



IMAGES FROM A NEOLIBERAL CITY: THE STATE, SURVEILLANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL *

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Abstract. Smith (1996: 230–232) characterized the late twentieth century crusade for a “new urban frontier” as akin to the Wild West of nineteenth century America. In the last ten years, not only in the North American context but in Europe too, extending the boundaries of the urban frontier – economically, politically, and culturally – has galvanized powerful urban coalitions in the task of re-taking – both ideologically and materially – city spaces from the visible and symbolic elements of urban degeneration. The project of urban reclamation has not been neutral but has been formulated within a post welfare, neoliberal politics that has promoted a ideology of self responsabilisation within a climate of moral indifference to increasingly visible inequality. These ideological shifts have been fuelled by, and consolidated in, an evolving form of state ensemble that, as a rapidly moving target (Hay 1996: 3), has been largely neglected in criminological analysis. It is the contention of this paper that the agents and agencies of the neoliberal state are constructing the boundaries and possibilities of the new urban frontier while simultaneously engaging in a project of social control that will have far-reaching consequences for how we understand the meanings of public space, social justice and the parameters of state power.

In stressing the relations between states and social control, this paper argues for an understanding of the normative aspects of social control embedded in prevailing political practice and social relations. In recent years, criminologists have depicted a fundamental shift in the rationale and practices of social control (Feeley and Simon 1994). The emphasis has been on managerial techniques and discontinuity and dislocation from previous crime control practice. In exploring contemporary social control practices, risk theorists (Shearing and Stenning 1985; Feeley and Simon 1994; Barry, Osbourne, and Rose 1996) have dematerialized risk discourses, neglected an analysis of state institutions and ideological power, and constructed a false demarcation between the technical and the normative aspects of social control. These omissions are problematic as they often demonstrate an unwillingness to venture beyond official vernacular identify and challenge tendential interests. Looking away from centers of power has led to an obsession with a particular definition of the local, coupled with a failure to adequately decon-

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struct ideological obfuscation associated with power plays. There has been a tendency to avoid holding up for critical scrutiny those social processes out of which discourses of crime and safety have arisen to play an important role in social reproduction. In the UK, and increasingly North America, camera surveillance is presented as being indicative of a new penology and at the cutting edge of crime control theory and practice. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly evident that surveillance cameras are bound up with a larger and more substantive social ordering project (Coleman and Sim 2000) and, therefore, “the main focus of debate should be extended to cover more political issues than the technical ability of surveillance cameras” (Koskela 2002: 273). To contribute to these issues and debates this article discusses the political-moral nature of social control, and in particular the adoption of closed circuit television (CCTV), within the processes of state building in the contemporary city. It is argued that a key task of CCTV is to deny, or render invisible, the unequal social relations and/or incongruent behavioral activities that neoliberal city building finds morally and politically unacceptable.

Neoliberal States and Spaces

In the UK and US, beginning in the early 1980s the partnership approach to urban governance and economic management became consolidated through the manifestation of the discourses of the New Right. Over 20 years, these discourses have constructed a particular story of global socio-economic restructuring (Tombs and Whyte 2003) and furthered the hegemony of a neoliberal strategy of marketization, self-responsibilisation, and entrepreneurialism. Within the context of national and international competition for investment, the running of cities in North America and the UK has resulted in the forging of institutional alliances and collaborative arrangements between public and private agencies to strengthen the institutional base and political viability of the local and national state. In their analysis of American cities, Logan and Molotch (1987) depicted contemporary rule in the city as geared toward the building of a “growth machine” which, apart from state building, has re-ordered inequalities between and within cities. Within such a growth machine:

... local actors link parochial settings with cosmopolitan interests, *making places safe for development*. . . . The growth ethic pervades virtually all aspects of local life, including the political system, the agenda for economic development, and even cultural organizations . . . (Logan and Molotch 1987: 13, emphasis added).

The local politics of growth has, therefore, led to a reorganization of the boundaries between public and private interests, and “resulted in a heightened control of the polity by new bourgeoisie and property interests, almost exclusively consisting of businessmen” (Hall and Hubbard 1996: 155). The growth ethic (or entrepreneurial ethos) has, broadly though unevenly, underpinned the process of state formation, euphemistically characterized in the UK through the official discourse of partnership. It is through the notion of partnership that the neoliberal state has developed.

