downward spiral of social relations in which public spaces and the city are seen, in themselves, to represent a form of urban *malaise* and distress from which vengeful policies may act as an ameliorative

A **reference to economic objectives** seen in the connection between urban economic development and the need to secure capital investment, increasingly seen as being footloose, by beautifying and securing city spaces in order to market the quality of living in such locations. Urban managers labour to produce positive images of places (Harvey, 1989; Gold and Ward, 1994) while strategy is devoted to attracting capital in order to boost employment and reduce poverty

of such measures has been questioned by civil rights and other groups concerned with the use of such information, its inability to help secure convictions and its displacement of criminal activity. Exhortations that if you are doing nothing wrong you have nothing to fear have been met with a realisation that this really depends on who is defining what is wrong

CCTV control rooms are ridden with racism and sexism, and certain types of young people are targeted with socially constructed suspicion and are labelled as ‘toerags’, ‘scumbags’, ‘yobs’, ‘scrap-heads’, ‘*Big Issue* scum’ ... and are scrutinised, followed, and harassed. Thus operators are already imposing a ‘normative space–time ecology’ on the city by stipulating who ‘belongs’ where and when, and treating everything else as a suspicious ‘other’ to be disciplined, scrutinised, controlled (Graham, 1998, p. 491).

CCTV seeks to secure space but has led to targeted intrusions on those who seem to fit the bill as potential criminals (Norris and Armstrong, 1999). This discretionary element of CCTV use separates it out from other forms of social control wherein CCTV operators were engaged in activities which were defined from the ‘categorical’ to the ‘voyeuristic’ in which observations

were “based on prurient interest” (Norris and Armstrong, 1999, p. 112). Further, this research indicated that systematic research on the deficiencies of CCTV have been refuted on the basis that they contradict common sense about what works in crime deterrence.

While apparently helping people to feel more at ease in public spaces, some writers have alluded to the fact that the visibility of CCTV itself signifies dangerous places which sensitises passers-by to the possibilities of insecurity in that space (Fyfe and Bannister, 1996). The displacement effect itself has perversely provided a reason to set up more and more surveillance units suggesting a logical end-point in which universal observation is made possible.

Information about transactions can be also be used to generate information from the use of items such as credit cards and other contacts with corporate bodies. Digital personas or ‘counterpart selves’ may be derived from this information which underpin

citywide, national, even international systems of intimate monitoring and control, classifying individuals into the spaces and times where they ‘belong’ (Graham, 1998, p. 492).

In spaces such as shopping malls, the recipe for success has been built on both

convenience and safety. In such spaces, non-consumption is a form of deviance. The rights conferred by citizenship are increasingly predicated on being a consumer—consumers of private and government services. Deviance from these norms of engagement and use can be seen in behaviours like that of window-gazers strolling shopping centres unchallenged although they do not represent the ‘target audience’. Shields (1989) cites the example of Edmonton Mall in Canada, the world’s biggest, in which a 60-year-old ‘cripple’ was barred on the grounds of loitering

The greatest rebellion is the act of sitting down on the floor, ignoring benches, defying the planned environment in a gesture which questions the conventional discourse of space at the Mall (Shields, 1989, p. 160).

This mall in particular highlights some of the contradictions and uses of such space that have come about

Such malls introduce an unheard-of degree of surveillance, with almost Orwellian overtones, into daily life. Old protest strategies such as the familiar picket line in front of a store become impossible in a shopping mall. The transfer of public space indoors to private quarters means that, unlike the street-life of the European tradition, the surrounding environment in the centre is carefully and consciously managed ... Although the promoted image is one of freedom, unfettered impulse buying, and liminality, the reality is one of control, new forms of discipline, and surveillance (Shields, 1989, p. 159).

