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URBAN RENAISSANCE

EDITORIAL

SECURING THE CITY: URBAN RENAISSANCE, POLICING AND SOCIAL REGULATION



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Introducing the urban renaissance

A conspicuously 'entrepreneurial' turn in urban governance has heightened the significance of cities as strategic sites upon and through which to foster renewed economic growth and prosperity while simultaneously combating entrenched social problems. If the pioneering entrepreneurial cities in this process (or, more precisely, their governments and agencies) have undoubtedly been located in the United States (Harvey, 1989; Jonas and Wilson, 1999), there is also little doubt that urban growth has become a key focal point of political programmes and spatial policy in many European countries (OECD, 2000; 2003; Moulaert et al., 2001; Brenner, 2003). The precise focus and specific character of such endeavours has oscillated between physical rebuilding and infrastructure development to attempts to nurture social cohesion and civility (Imrie and Thomas, 1999; Bannister et al., 2006). This collection of articles aims to examine some of the contemporary configurations that are emerging at this intersection between economic regeneration and social regulation,¹ of which security, policing, the regulation of conduct, and moral ordering have become essential ingredients (see Esser and Hirsch [1989] for some early signs of social regulation in 'post-Fordist' cities in then West Germany).

Within a European context, our individual respective research interests mean that we are most qualified to discuss the United Kingdom. Here, following a landslide sweep to power in 1997, a New Labour Government identified as one of its key objectives the stimulation of an 'urban renaissance'

(Urban Taskforce, 1999; Holden and Iveson, 2003; Johnstone and Whitehead, 2004). A critical examination of this agenda, at least in its initial stages, revealed a rather narrow focus on urban design as a route to renewal (Amin et al., 2000), while other critics viewed it as paving a way for gentrification to become the blueprint for delivering a very partial version of community to British cities (Smith, 2002; Lees, 2003). In its post-2000 policy proclamations, however, and as discussed by Raco (2007) in this issue, New Labour has begun to marry a discourse of urban renaissance with one of 'sustainable communities', which at least in part recognizes the value of a more 'holistic' approach for revitalizing cities, involving themes like safety, crime control, quality of life, and place attachment (ODPM, 2005; Parkinson et al., 2006; Atkinson and Helms, 2007).

In the UK, then, it would seem that the policy horizons for inducing an urban renaissance have been extended in two ways: first, the geographical horizons have stretched beyond an erstwhile preoccupation with city centre revitalization to reach the inner and outer suburbs; and second, it has been enlarged substantively vis-à-vis the range of policies actively engaged in the process. Indeed, Cochrane (2007) offers a compelling case whereby, rather than conceiving of it as 'urban' in strictly spatial terms, 'urban policy' ought to be reconceptualized as an *active social policy* interlinking numerous fields from education, social services, criminal justice to land use planning and economic development. In this sense, urban policy actively and consciously works upon and through the actual social interactions and

social relations of the urban populations it targets. While such governmentalities may well have characterized the post-Second World War large-scale housing renewal programmes, it is even more pronounced in contemporary initiatives such as Britain's *New Deal for Communities* (Lawless, 2004) or Germany's *Social Cities* programme (Läpple and Walter, 2003). In so doing, urban policy commands a growing range of political and policy levers and associated powers and responsibilities.

Understanding this complexity, in turn, demands a multidisciplinary research agenda. These considerations were uppermost in our minds when organizing the conference from which the articles in this special issue originate. Held in Glasgow, Scotland, in 2005, and given the title 'Securing the Urban Renaissance', the primary aim of this conference was to bring together scholars and practitioners from criminology, political science, sociology, social policy, geography and urban studies to reflect critically on urban policy and practice, and, furthermore, to enhance our understanding of this weaving together of explicitly urban policies with those ordinarily concerned with social control, policing and criminal justice. While in recent years these debates have often been remarkably biased in favour of the Anglo-American experience (though see Wacquant, 2006), the conference benefited enormously from the contribution of several papers analysing cities within several mainland European countries, notably Germany, Switzerland, Italy and France.