Instead of marginalizing an analysis of the state, as in much neo-Foucauldian literature, it can be conceived of as part of a neoliberal project of rule that “is constantly seeking power sharing arrangements which give it scope for remaining an active center, hence being a ‘catalytic’ state” (Weiss 1997: 26). Furthermore, “neoliberalism represents a complex, multifaceted project of socio-spatial transformation – it contains not only a utopian vision of a fully commodified form of social life, but also a concrete program of institutional modifications through which the unfettered rule of capital is to be promoted” (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 363). The influence of neoliberalism on the urban spatial form can be characterized as a process of “creative destruction”. As well as being destructive of forms of welfare provision, regulation of financial and monetary speculation, forms of targeted public funding and certain rights and social entitlements, neoliberalism has produced “moments of creation”, including the building of free trade zones, privatized spaces for high earner consumption, the unleashing of zero tolerance initiatives and targeted surveillance, and the development of powerful and insidious discourses aiming to re-image cities within a vernacular of renaissance (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 363–372). An important component of these neoliberal strategies has been the creation and uses of Business Improvement Districts (BIDS), much in evidence in the US and now in the UK. In return for paying annual subscriptions, commercial property owners are able to fund a private body charged with managing city centers. Within BID partnerships street cleanliness becomes a catch-all category under which problems of marketing, environmental improvements and street safety become conflated. BIDS are publicly unaccountable bodies set up to police and monitor the debris of neoliberal urban visions – litter, graffiti, the homeless, and prohibited street trading. Like previous incarnations of state power, neo-liberal strategies of rule have involved the application of management techniques that appear to offer developmental growth as a “value-free” and technical solution to urban problems claimed in the “interests of all” (Hall and Hubbard 1996: 156). But it is a politics of investment that defines the limits of techniques of rule (Savage, Warde and Ward 2003: 182). Thus, far

from being value free, these new governance forms are serving to reflect and reinforce new and more established sets of power relations.¹

In fostering these power relations, cities attempt to “forge a distinctive image . . . to create an atmosphere of place and tradition that will act as a lure to both capital and people ‘of the right sort’ ” (Harvey 1990: 295). The marketing of place has thus intensified processes bound up with attempts to lever investment and provide the basis for positive re-imaging through the selling of an area’s economic benefits in terms of infrastructure and labor force, the selling of cultural products, tourist attractions, the general quality of life (including the elimination of crime and propagation of safety), and a range of consumption and leisure facilities. As well as attempting to make the city more attractive to potential investors, this manipulation of image has played “a role in ‘social control’ logic, convincing local peoples as to the benevolence of entrepreneurial strategies” and in providing a framework for the construction and maintenance of partnerships (Hall and Hubbard 1996: 162). Essentially, the problem of place management (the selection of desirable images and the dissemination of information about place) has been at the same time the problem of representing and maintaining order within the city.

In promoting the economic growth of a city, place entrepreneurs – often represented in provincial media as local heroes (Lowe 1993) – have contributed to long term shifts in urban governance, particularly around the marginalization of welfarist objectives in favor of competitiveness and growth. The process of marketing cities has engaged a set of “new primary definers” (Coleman and Sim 2000) from business firms, police, local media, investment capital, tourist agencies, and cultural and educational establishments who have sought to replace either unclear or negative images previously held by the various targets of city marketers. These agents and agencies charged with city rule are attempting to build “a hegemony of vision” (Zukin 1996: 223) across this rescaled state form, to not only facilitate the “channeling of capital into the built environment” but also to assist in “producing, controlling and surveilling social and physical spaces”, designed to construct the perception of “a relative crisis-free and cohesive civic order” (Swyngedouw 1996: 1504). Theoretically, the ascendance of these powerful definers, and their role within a neo-liberal state, can be understood as “constructor[s], organiser[s], ‘permanent persuader[s] and not just simple orator[s]” (Gramsci 1971: 10). Such intellectuals, for Gramsci, provide social groups with a degree of homogeneity and awareness of their own function in organizing, for example, the confidence of investors in business, customers for particular products, and the articulation of a new legality and cultural plane (Gramsci 1971: 5). As participants in the building of a particular social bloc, itself often contradictory and discordant, the new primary definers can be understood as engaged in local

political struggles designed to forge a hegemonic project (Jessop 1990: 260) between the institutional components of a neo-liberal state form. The building of a responsible economic, political, intellectual, and moral leadership across the rescaled state form may be possible to the extent that a “representative regime” can be consolidated (Jessop 1990: 345).