Street ‘furniture’ increasingly allows only a codified use through design. Climb-proof paint and vandal-proof lights are logical and useful developments, whereas other changes in the style of chairs and benches actively prevent resting. An example of this may be seen in bus shelters which have been made from glass to allow surveillance but with seats which tilt to stay dry and to discourage anything more than brief use. Other changes

can be seen in ‘bum-proof’ park benches (Davis, 1990) which have become segmented by armrests in order that people cannot lie on them to prevent people (i.e. the homeless) sleeping on them—thus ‘designing-out’ the already socially excluded.

For those who subscribe to these forms of controlled access, they cut at least part of their noses off to spite their face. Such ascetic environments impact negatively as much on their inhabitants as those they seek to exclude: in much the same way, residents of gated communities might as much be cast as prisoners in their homes as those liberated from the fears of a violent urban drama.

It would be simplistic to assert that the securing of public space has only been for the benefit of the affluent or that all of these measures are negative. Concierge schemes in tower blocks and security doors to many shared flats, particularly in Scotland, act as barriers to unwanted guests and allow control of space and a betterment of the quality of life. The retreat itself into more private spheres of life has also been blind to class boundaries (Goldthorpe, 1968). Sibley (1995) asserts that allusions to idyllic homes and activities centred on the home constrain views of life in a public sphere while working- and middle-class cultures have been privatised through the home-based media and aspirations to conspicuous consumption.

Increasingly punitive and unaccountable modes of coercion and control are already in place. A growing corporate stamp on the monopoly on violence, long recognised as a hallmark of the nation-state, has occurred through the use of private security guards and prisons while electronic surveillance has become a relatively cheap commodity. These various developments in the securing and recasting of public spaces and the creation of semi-private areas represent wider changes in how we move around urban spaces.

3. Extreme Cases?

In this section, the use of an ‘extreme case’ method is described where cases have been selected to test whether elements of a revan-

chist urbanism are permeating policies which deal with British public spaces. In policy terms, they are non-typical and have a selective geographical and social target range but they provide an insight into what some see as a new direction of policy and increasing levels of discretion and control of public spaces and publics (Body-Gendrot, 2000). While both cases are drawn from the Scottish context, there is little to suggest that this fact, in itself, contributes anything to the particular character of the programmes.

The Hamilton Child Safety Initiative (HCSI) could only have been picked as an example of a curfew in Britain, given that it is the first of its kind. The policing of begging in Edinburgh and Glasgow highlights contrasts in approach which might be found in any two British cities and explanations for both of these cases are offered which may yield wider insights into why these approaches have been taken. Perhaps it should also be added that, while these cases might be considered relatively extreme responses, they may be portrayed in very different lights. For example, while the HCSI was defined as a community-driven response to crime problems in the town by the local authority, others viewed it as a top-down imposition which alienated local residents.

3.1 *The Hamilton Child Safety Initiative*

The Hamilton Child Safety Initiative began in October 1997 as a partnership between the local authority, South Lanarkshire Council and the Strathclyde police. The explicit aims of the initiative were to

- ensure the safety of vulnerable youngsters under the age of 16 and with particular regard to those under 12;
- increase parental awareness of their responsibilities towards their children;
- reduce the incidence of juvenile crime and disorder; and
- increase public safety and reduce public anxiety over crime (McGallagly *et al.* 1998).

Local and regional newspapers portrayed the

initiative as a curfew which operated in notorious areas of Hamilton, yet it has been seen as both a role model for proposed youth curfews and as an instigator of renewed local fears about crime. The label of curfew was resented by the police, local authority and, most importantly, by the residents themselves who viewed media sensationalism regarding the initiative as yet another facet to the stigmatisation of areas already facing a number of social problems.

The reasons the local authority and police force started the initiative were given as a response to a call for help by the community of the three housing estates in Hamilton which were seen as problematic spaces in terms of anti-social behaviour and youth disorder. In operational terms the initiative meant two teams of police officers, each comprising one sergeant and five constables who worked alternate Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays between 7pm and 11pm in the 'intervention areas'. These officers would escort home any children in the target age range, especially those under the age of 12.