By bringing some of these papers together in this special issue of EURS, we hope to raise awareness of the degree to which policies for crime control, criminal justice and indeed the regulation of moral order and 'civility' have become closely intertwined with, and so fundamental to, strategies for urban development and city management in Europe. Moreover to encourage this to become a significant research agenda for *European Urban and Regional Studies* in the future.

Securing the urban renaissance: the growing significance of policing and crime control in European cities

During the 1980s, the European urban landscape was punctuated by waves of dramatic industrial

closure and relocation (Swyngedouw et al., 1988). This geography of de-industrialization went hand-in-hand with a crisis in the welfare state, materializing as wholesale cutbacks in welfare provision and social services (Jessop, 2002): the full brunt of which was borne by working-class communities where people not only lost their jobs but the social welfare net originally designed to support them (Hudson, 1989). These are the very conditions thought to fuel the disenchantment and societal disengagement which, in turn, have led to a 'high-crime society' (Garland, 2001). Densely urbanized regions like the Ruhr in Germany, north-eastern France, central Belgium, and northern England and west-central Scotland thus found their customary approaches for ameliorating crime being increasingly undermined by the retrenchment of policies for social welfare alongside profound economic restructuring which saw massive unemployment and subsequent social disaffiliation by both minority ethnic groups and traditional working-class constituencies (Ronneberger et al., 1999; Young, 1999; Wacquant, 2006; Dikeç, 2007a).

The societal processes, then, alert us to the fact that, even as far back as the 1980s, plans to renew the economy of certain European cities have been associated with attempts to govern, regulate and 'civilize' purportedly unruly urban populations. Strategies for regenerating Bilbao and Barcelona, to take two notable examples, were explicitly connected to the desirability of promoting an urban middle-class presence in what had long been city centres in industrial decline (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005). In the Netherlands, a programme of urban restructuring – involving significant demolition, re-modelling of housing estates, and tenure diversification – has undoubtedly made certain inner urban areas more attractive to middle-class residents who, in turn, are viewed as increasing tax revenues, reducing the management costs of such areas while also acting as role models for poorer residents; in other words, the aspirational middle classes are cast as catalysts to integrate poorer groups into local labour markets and to reduce disorder (Aalbers and Deurloo, 2003).

By the late 1990s, such perspectives were filtering into the discourses of UK policy and politics (Urban Taskforce, 1999). In practical terms, one of the most significant initiatives to have emerged is the *Housing Market Renewal*

'pathfinders', involving £1.2b of state funding and designed to reinvigorate local housing markets in nine urban areas, including parts of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Newcastle; cities that have borne the deepest scars of de-industrialization (Cole and Nevin, 2004; Cameron, 2006). In some senses, however, rather than representing a 'market'-led renewal, this process might more accurately be interpreted as a form of state-sponsored gentrification, whereby groups of professional and middle-class urbanites are induced – or parachuted – into tightly cosseted housing quarters, but which themselves are encircled by a wider landscape of distressed and disengaged neighbourhoods (Johnstone and MacLeod, 2006).

Significant investments like these often demand – or at least are perceived to demand – an extensive assemblage of social practices and related technologies designed to enable an ordered, safe, secure and pacified atmosphere (Mitchell, 2003; Helms, 2008). Contrasted with the ostensibly soft and consensual policing traditions and the participative urban street cultures one often associates with archetypal European cities such as Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Helsinki (Bianchini and Schwengel, 1991; Parkinson et al., 2006), some city authorities have welcomed and eagerly imported the model of revanchist public space regulation pioneered in Giuliani's New York (Smith, 1998): witness the use of zero-tolerance policing and anti-begging strategies in the northern cities of the UK and the distinctly militarized responses to disorder seen in Paris throughout the summer of 2005 (MacLeod, 2002; Coleman, 2004; Dikeç, 2007a).

Furthermore, it needs to be considered how concerns over safety – or, more accurately, 'security' – in cities have increasingly entered a public consciousness instilled with a vernacular of danger and fear of 'the other'. Across the world the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001 have become firmly entrenched as a marker in concerns relating to urban security (Coaffee, 2005). At the same time, however, it is important to consider that security – whether defined as 'homeland' as in the US or 'inner' as in Germany – has long been intertwined with concerns over terrorist threats; notable examples in Europe being ETA in the Basque Country in Spain, the IRA in the United Kingdom, and the RAF in West Germany during

the 1970s. Security has also risen to the fore in the fears of minority ethnic groups and concerns in British cities following the attack on Iraq and creation of 'homegrown terrorism' (Graham, 2006; Young, 2007).