An outcome of these developments has been the concentration of public funds, state capital and socio-cultural capital within a small locally powerful and politically inoculated network, which has shaped the urban fabric in its own image. Swyngedouw (1996: 1503) argued that this form of state has “a decidedly undemocratic and double authoritarian touch, both at the supra-national and local (urban/regional) level” largely as it bypasses local democratic control. The “democratic deficit” in many partnership activities may be consolidating a new authoritarian state form in its position “as *organiser* of new forms of investment, market regulation, new forms of control and policing and as *disorganiser* of old forms of welfare and social collectivity” (Savage, Warde, and Ward 2003: 197 [emphasis in the original]. It has been argued, therefore, that the work of partnerships towards local economic development has intensified a process of commodification regarding the city, along with its political-ethical reinvention, construed hegemonically through discourses pertaining to the meaning of place and civic identity.

In summary, a neoliberal state form can be characterized as a set of institutions that demonstrate a shift to private sector power in decision-making, relative inoculation from public scrutiny, being less reliant on public elections, and which are centrally concerned with building a legitimacy base for its activities through public consultation rather than participation. Furthermore, in relation to the last point, this state form has promoted a raft of technical solutions, to deal with the manifestations of urban decay, which has helped construct layers of expertise filtered through an ideology of a-politicization.

Neoliberal Order

Some writers have highlighted an increasing concern with security, order, and policing in the spaces of this new city. On this issue, Sorkin (1992) offered a dystopian description of the “the new American city,” and put forward three characteristics that distinguish this emergent city which he saw as the basis for “models for urban development throughout the world” (Sorkin 1992: xv). The first characteristic, driven by globalized capital, electronic production techniques, and mass culture, is repetitively universalizing city spaces into the predictable and known. Secondly, the new city can be characterized as increasingly concerned with security, both technological

and physical, leading to new forms of urban segregation and distinction amongst city inhabitants. Third, the new city has increasingly assumed the character of a theme park as reflected in its architecture and imaging, which in turn reflects “a spuriously appropriated past that substitutes for a more exigent and examined present” (Sorkin 1992: xiv).² It is precisely out of these developments that initiatives around social control have played their part in attempting to homogenize the perceptions, uses, and experiences of city center space.

In thinking about the development and logic underpinning these spaces, Goss (1993) argued that partnerships between designers, planners, and developers have been energized in constructing total consumption environments that have their roots in shopping malls but are also increasingly important in the architectural landscaping of city centers. He argued that a complex control logic underpins the reconstruction process:

... developers have sought to assuage the collective guilt over conspicuous consumption by designing into the retail built environment the means for the fantasized dissociation from the act of shopping. [...] ... designers manufacture the illusion that something else other than mere shopping is going on, while also mediating the materialist relations of mass consumption and disguises the identity and rootedness of the shopping center in the contemporary capitalist social order. The product is effectively a *pseudoplace*, which works through spatial strategies of dissemblance and duplicity (Goss 1993: 19).³

Such strategies, articulated by architects of the neoliberal city, reinforce a particular set of social relations that have fostered specific practices of social control (Parenti 1999; Coleman and Sim 2000). Just as the design of contemporary urban centers has attempted to hide how they are embedded in capitalist social relations, so current practices of social control can, in part, be understood as geared towards hiding or denying certain forms of unwanted and incongruous behaviors and activities at odds with neoliberal city visions.

The rise of predictable, sanitized and secured urban environments has, for Sibley (1995), been integral to a process of “boundary erection”, constructed through individual and institutional conceptions of abjection and hostility towards difference. Reflected within the built environment, such boundaries of separation are in part moral boundaries (Sibley 1995: 39–43) underpinned by a fear of the other, and constructed along class, gender, ethnic, sexual, age, and disability lines. The urge to purify and dominate space may be a relatively unnoticed feature within “the spatial separations of city center development” (Sibley 1995: xiv); however, “it appears that the boundaries between the consuming and non-consuming public are strengthening, with

non-consumption being constructed as a form of deviance” (Sibley 1995: xii). The process of re-moralization in the city center has run coterminous with a process that places the value of property over the value of people.

In the main, urban geographers and not criminologists have made these connections between the governance of social relations in cities, social control, and order. In making these connections, a range of issues have been raised about the reworking of the boundaries between public and private space, and a re-ordering of the uses of that space alongside an intensification in the reality and visibility of socio-economic inequality. Strategies enacted under neoliberal urban rule are increasing the divergence of control tasks between public and private sectors that open up spaces for the “the development of crime prevention projects which are not necessarily directed at ‘crime’ in the legal sense of the word”, and are thereby instigating a process of bringing “people under penal control over whom no legal suspicion is established” (van Swaaningen 1997: 196). The developments discussed here can be understood as a merging of crime control/prevention with a broader strategy seeking to manage some notion of quality of life, that reflects the re-imaging of place. At the local level, this has been accompanied by a move towards public order, zero tolerance or quality of life policing that has been aimed at groups perceived to demean the urban aesthetic and who make life complicated for the law abiding.