An evaluation conducted for the Scottish Office markedly lauded the initiative as a success which was not simply welcomed by local residents and business owners but even half of the children picked up during curfew hours 'approved'. The evaluation was carried out by a police Inspector from Strathclyde Police and two academic researchers (McGallagly *et al.*, 1998). They collected police intervention data, school children's perceptions, a survey of businesses, police officers' perceptions, a crime impact assessment and a community survey. The evaluation praised the approach and its impacts, but was directly contradicted by a later evaluation by the Scottish Human Rights Centre (1998), discussed below.

The researchers found that 200 young people were taken home during the evaluation period (October 1997 to April 1998) and 4 were charged with a crime (2 per cent). However, complaints of disturbance dropped by 22 per cent (although they also dropped in the neighbouring control area where a curfew was not imposed). Residents felt safer since

the curfew (44 per cent) had been imposed but, significantly, 86 per cent would avoid the area since the curfew had been introduced. Recorded crime fell by 23 per cent but, again, fell (by 14 per cent) in the control area. While half of the children picked up believed the HCSI was to ensure child safety, a further third believed it was there to remove children from the streets.

Local media reports of the views of community leaders have indicated scepticism towards the use of the curfew, citing the effective criminalisation of youth, an increase in suspicion and attenuation to young people as problem people. Had the HCSI been set up to cover the whole of the town, it is unlikely that such controversy might have ensued. The idea that child safety fuelled the need for such a project seems disingenuous when local residents viewed local children as the primary reason for a lack of safety in the area.

The Scottish Human Rights Centre (1998) report concluded that the HCSI was not wanted by the areas concerned and that police activity lacked legal authority and was in breach of international human rights. In their own survey of local children, they found that the majority disapproved of the initiative and that 90 per cent now felt more negatively towards the police. Most importantly, the same number said that they did not go onto the streets less often because of the curfew. The report concludes that the long-term impacts of these measures include the criminalisation of the young, damaging relations with the police and the wider community in areas already suffering a range of problems.

At a time of local state withdrawal from deprived neighbourhoods, the HCSI represented both a widened mandate for the role of public agencies in semi-private life and an intervention into the behaviours and lifestyles of residents of these areas. The social work role given to the police in this context would, in any middle-class neighbourhood, have been seen as an outrageous intrusion.

Wider proposals have now been made for child protection orders that closely resemble

curfews. The Scottish Executive has said that these orders 'will deal with young children suffering neglect by parents because they are left out on their own far too late at night'. Local child curfew provisions under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have not been used so far. Jack Straw has planned to introduce curfews for 'out of control' teenagers aged 9–15 years, while the former Scottish First Minister, Henry McLeish, has commended the role of the HCSI in reducing crime and said that it should be repeated elsewhere.

Proposed extensions to the curfew by the Home Secretary would allow local authorities to impose them on a discretionary basis. This use of discretion would strongly suggest that only problematic areas are targeted, thus stigmatising further the residents and reputations of such areas. The police themselves have called for a rethink on attitudes to youth given that proposals for further curfews are regarded as inefficient and expensive. Recent meetings of chief police officers have produced suggestions that children need to be seen more as equal partners and that alienation may ensue if curfews were replicated across the country as proposed by both the Scottish Executive and Westminster.

In terms of the strands of revanchism, it could be argued that the HCSI represents a programme for securing public spaces. However, in many senses, it is more than this. The HCSI is also about how spaces are governed and highlights a discretionary policy which made it contentious. The wider call for curfews suggests a zero-tolerance attitude to youth disorder predicated on the need to tackle these early problems to prevent later and more serious crimes. Downing Street has already defined the parameters of a forthcoming debate in terms of stamping down on a 'yob culture' which connects local control over spaces with a wider political agenda on youth crime.