In all of this it seems abundantly clear that the domestic buttressing of security is becoming increasingly indistinguishable from military and international agendas on organized crime and terrorism (Haubirch, 2006). The contributions in this volume from Mustafa Dikeç (2007b) and Bernd Belina (2007) highlight this entanglement of policies to avert terrorism with those ordinarily designed to control 'domestic' crime.

Urban renaissance and the new Communitarianism

Following on from the last paragraph, it would seem that contemporary endeavours to secure 'safe cities' are negotiating something of a political tightrope. On the one hand they appear to be 'protecting' the urban citizenry while on the other hand they could conceivably be compromising those very citizens' substantive freedom to move in and around urban *public* space (see Mitchell, 2003). And as revealed in Klausner's (2007) discussion of the video-surveillance of street sex workers in the Swiss town of Olten, this paradox materializes in the growing recourse to Closed-Circuit-Television (CCTV) as a purportedly indispensable technology in the creation of safe urban spaces. All of which also raises searching questions about the political discourses and the associated practices of social regulation with which the 'hard' securitization of city space is actually achieved. To put it more succinctly, what 'social ordering practices' (Lacey, 1994) lie at the heart of such attempts at governing?

In the UK, the New Labour Government has devoted considerable energy addressing social 'disorder'. In fact the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) was one of its first major legislative projects and introduced a series of measures designed to instil good parenting and treatment for drug abuse. And, through the now infamous 'antisocial behaviour order' (ASBO), the Act created an unprecedented legal instrument to pursue behaviour deemed to be 'undesirable' or liable to induce feelings

of fear or harassment in others (Squires, 2006). Another measure, the Dispersal Order, focuses not on individuals but on the public spaces within which antisocial behaviour is deemed by senior police officers (or a local authority Chief Executive) to be especially prevalent. It provides the police powers to disperse groups of two or more people and remove minors to their homes between 21.00 and 06.00 hours if their presence 'has resulted, or is likely to result, in any members of the public being intimidated, harassed, alarmed or distressed' (Home Office, 2003).

In practical terms, the forces of the UK state are stirring a remarkably potent cocktail of legal sanctions and capacities designed to combat any number of antisocial incivilities. Prospective recipients or 'folk devils' (Cohen, 1972) include the young men who menacingly claim the streets of Middle England as their own and the troupes of 'binge drinkers' who rowdily spill out of a seemingly endless succession of bars and nightclubs; raucous 'incivilities' accompanying a night-time economy whose rhythm booms right across the nation's post-industrial landscape (Hobbs et al., 2003). Furthermore, the themes of crime and antisocial behaviour have each featured prominently in the design and delivery of national schemes such as the New Deal for Communities, Neighbourhood Management and Neighbourhood Renewal. Moreover, as discussed in Caroline Paskell's (2007) article, some low-income neighbourhoods have been granted Police Community Support Officers as an additional measure to address disorder and gain public reassurance.

Mike Raco's (2007) article makes mention of how the political discourse accompanying New Labour's disciplinary approach to the creation of 'sustainable communities' and moral order draws on Communitarian philosophy. Communitarianism laments the putative erosion of civil society and its more 'traditional' institutions, particularly those of the family and the community (Etzioni, 1998). Often couched as a critique of the liberal (i.e. 'permissive') values associated with the 1960s and its inscription of civil rights, Communitarianism posits that the period since has witnessed those individual rights becoming increasingly disconnected from any meaningful sense of social responsibility.

Central to the more right-wing brands of Communitarianism (see Hale, 2004) is the re-moralization of society as a crucial first stage in the rebuilding of families and communities.