Targeting the homeless, drunks, and vandals continues to be underpinned by a widespread tolerance of inequality and poverty.⁴ The notion of quality of life has formed a thread in urban regeneration discourse on both sides of the Atlantic and increasingly embodies reference to local crime hot spots and political attempts to counter any negative local, national, and international reputations and identities that particular places are perceived to engender. Partnerships between local business, police, local government, developers, and local media are becoming increasingly geared towards the management of local problems and threats deemed to destabilize a local growth strategy (Coleman and Sim 2000). These agencies pool and swap information to be used in investment decisions.⁵ This recognition of the salience of crime within local growth machines and its importance in the competitive re-positioning of global cities, has been reflected in the UK through central government initiatives such as the Crime and Disorder Act (1998). As Third Way speak would have it, the Act is aimed at producing joined up government.⁶ In other words, formalization of the developments discussed in this article, through the central state, has been taking shape under a neo-liberal ideology of managerialism at the local level. This has intensified a process that has narrowly reconfigured social policy to sustaining economic competitiveness and fighting crime and disorder. Managers and proponents of camera

surveillance, in shaping how the technology is ideologically represented and used, have further reinforced the link between orderly urban space and urban renaissance. Attempts to join up experiments in neoliberal rule and coordinate agents and agencies in the neo-liberal state has been at the heart of a Third Way politics, a central aim of which is the restoration of sovereign or state control over the socially excluded, hard to reach groups or, as we used to say, the poor. As the next section will explore, neoliberal social control has a logic rooted in the emergent social relations and visions prescribed for contemporary cities.

UK Camera Surveillance: Extending a Neoliberal Urban Revanchism

The original revanchists in late Nineteenth Century Paris sought to reclaim the streets by coercive and moral means from the perceived ungodliness of socialist ideas and practices. Currently, a notion of “privileged revenge” is being enacted at the behest of a neoliberal vision of urban sanctity. To be sure, these forms of social control have a logic underpinned by an overt viciousness targeted at the economically marginalized as a high risk group who appear “unable to learn the lesson that neo-liberalism now expects of its subjects” (Pratt 1997: 181). In other words, neoliberal vernacular has irresponsibilized sections of the population as a forerunner to their criminalisation and/or exclusion from public space. New social subjectivities continue to be cultivated around the homeless, unemployed, selected radicalized minorities, and those on the borders of the “respectable” economy, as they are targeted and pathologized as incongruous folk-devils of the neoliberal landscape; unclean, sometimes petty, violators who illegitimately inhabit a sanitized urban aesthetic. The most recent developments around policing and social control practices in this arena demonstrate the means and ends of a neoliberal urbanism and indicate a move to unity (both ideologically and in practice) between public and private order maintenance agencies. It is the promise of wealth and international recognition underpinning strategies of urban renaissance that is providing the catalyst for action and state building.

The advent of closed circuit television in the UK traverses this state form and demonstrates some of the trends in social control this paper is concerned with. Although CCTV may be viewed as no more than a technology for the prevention of crime (Tilley 1998), it is in reality a vehicle for the realization of a highly moral vision of order, often communicated through a language of censure aimed at the least powerful members of society. Camera surveillance should not be studied in isolation because it stands at the center of, and reaches into, a larger network of policing developing in advanced capitalist cities. What follows is a discussion of the situation in the UK generally and

the city of Liverpool in particular.⁷ This city has recently been held up as a model for urban renaissance practice and has one of the UK's most advanced camera surveillance systems.

Following the securitised reactions in the United States to the events of September 2001, the seeming desirability of camera surveillance has come to the fore, despite a range of evidence from the UK that this technology has a limited influence – if any at all – on a range of criminal offences (NACRO 2001). In the UK, however, CCTV is less about the prevention/detection of crime and more about the promotion of a required urban order and sensibility. It is the desired tool of neoliberal rule; and, as a Government Department stated, CCTV is an empowering technology that has enabled consumers the “freedom and safety to shop” (Home Office 1994: 9). Under both John Major's Conservative administration and then Tony Blair's New Labour government, CCTV has played a key role in official crime control policy and rhetoric; the latest techno-fix to rising rates of recorded crime and public anxiety. Between 1994 and 1999, £38.5 million was dispensed from the Home Office with an estimated £51 million from the private sector to establish CCTV systems (*Hansard* 1999). Under New Labour in particular, the allocation of £170 million of Home Office funds to extend CCTV by 40,000 cameras was announced for 1999 to 2001, making CCTV the most heavily funded non-criminal justice crime prevention initiative in the UK (Welsh and Farrington 2002). Competitive bidding for the funds can only be achieved through building urban partnerships that include the use of private sector expertise and finance (Coleman and Sim 1998). This has led to the UK being the largest market for CCTV in Europe (Graham 2000: 45). All of these developments are not subject to statutory regulation in terms of how camera systems are used or where they are placed. Since 1994, Liverpool city center, like other cities, has been wired up to a CCTV network with the aid of public and private financing. In 1998, the legislative framework of the Crime and Disorder Act provided the means for the extension and formalization of the network in 2003. The long-term aim of this expansion has been the integration of comparable CCTV systems linked to a master control room overseeing 250 cameras in the city center and outlying areas, as well as links to cameras in stores, public houses, and night clubs (*Daily Post* 2000). Within the city center, this will incorporate talking cameras so “operators will be able to shout at would-be attackers to warn them they are being filmed” (*Liverpool Echo* 2001). In Liverpool, and at national level, CCTV has been depicted as a neutral observer in the fight against crime and social incivility; a technical-fix for an unease about urban disorder and degeneration. For its proponents, CCTV has a reassuring function. It reassures consumers, tourists, potential investors, and property developers. In other words, it reassures the “capital