This connection is important since it represents a much-criticised and more coercive form of social control in public spaces. However, such moves are equally a strengthening of the discretion with which local authorities

pursue agendas on law, order and public space. Because of the proposed discretionary use of curfews, the opportunity for them to be used in deprived and high-crime areas may further a largely negative and stigmatising influence in both geographical terms (the targeting of particular spaces) and social terms (the targeting of particular social groups). If the legitimacy of such programmes is to be assured, then it must be assumed that a universal standard for intervention is applied.

3.2 *Zero-tolerance Policing in Scotland?*

Zero-tolerance policing has become a popular term. Imported from a notoriously dangerous city, New York, the strategy of coming down hard on minor offences to prevent the growth of more intractable problems, has become synonymous with low crime rates as well as racism and violence. However, the success of New York's policy has been matched by cities with more benevolent policing strategies (Pollard, 1998) such as San Diego, suggesting that economic explanations are as important as policing styles.

Originally a mantra devised to express intolerance of domestic violence, the use of zero tolerance has become a confused mass of contradictory messages fundamentally pinned on the severity with which minor infractions are dealt with. In its original formation (Pollard, 1998), zero tolerance was drawn from Wilson and Kelling's 'broken windows' formulation of the problem (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). This approach suggested that minor civil infractions, such as a broken window or *graffiti*, would lead to more serious problems unless tackled by a police presence to deal with these problems before they got out of hand. Pollard suggests that zero tolerance (ZT) expresses the degree to which the solution to minor problems is seen as an aggressive and uncompromising enforcement action. In the broken windows scenario, there was a greater attempt to understand and define the problem and to act in partnership and with compassion in order to deal with this.

The British police force has largely distanced itself from the ZT approach. Reports from as long ago as the Scarman report (1981) on the Brixton riots and as recently as the Macpherson report (2000) on the Lawrence murder, have restated that one of the key difficulties is of a closer engagement with the community and institutional racism respectively. However, the need to engage the community has often been met with resistance from it, while police have continued to be viewed as being distant through the continued use of police cars.

Debates have emerged as to whether British and, more specifically, district policing styles have turned towards methods that seek to eliminate behaviours deemed unsuitable (Dennis, 1998; Hopkins Burke, 1999). The link between policing styles and levels of crime has often been viewed as contentious. New York's drop in crime has been explained as being related as much to a wider economic cycle as well as a waning of the street struggle by young people due to their use of crack cocaine. Increases in police brutality, by 41 per cent between 1994 and 1996, in New York have led some commentators to suggest that the price of apparently lower crime rates should be questioned. In fact, it is precisely because of such behaviour by the police that the explanation of lower crime rates has been related to a loss of confidence in the police and an attendant lowering of reporting behaviour (Taylor, 1998).

Does zero tolerance provide a portable conceptual model for policing styles in Britain? The Strathclyde police district, which surrounds and includes Glasgow, is the third-largest in Britain and contains more than half the population of Scotland and is home to more than three-quarters of its criminals (Orr, 1998). Through Operation Spotlight, introduced in 1996, the force aims to tackle the following areas: carrying of weapons, vandalism, truancy, underage drinking, sporting events, litter and licensed premises, *street robberies, parks and public places* and *drinking in public*. It does then have a distinctive 'broken windows' empha-

sis through its focus on minor civil infractions as a method for dealing with the deeper problems that might ensue were these not to be tackled, but does it bear the hallmark of a revanchist method for dealing with public spaces?

Operation Spotlight contains contradictory elements with particular problems emphasised one day only to be ignored the next. The force targets these problems according to geographical and temporal priorities so that littering might be policed heavily one day with people charged for the offence and the next day people behaving in a similar way might be ignored. This approach appears to have been developed in order to maximise efforts and yield greater returns on key issues that the public is concerned about, while scarce resources also dictate the need to act in this focused way.