New Labour's Respect Action Plan (Home Office, 2006) provides a notable example of this re-moralizing agenda in that it seeks to instil seemingly lost social values while further underlining the need to perform civic responsibilities on behalf of one's community (Flint, 2006; Hughes, 2006). Indeed, 'community' appears to be the shibboleth of New Labour, and as lucidly articulated by Eugene McLaughlin:

Community is utilised by New Labour not just in a traditional sociological sense to bemoan fragmentation and breakdown, but also in a governmental manner to signal its determination to use the disciplinary powers of the state to tackle not just 'crime' but to restore order and pro-social behaviour. This civilising mission is a defining difference between New Labour and the previous New Right administrations. (McLaughlin, 2002: 55)

In considering all this, however, it is important to acknowledge the historical lineage of those social groups and classes perceived to be a danger to both public safety and the moral fibre of urban society. In the 1970s Cohen's (1972) work on Moral Panics was particularly influential. But it is possible to trace this further back to debates around the 'dangerous classes' in Victorian London (Stedman-Jones, 1971), where the promotion of the first urban renewal programmes and the establishment of the New Metropolitan Police force were each infused with appeals to Victorian values of morality, decency and respect. So while contemporary understandings of crime and the dangers to public safety are perhaps less novel than we might assume, New Labour governments have certainly been able to conjoin policies for crime with a discourse of respect and moral order. Linking these policies not only to social policy (as welfare reform) but also to urban renewal (as, in a sense, a spatialization of public policy) has enabled the promotion of a politics of public safety.

Towards a new urban political landscape in Europe?

As a final precursor to the articles which comprise this special issue, we wish to introduce in brief four themes which we consider to be of crucial significance for scholars and practitioners with a stake in the economies, social well-being, public culture, and quality of life in European cities.

Competitive economic spaces, 'purified' urban landscapes

The economic profitability of urban space – whether in the form of business districts, shopping centres, hotel complexes, or tourist sites – is patently dependent on it being maintained as clean, secure and attractive. For us, though, the really interesting issue concerns the actual technologies through which such landscapes are maintained and 'secured' as economically profitable or competitive. And this provides the starting point for several of the articles assembled here. Gesa Helms (2007) sets out with an initial argument about how attractive urban public spaces are often now secured, protected and safeguarded by an ever-widening range of police presences, such as city centre warden programmes. However, she goes on to highlight the importance attached to the funding of such projects, and how this is integrated into existing labour market policies; and, thereby, a need to appreciate the much wider regulatory implications of such projects which actively provide training and employment opportunities in fairly tight urban labour markets.

Thus, the interconnectedness of urban regeneration, policing and social regulation – through urban spaces and also through labour markets – exposes the much wider range of implications which efforts to 'secure the city' have on the lived practices of urban populations. Another instance of a 'lived space' in the contemporary entrepreneurial city is that of the Business Improvement District. Originally pioneered in the United States, they are now effectively a 'policy in motion', creeping into the city centres of the UK (Ward, 2006). It would be most interesting to monitor their presence across the urban landscapes of Europe, not least those of recent accession countries.

Governing through 'community'

Several of the articles encounter the theme of 'community', perhaps most explicitly in the cases of Paskell (2007) who discusses the impact on neighbourhood communities of the Police Community Support Officers, and Raco (2007) who considers the New Labour strategy to foster 'sustainable communities'. Both articles refer to the

case of the UK and it is indeed interesting to note how each author identifies a potential paradox in the respective strategies: and this, we would contend, is in no small measure related to the extent to which 'community' itself represents such a highly elastic and nebulous term.

The work of Nikolas Rose (1996; 1999) identifies how community has come to represent 'a geographical and inter-subjective zone', which is to take responsibility for preserving the security of its own members. Community thereby proposes a relation which appears less 'remote', more 'direct'; one which occurs not in the 'artificial' political space of *society*, but in matrices of affinity that appear more natural (Rose 1996: 334). Rose goes on to suggest that:

Community is not simply the territory within which crime is to be controlled; it is itself a means of government: its ties, bonds, forces, and affiliations are to be celebrated, encouraged, nurtured, shaped and instrumentalized in the hope of enhancing the security of each and of all. (Rose, 1999: 249–50)

Crucially, when the meanings associated with New Labour's various invocations of 'community' are closely scrutinized, we find that young people are rarely part of that community (Rogers and Coaffee, 2005; Muncie and Goldson, 2006), and, similarly, grassroots activities struggle to get their concerns heard, as in the case of social housing management or housing stock transfers (Hancock, 2001). This chimes with Raco's (2007) concern that the sustainable communities agenda has inbuilt technologies designed to 'control the *presence* and *absence* of particular types of citizens in particular places at particular times'.