and people ‘of the right sort’ ” (Harvey 1990: 295) deemed suitable to inhabit a neoliberal landscape.

CCTV and the Landscape of Denial

The use of CCTV – at least in the urban centers of the UK – continues to expand the power and scope of neoliberal agendas. To clarify: CCTV is part-managed by local business consortia, chambers of commerce, and hybrid organizations sponsored by a mixture of local capital and public grants. These entrepreneurial roots of camera surveillance provide a clue to the uses of CCTV as a social ordering tool. Within neoliberal strategies for order, CCTV is central to a strategy of denial in the urban form. The rhetoric of “rolling back the state” – a feature of 1980s neoliberal ideology – has moved on to an era of “roll out neoliberalism” (Peck and Tickell 2002: 389) that, through intensified social surveillance and authoritarian statehood, is attempting to cast a veil over the harmful social consequences of neoliberalisms’ more destructive moments. Camera surveillance manages both the idealized urban order and its discontents. This means that a range of urban social problems such as popular protest, homelessness, street trading, and petty violations of local laws are – through the eye of a street camera – divorced from any meaningful social context, and instead are defined through the language of crime and disorder. What needs to be acknowledged is that cameras overwhelmingly focus on the street, or more accurately street people, and thus reinforce hegemonic definitions of risk, crime and harm as emanating solely from powerless and disaffected people. Any irresponsible actions and social harms propagated by the directors of neoliberal strategies and other corporate actors⁸ are thus further inoculated by the selective use of the camera networks they have established. These two points concerning denial are particularly important when set against the fact that footage from street cameras regularly provide the material for cops and robbers TV entertainment shows, reinforcing within the public mind ideas about crime, law, and social (dis)order. As surveillance cameras routinely monitor the street prohibitions (not all of them strict legal infractions) of the neoliberal city, they also reinforce the moral codes, intolerances, and normative prescriptions of its creators.

The Denial of Politics

The surveillance of neoliberal spaces reflect an intolerance to politics that is bound up with an attempt to deny overt political expression by local citizenry, particularly if critical of the neoliberal agenda itself. The strategy to depoliticize space reflects the ideological underpinnings of partnership. From

the Urban Development Corporations in the Thatcher era and the sprouting of BIDS in the Reagan/Bush years, to the Third Way of the Clinton/Blair successions, partnerships have assumed the guise of technical and neutral players in the urban scene; dispensing with red tape (i.e., earlier and outmoded democratic forms of decision making) and delivering the goods (the goods usually being gentrified spaces and headline-grabbing architectural gestures).