Begging, one of the 'public places' targets of the Spotlight initiative in Glasgow, appears to have been subjected to very different modes of policing compared with its cousin, Edinburgh. Fitzpatrick and Kennedy (2000) conducted extensive fieldwork with people begging in both cities and found that beggars in Edinburgh were rarely hassled and that policing styles had even improved. In Glasgow, a very different picture emerged with beggars constantly moved on, arrested or even marched to the nearest charity collection point where they were forced to hand over all of their money.

The governance of public spaces in general and of begging in particular has proliferated into a partnership of agencies who are tackling different dimensions of the problem such as tourism offices, economic development agencies, police, environmental health and town centre management (Hermer, 1999). In effect, the policing of the public realm has come to resemble more strongly the model suggested by Hannigan (1998) in which the securing of public space is seen as a pre-condition for economic development in post-industrial and post-modern metropolises. This also fits with the economic strand to revanchism identified in Table 1.

Strathclyde's strong tactics on minor in-

fractions also fit with wider fears that the competition of booming central shopping streets with other areas has led to a public realm strategy by the local authority and police which supports the removal of those people who tarnish its image. This is similar to what occurred in Winchester (Hermer, 1999) where a programme of 'diverted giving' was set up to encourage sympathetic passers-by with collection points to help beggars through local agencies rather than giving to them directly and thereby supporting drug and alcohol habits.

The impact of the government's recent and overt involvement in people's decisions to give to beggars cannot yet be evaluated (billboards have been posted suggesting that if people really want to help beggars they should give to charity instead). However, the government has promised funding for support work for 'roofless homeless people' (beggars) in order to target the problem more fully. The government's Rough Sleepers Unit (Rough Sleepers Unit, 2000) has stressed the need to create alternatives and to help people on the streets but, underlying this apparent compassion, some commentators believe that for those who do not accept help the response may be much sterner.

Documentation from Edinburgh relating to the management of the city centre (Edinburgh City Council, 1999) suggested that begging and problem behaviour were related to a small number of people 'and probably not from among the homeless'. Again, research evidence from Fitzpatrick and Kennedy (2000) cites the helpful and compassionate role of the police in the experiences of beggars there. In fact, Edinburgh is an interesting case for a number of reasons; with liberal licensing laws and a booming financial, tourist and property market comparable to that of London. Within this formulation, policing might be expected to take on a more vengeful role as its bourgeois governors seek to keep its image respectable and yet this does not seem to have occurred.

An absence of ZT policing in Edinburgh may be because the city can afford to tolerate some street-level social problems. The

booming tourist, property and financial sectors might be considered to have produced the pre-conditions for a backlash against street-level begging since the quality of the urban environment would throw into sharp relief the 'down and out'. However, the apparent temperance towards this group suggests that local civic culture may be important in explaining local variations in responses towards begging. However, Edinburgh is also a city where a Conservative councillor has sought to pass by-laws prohibiting begging. In an unprecedented response, beggars drew up a 10-point code of conduct which forbade aggressive begging and physically stopping passers-by. These appear to represent contestations in defining the situation; certainly, it appears unprecedented that a group of beggars have managed effectively to mount such a counter-offensive.

The Blairite mantra 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime' has been supplanted by the authoritarian dictates of a Home Secretary who expressed concern about aggressive 'begging by squeegee merchants, winos and addicts'. This portrayal of the victim as aggressor or a source of danger has been contradicted by the accounts of those who have made contact with such groups. Those constructed as dangerous are themselves often vulnerable (Spradley, 1970; Fitzpatrick and Kennedy, 2000). Toth's 'mole people' (1993), live under Manhattan in groups huddled in dark underground spaces in search of sanctuary and, more importantly, refuge from the brutality and interference of the 'normal' world above.