To recall another of Rose's suggestions, it may be the case that 'the social' – and here we would underline this as meaning the progressively redistributive welfare state – may be giving way to 'the community' as a new territory for the administration of individuals, and a new plane upon which micro-moral relations among persons are conceptualized and administered (see also Cochrane, 2007). This is clearly an account which is derived from the case of the UK. And we would thereby urge further debate about the extent to which 'community' and the process of 'governing *through* community' are characteristic of cities and societies on mainland Europe.

Urban renaissance, policing and the 'moral ordering' of space

The sheer range of policing, enforcement, surveillance and regulatory practices that secure urban spaces represents the third underlying theme of this issue. As we have just seen, 'governing by community' is at the same time a governing by means of exclusion. And Belina's analysis of how the exclusion of 'undesirables' – in this particular case, street drugs scenes in Germany – shows the extent to which the moral ordering of urban spaces is intertwined with policies for enacting community and for reducing crime (Whitehead, 2004; Cochrane, 2007). But his article also demonstrates the limitations encountered by political appeals to citizens and communities to become 'responsibilized': once identified and classified, even if by mere presence in particular spaces, as part of the 'undesirable' illegal drug scene, the full force of the state and its enforcement apparatus is becoming apparent. This is also a theme which Dikeç (2007b) observes in relation to French urban policy. And here, Coleman's (2004) insistence on keeping sight of state power when considering governance seems most apposite, and so too are Mitchell's (2003) and Belina's (2007) insistence on considering the state's fundamental inscription of property rights.

Concerns with surveillance have marked many local responses to disorder and regeneration. Francisco Klauser (2007) examines the introduction of such a system to promote public safety and aid the revitalization of an area within a Swiss town. The surveillance, in this case in an area often used by street prostitutes, was designed to monitor activities and create a safer environment. However, while policymakers have generally emphasized the importance of CCTV, Klauser finds that these devices became largely forgotten by people who used this area. If crime in general can be understood as a response to social exclusion (Young, 1999) the kind of Communitarianism being espoused today can only be seen as a patch or temporary solution to the failures of a market orientation to deliver reduced social inequalities and progressive solutions to many of these problems.

Current debates around urban policy point towards an increasing entanglement of social policy and urban agendas, but also a creeping

criminalization of urban policy. By this we mean that what passes as urban policy today is often suffused with policies which are designed to address concerns about security, management, social regulation and the containment of disorder. In this sense, rather than being primarily directed at the regeneration of local economies and the alleviation of social inequalities, they appear to have taken on the crime and disorder agenda with a much deeper commitment to social control and regulation. This is particularly evident in the neighbourhood context and in public ('social') housing areas which, in turn, have been marked out as spaces of exclusion and heightened disorder and anti-social behaviour. The folding together of urban and criminal justice policy: or perhaps a new authoritarianism? While policing practices and rationalities already point towards the ways in which urban and criminal justice policies are overlapping – be it in relation to Paskell's (2007) Police Community Support Officers, the CCTV surveillance in Klauser's (2007) case or Helms's (2007) discussion of public space management – such folding of policy fields deserves further attention as our fourth theme (see Flint and Nixon, 2006). Paskell's early findings on new policing initiatives in deprived neighbourhoods provides the empirical insights into policing practice – while posing the question over who has ownership over these new police officers: Do they provide *community* support or *policing* support? Similarly, Helms (2007) explores the extent to which labour market policies, particularly given their focus on employability and skills (the individualization of responsibility under workfare), are closely intertwined with the tactics and aims of another policing initiative – this time in relation to city-centre public spaces.