The perception of these spaces as orderly, clean and safe is integral to the realization of profits. These strategic spaces strictly curtail and police demonstrations, leafleting, and picketing which threatens the contrived retail carnival atmosphere. The idea of public space as an arena for collective debate to do with rights and entitlements is being eroded in this postjustice city (Mitchell 2001). If, in principle, aesthetics override democratic considerations, then this principle will have only been furthered in Liverpool, where in June 2003 the city's claim to be the most business friendly in the UK was reinforced as it was designated European Capital of Culture for 2008. Within hours of the announcement, property prices rose by as much as 20% in the city center and the local media heralded the coming of "Boom Town", with increased tourism, hi-tech investment and property development (*Liverpool Echo* 2003b). Following this news, the chief of police promised a safe culture and trumpeted "the effects the Capital of Culture honor will have on the force" in terms of extra police funding (Merseyside (2003) Safety row for culture year, 19 June). Whilst the local elite congratulated themselves, the police supported the city council and the passing of a law to curtail a range of grassroots and spontaneous street protests. In particular, this came out of a response to marches and protests that criticized how the city's regeneration was being conducted. The law states that, "no person shall in any street or public place, for the purpose of the selling or advertising any article, or obtaining custom tout or importune, to the annoyance or obstruction of passengers". The broadness of the law means it can also be used to attack a range of perceived nuisances tied to the secondary economy in the city and, for the new primary definers, give the city the image of a "bargain basement economy".⁹ It is an offence for people to sell or tout for business in the streets or other public places, including flower sellers selling their goods in restaurants and bars. The new law also bans individuals asking for money to mind cars and prevents charities from stopping people in the street. This is particularly interesting as Liverpool is one of the poorest areas in the European Union and has had a visible and sizable part of its population engaged in the secondary economy in the city for over two centuries (Brogden 1982).¹⁰ The law also prohibits flyers being given out, people selling draw tickets in the street, student "rag-mag" sellers and leaflets being put under the windscreens of parked cars. Liverpool City Council's licensing committee approved a team of 14 Wardens

to enforce the law across the city. Linked by radio to the camera system, these Wardens cost £700,000 annually and are utilized widely in addressing anti-social behavior that includes checking the movement and identity of homeless people and those who sell the homeless magazine, the *Big Issue*.

The Denial of Culture

The contrived atmosphere of the neoliberal city involves a branding process that strictly coheres with prevailing marketing strategies. The strategy of “controlled spontaneity” seeks the realization of an idealized middle class perception of the ordered nineteenth century city street, and points to a hegemony of aesthetics regarding who and what should and should not be seen. This recapturing of an idealized past and present is attempted through staging officially sponsored and prescribed cultural events and street art deemed ‘image friendly’. Liverpool’s premier arts festival – Biennial – featured the work of a local photographer whose exhibition was entitled “Wish You Were Here.” The exhibition consisted of alternative postcards depicting scenes of contemporary Liverpool – de-industrialized wastelands and run down housing estates. In showing images of “another” Liverpool, at odds with the neoliberal vision, the city entrepreneurs stirred a debate through the local press as to whether the work was warranted, as it was certainly at odds with the efforts they had in place to reverse negative images of the city. It is image, and its control, that is paramount for those same people and agencies that fund the city’s CCTV system. Cameras in the cities of the UK are a tool in the politics of vision – helping enforce what can and cannot be observed on the streets, thus aiding the strategic balance between aesthetics and function. For example, any notion of the city as a place of spontaneous fun for young people is being curtailed, as skateboarders can be fined up to £200 if they break a by-law banning skating passed by city councilors in July 2002. Liverpool council claimed that skateboarding should be an offense as it is giving the city a bad image – putting tourists off and pedestrians at risk, as well as damaging statues and memorials.¹¹

The introduction of cameras is also starting to have an influence on what clothing can be legitimately worn, particularly by the young, in city centers. In cities in the counties of Essex, Hampshire, Cornwall, and Devon, police and private security enforce a policy that has banned the wearing of hooded tops, baseball caps, and hats of various descriptions (it seems umbrellas are still a option). For all the techno-hype, cameras cannot identify people if they are wearing headgear. Under the initiative, mainly young people are stopped and told to remove headgear if they want to remain in the city center. As one businesswoman stated “it’s a brilliant idea [but] some kids get stropky [angry] when we ask them to remove their hoods. As long as it helps in

the fight against crime it isn't discriminating against young people". Such measures are likely to be adopted elsewhere, and are set to further criminalize a generation and reinforce the discourse of dangerous youth in the public mind.

The Denial of Inequality

The creation and surveillance of neoliberal spaces seek to deny the materialization of inequality. With the use of surveillance cameras (as with the introduction of the urban police forces of the nineteenth century) has come the greater potential for spotting and moving on undesirables and the more efficient enforcement of city Exclusion Orders and retail-store Banning Orders. The Orders are operated by private security and police to keep known, potential and anti-social elements out of the city center. Furthermore, those perceived as non-consumers are being disproportionately monitored by camera operators, particularly if young and/or black (Norris and Armstrong 1999; Coleman and Sim 1998).¹² In Liverpool, despite the riots of the 1980s (the largest and most costly in human and financial terms in the UK) and the government responses that followed, Liverpool city center is still virtually devoid of black people.¹³ The restriction of movement and quality of life for local black people is reinforced by police stop and search data that are disproportionately high for black people in the UK, with Liverpool having the highest rates outside London (Coleman, Sim, and Whyte 2002). The construction of the theme park city only reinforces these processes, so those walking the streets without branded shopping bags and low income categories of teenagers, single men, the disheveled are likely targets of security personnel whose idea of suspicion has converged around the notion of walking or standing without due cause.