In an increasing number of British cities, it is illegal to drink in public spaces. This has been in response to problems of noise, general anti-social behaviour and broken glass. In Glasgow, public spaces are designated as drink-free zones, a move designed to clear public spaces of street drinkers. This association is part of a wider negative and highly persistent image of Glasgow but one that even its own filmmakers and comics continue to capitalise upon (for example, *Orphans*, *My Name is Joe* and *Chewing the*

Fat). This image is encapsulated by the current chief of police John Orr who gives the example of the

'Glesga' hard man of the 1960s and 1970s had made way for the doped up, spitting yob standing on the street corner, underpass, or local park, drinking 'buckie' (cheap wine) and humiliating passers-by, felt tip pen at the ready to publicly inscribe the current fashionable obscenity (Orr, 1998, p. 107).

Although Orr recognises that this type hangs about in all places in Glasgow, a connection is made between this local folkloric persona and a wider strategy to improve Glasgow's image and its industrial future—thus again supporting a linkage between the revanchism and the need to secure investment (see Table 1). Such an image also has a popular local resonance and drives many people's fears of the encounters they may have when in public places.

From discussions of policing styles (Dennis, 1998), it would appear that there is consensus from different parts of the political spectrum that regular and visible interventions in activities can be used to good effect. This, after all, underpins the concept of community policing. However, a creeping militarisation of the police (the introduction of armed police), calls for tougher stop-and-search patrols by police (opposition party) and the use of zero-tolerance policing suggest a more authoritarian stance. These trends seem stronger perhaps than the need for compassion and greater community contact in effectively combating crime.

What does policing on begging in this example represent in terms of the typology of revanchist programmes? Governing a problem in itself is suggestive of a lack of a remedy for its causes. It can also be argued that the Strathclyde programme of Operation Spotlight has an economic motive. The cleaning-up of Glasgow's image is linked to three things: motivating investment, a future characterised by improved financial security and the removal of social problems.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

Is a revanchist strand observable in policies directed at British urban spaces? An unequivocal response to this question is hard to produce. It has been seen that trends in these policies have moved towards more coercive stances which stress the need to clear certain groups away from areas to safeguard the public. The precise delineation of this latter group is hard to identify; is it tax-payers, citizens or a more generalised notion based on contextual definitions of appropriate use? Devolution of decision-making and discretionary powers of policing and social control can be seen, however, to produce responses of variable severity. According to Body-Gendrot (2000), a move to devolved and decentralised government is leading towards discretionary policy-making which has targeted local communities as a way of dealing with urban violence

The more the central state devolves its social commitments to the local arena, the more cities become the major spheres in which to understand the treatment of polarisation and marginalisation associated with the world flux of capital and people (Body-Gendrot, 2000, p. xx).

Explaining the changing status of public space and the nature of its recent attention in policy documents is also difficult. The story is complex and may be explained by a number of factors including footloose capital investment, devolving governance, the restructuring of welfare regimes as well as fears about opening access to all. Economic and social inequalities form the seedbed for later social problems to which policies on urban space can be seen as a response. Local economic prosperity and investment are, in part, predicated on attractive urban spaces that may drive responses that clear or bar undesirable users. The link between capital investment and public realm policies may be used to suggest that zero-tolerance policing is a form of street-level city image manipulation.

The difficulty of generalisation should

be highlighted. Privatisation of spaces through consumption and programmes of zero-tolerance policing have arisen at the same time as more compassionate ideas such as 'policing without the police' and the use of neighbourhood wardens to spearhead strategies to safeguard the public. These policies say very different things about how to deal with social problems. The use of the HCSI suggests that it is only poorer neighbourhoods that need such forms of social control. However, an alternative reading is that such programmes act as an empowering influence for local communities to help them deal with the crime and problems that cluster in their public spaces.

Table 2 opens up the debate about portable strands of the revanchist view of policies which seek to deal with public space. In a very brief way, it outlines what appear to be revanchist themes in the case studies explored. From this, it may be possible to assert that revanchist threads are shared in responses to social disorder in British cities. This view must be tempered by the fact that this is only an exploratory and extreme case analysis. The importance of making these connections perhaps lies in how we think about the state of social relations in public spaces in cities in the future.