Moving away from working practices, Dikeç's (2007b) arguments about the extent to which, at a programmatic level, French urban policy employs not only specific conceptions of space, but moreover ties these to preferred strategies of regeneration and policing – as attempts to govern – points towards some quite dramatic transformations in this folding process. For as Cummins (2005: 4) points out, through the rhetoric of 'anti-social behaviour', politicians in Britain have actively coaxed citizens to adopt particular styles of community life. Feeding on perceptions of a rising tidal wave of crime and

armed with a powerfully evocative discourse with which to demonize, and, furthermore, backed by a raft of stoutly authoritarian legislation, some residents in distressed neighbourhoods have successfully waged the power of the state against other families and groups within their own 'communities' (Johnstone and MacLeod, 2006). In this context it is hardly surprising that the European Commissioner on Human Rights (European Commission, 2005: para. 110) was moved to observe that civil orders like ASBOs 'look rather like personalised penal codes, where non-criminal behaviour becomes criminal for individuals who have incurred the wrath of the community'. Class conflict – which remains to this date one of the underpinning dynamics in which poverty is socially produced – it would appear, now only enters the debates as 'underclass' (Haylett, 2001). Tensions between working-class citizens are increasingly addressed through the criminal justice system as the outcome of an individual's failings, somewhat diffused within the social exclusion agenda (Hancock, 2007). Move up the social hierarchy and we find that, as outlined by the criminologists David Garland (2000) and Jock Young (1999), the perceived uncertainties faced in late-modern risk society – fears about job insecurity, financial security, family breakdown, personal, familial and neighbourhood safety, concern over travel, fear of immigration and 'the other', terror both local and global – are now such deeply ingrained preoccupations among the middle and upper-working classes that sympathy for the poor, empathy for the vulnerable, and liberal sensibilities relating to those convicted of criminal offences have all been steadily eroded. It is a compassion fatigue which nourishes an appetite for punitive solutions. This has often filtered into the popular advocacy of zero-tolerance policing, intolerance of street disorder which includes homelessness and the desperation underpinning begging; the flip side of which sees the emergence of insulated 'bubble' lifestyles and 'SUV' models of citizenship (Mitchell, 2005; Atkinson, 2006). Indeed, as Wacquant (2006: 4) observes:

... penal severity is now presented virtually everywhere and by everyone as a healthy necessity, a vital reflex of self-defence by a social body threatened by the gangrene of criminality, no matter how petty.

Conclusion

Our central contention, made through the assembly of this special collection of articles, is that the turn towards 'governing through crime' (Simon, 1997) and community (Rose, 1999) has been further modified in the latest iteration of European urban policies. Whereas previous waves have shown a preponderance dealing with the physical, economic and social consequences of de-industrialization and postwar decay, we now see revitalization and what has come to be known as urban renaissance firmly predicated on a need to encourage community and public safety in the city. This significant merger of crime and disorder agendas with urban spatial policies can be seen in the way that public and political discourses of safety and danger have been interwoven with treatments of social exclusion, disaffiliation and discontent. As the war on terror has blended with domestic concerns about social cohesion and 'enemies within' national states (Young, 2007), it seems likely that a punitive and far-reaching connection of urban policy with disorder and control are likely only to increase in the near future. Discerning the points at which conventional policing ends and 'gives way' to urban renewal and regeneration has become an increasingly challenging occupation given the overt concerns with security as the mainstay of achieving the kinds of social and economic investment desired by city and central government administrations.

To us, the growing interest in social regulation, (antisocial) behaviour, civility and control over crime (Fyfe et al., 2006) would appear to be indicative of a political concern to manage or ameliorate the intense contradictions of a neo-liberal mode of urban governance (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck, 2003). And while we should certainly tread cautiously in drawing parallels with the social polarization and the punitive revanchism which evidently punctuates the political landscapes of 'paradigmatic' cities across the USA and Latin America (Smith, 1996; Caldeira, 2003; Mitchell, 2003), in an era characterized by 'fast' policy transfer and with Europe's cities enduring widening socio-economic inequalities, it surely behoves scholars of European urbanism to examine the intricate tactics and strategies being designed to govern these increasingly unequal spaces.

Note

- ¹ Here, we are drawing on 'regulation' as developed by the Parisian school of Regulation Theory, where the mode of regulation refers to a preservation of a set of institutions (including but extending beyond the state), social norms and infrastructures, and a way of life which accompanies the particular growth regime prevailing within a period of history (MacLeod, 1997).

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