In Liverpool, as in other advanced capitalist cities, the problem of how to "responsibilize the homeless" has been aired between local growth sponsors. The issue of homelessness and its increased visibility on the streets of Britain through the 1980s and into the 1990s received growing national attention from media commentators and policy makers. The notion of professional begging aggressive begging helped move the debate on homelessness to the ideologically motivated problem of how "to reclaim the streets for the law-abiding citizen". The drive for street reclamation has taken various forms; and in Liverpool, the notion of educating the sellers of the *Big Issue* in non-aggressive communication has been tried with the idea they could be city ambassadors or tourist guides. Working for a living by selling the homeless magazine does not seem to be a responsible activity, and at odds with the prevailing urban aesthetic. It is the targeting of beggars who mingle with the crowds around the bars and shopping malls who present the biggest chal-

lenge. "Operation Change," launched in Liverpool in 2003, aimed to reduce anti-social behavior among beggars and to target "people who allegedly can't speak English, using their children to ask for money" (*Daily Post* 2003). Publicity posters (titled: Fact: Nobody needs to beg for a bed) have a picture of a fake-model homeless person, crouched on a city street, whose face is covered by a cardboard sign that reads, "Help them make the change, keep your change". This process of silencing the experiences of homeless people is reflected in the poster campaigns, which discourage local people from talking to and giving loose change to street people. In Liverpool, this has been coupled with undercover policing and targeted surveillance resulting in the arrest, caution, or charging of over 800 people in 2002 in relation to begging offences. All beggars are now routinely finger printed and placed on the Police National Computer (*Daily Post* 2003).

The removal of the signs of inequality has been extended to a tradition found in most English cities during October and November. This is Guy Faulks Night, where children have for over two centuries legitimately asked members of the public for a "penny for the guy". Some, though not all, of this money is collected for schools and other charitable causes. However, in an attempt to combat children "who are a nuisance" and who remind shoppers of images of the street urchins of the nineteenth century, the Liverpool City Council denied the continuation of this activity under the Vagrancy Act (1824) and the Children's and Young Persons Act (1933) that makes it an offence for anyone who is responsible for a child under the age of 16 to allow that child to be in any street for the purposes of begging (*Daily Post* 2002b). The validity of young people to be on the streets has been questioned through a number of schemes. For example, in 1998, a government funded initiative involved the police in Liverpool and other agencies stopping and questioning suspected school truants. One thousand school children were stopped in 1999, and a third of these "gave a good reason for being out of classes" (*Liverpool Echo* 2000). The latest initiative, straight from New York, is what is called the "yob tank". This is a police mobile prison that tours the city locking up anti-social youths, fully kitted with internal and external CCTV (*Liverpool Echo* 2003a).

For some, the examples cited above may seem trivial, but actually form part of a larger program of masking any hindrances to neoliberal progress by rendering invisible unequal relations. Camera surveillance plays its part in veiling its targets by displacing them, excluding them, and re-representing social and political problems as criminal and/or deviant. CCTV ensures an increasingly codified set of unequal rights regarding the use space and, in displacing inequality, reinforces the development of a hidden city. Just as the main routes into downtown have received makeovers to disguise the poor

estates from visitors (mass tree planting on man made hills) and renaming (from Street to Boulevard), so CCTV can be understood as an attempt to disguise-through-exclusion the flip side of neoliberal city building. Crucially, the enforcement of a new social hygiene and the class-based cues and norms that underlie it are not gender neutral (Coleman and Sim 1998). With the advent of camera surveillance, the extension of a threatening and objectifying male gaze continues to be a taxing problem in the domain of a neoliberal public space; not least in terms of the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual violence (Koskela 2002).