The work here represents only a starting-point in thinking about how access to public space is changing. In order to evaluate the degree of revanchism contained in policies on public space, a comprehensive review of such policies is needed. This needs to consider the various agents who have some role in determining what goes on and who may go in to these places. Interest in public spaces is growing and recent proposals for US-style Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) by the UK government continue a trend which appears to be privatising public spaces to make them cleaner and safer. However, BIDs have been criticised for setting up private police forces that have been used to exclude groups such as the homeless. A limited ability to set up local organisations that could raise funds to improve the area may be a good idea and should not necessarily be seen

Table 2. Strands of revanchism in case studies

| Revanchist strand | HCSI | Policing in central Scotland |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| A mode of governance | Yes. Collecting and managing children into places and times | Yes. Policing is an aspect of managing the city centre and key social problems in these areas |
| A set of programmes | Yes. Clear statement of how to deal with youth disorder | Yes. Clear policy statements and operational details in response to undesirable street-level social problems |
| A prophetic and dystopian image | No. HCSI based on local social disorder rather than view of long-term future of area | Yes. Indication that senior officials believe Operation Spotlight is a response to the decline of social relations in the city |
| A reference to economic objectives | No. Residential nature of spaces being managed suggests that an economic role for the programme does not exist | Yes. Operation Spotlight is linked to wider city-regions, future economic prosperity and social well-being |

as the thin end of the wedge. However, it must also be recognised that such responses would inevitably be patchy and skewed towards those areas that have the means or resources to pull something together.

As city and small town centres are increasingly portrayed as out of control, even by those who police them, the idea that ‘no-go’ areas exist has fuelled public opinion that stronger measures for security should be taken. The question remains: if we continue to produce policy responses to these symptoms of deeper problems, how can these responses be sustainable in the longer term (Pollard, 1998)? Footloose capital has created some of the economic pre-conditions for the social problems revanchist policies seek to displace. In turn, cities seem to be trying to displace or control these problems in order to attract investment from these organisations.

The distinction between residential and public is critical because it is in public spaces that it seems there is a move to security through domestication. This is to say that residential desires for safety and relative social homogeneity are influencing the choices

made about public spaces in order to enjoy the experience of the street without its dangers. Privatised and residential images drive a visualisation of the kinds of ‘public’ that should be allowed to use public spaces. Like an architect’s sketch, the public is often White, male and wearing a suit. Security is therefore also based on distinctly White, middle-class and suburban values. Where diversity was more often encountered, this has been supplanted by a purified and suburbanite sense of public space (Sennett, 1970). Goldberger neatly encapsulates this view in terms of

A measured, controlled, organized kind of city experience ... it disdains randomness, the difficulty, and the inconsistency of real cities. It is without hard edges, without a past, and without a respect for the pain and complexity of authentic urban experience. It is suburban in its values, and middle-class to its core (Goldberger, 1996, p. 135; emphasis added).

A problem with many of these developments is that they appeal to many while feeling oppressive to others. It is difficult to deny

that safer public space should be the goal of public and private policies, but there are clearly different routes to achieving a sustainable goal in which diversity and safety go hand-in-hand. The question is therefore not whether we want safe urban spaces, but whether current trends towards solving this problem will actually deliver the healthy public places that so many people require.

Notes

1. Ravers refers to those people attending spontaneously organised and, often, outdoor dance parties. This is something of a dying practice and has largely been subsumed by a more internalised and highly commercial club scene which has made the Act something of a product of its time.
2. This aspect of the Act was derided through the production of music with non-repetitive musical structures in defiance of the Act (for example, Autechre, 1994). This music was sealed by a sticker which stated that the player would be responsible for any prosecutions that might ensure if the Act were to be passed and that a musicologist and lawyer should be present to attest to the non-repetitive character of the music.

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