Conclusion: Trajectories of State Formation and Social Control

Davis (1990: 224) captured the shift from social welfare to social warfare in post-liberal Los Angeles, where “one observes an unprecedented tendency to merge urban design, architecture and the police apparatus into a single comprehensive security effort.” His work pointed to a dystopian vision of the contemporary city where urban renaissance continues to go hand in hand with the reconstruction of policing and security towards the maintenance of brutal and unequal social boundaries. Davis cogently highlighted the interconnections between agencies involved in social control in the city. However, the extent to which it is possible to generalize from such an analysis has remained open to empirical and theoretical debate. “Fortress LA”, like Cohen’s (1979) “punitive city” or the pathological zones of the Chicago School, cannot be read as representative of urban policing, strategies of social control, or patterns of urban crime respectively. As Taylor (1997: 59) argued, global prescriptions of change, whether formulated in terms of a “risk society” or post-modernism, have failed to connect “global change to local expressions” regarding the emergence of local partnerships that have placed crime prevention as a core concern. While this may be true, it also becomes important to remain sensitive to global trends, not least in terms of the discourses of crime and safety and the image management they are a part of which are central to the promotion of neoliberal ideology and growth. In noting the importance of the local, it does not prohibit a contribution to wider empirical or theoretical debate around the nature of contemporary social control. Neo-Foucauldian approaches to social control stressed the micro techniques of power. These studies have been, at best, contingent and, at worst – in the call for attention to the local and particular – so particularistic “that we can never know when any particular is particular enough” (McLennan 1996: 70). Ultimately, existing empirical observations must be placed alongside, and integrated in, theoretical progress.

This article has not argued for brushing aside the peculiarities and contingencies involved in policing and monitoring particular places with distinct socio-economic backgrounds, political complexions, cultural expressions, and other issues that fall under the broad category of quality of life. Following these points, although the composition of state managers has shifted under entrepreneurial conditions of urban rule in the last 75 years, those groups and individuals targeted as problematic for that rule have remained broadly the same. This point has underpinned the lack of a deeper historical narrative of social control within theorizations of risk, but also remind us that revanchist policies of reclamation will not unfold evenly between different locations. The evidence suggests they are unfolding and encouraged by the partnership approach organized through the CDA and BIDS that have grown out of private sector jostling for greater power and position in the decision making process at local and national levels over the last 20 years. Information swapping between cities on quality of life policing tactics (Zero Tolerance) does not simply mean Liverpool is like New York (which it is twinned with), but it does point to a recognition by local elites of similar problems and hindrances that may require a policing option as a solution. In this sense, the growth machine ethic, which is helping bind a new consensus across the neoliberal state, also underpins a defensive and revanchist social movement that is pushing the boundaries of crime and safety initiatives so they are increasingly defined by targeting street nuisances that mirror the urban social defense practices of the 1880s. CCTV represents a move to re-gate the city while at the same time adding support to a political strategy that is resulting in the intensification of social demarcation between richer and poorer sections of the population.

This article is therefore more than a descriptive overview of some new penology, with its emphasis on a-moral and actuarial techniques. What has been largely unacknowledged within the risk literature is the way in which new technologies like CCTV have been underpinned by moral discourses that have emanated from the supposedly instrumental/risk organs of the corporate and business sector (Coleman and Sim 1998, 2000). Thus, the defense of property and profit margins relies upon and marshals moral signifiers and discourses of respectability. It is the media savvy managers of BIDS, city partnerships, and growth spokespeople – along with more established public officials – who articulate contemporary urban tales of degeneration and moral decay. Profit may be the desired goal, but moral propriety, family values, and civic responsibility conjoin with the growth ethic and provide a means and an end in themselves. Furthermore, it seems questionable that “the mechanisms of coercion within criminal justice [will] come to be seen less as a device for inflicting pain and more as set of resources to be considered in

reducing risk” (Shearing 2001: 217). This kind of speculation only denies the militarization¹⁴ and punitive severity being brought to bear in many cities. The components of spatial reordering (camera surveillance, paramilitary policing, hybrid policing) need to be analyzed in dialectical interrelation and as belonging to a strategy of social ordering, not always uniform and coherent. What this article has attempted to analyze are those processes that are constructing the legitimate and safe uses of public space and how the proper objects of neoliberal power come to identify social groups as deserving of exclusionary, frequently oppressive, monitoring. These processes of social censure, along with definitions of responsibility, have been re-framed within a neoliberal state – a concept which is missing in the risk literature. It is a notion of the state that critical criminologists need to retain:

... it is exactly through the state (*at what ever scale*) that the position and role of the citizen and his/her relationship with society is defined, institutionalized and, on occasion, contested and challenged [. . .]. If we are concerned with formulating emancipatory policies and strategies, the state and other forms of governance remain key areas for challenging processes of exclusion and disempowerment (Sywngedouw 1996: 1502, *emphasis added*)

If discourses of moral abjection and corrective severity still hold a pivotal position in social ordering, then this belies any notion of the end of class, racial, gendered, sexual, and age based expressions of power. Power in its normative and ideological dimensions still needs to be understood and deconstructed because the processes denial, containment, reclamation or exclusion are integral to contemporary state functioning and neoliberal ordering.

The application of neoliberal policies has accentuated the problem of challenging their hegemony, not least for local communities themselves. This is because the contemporary notion of public interest has increasingly been aligned to, and made to work alongside, the visions of urban renaissance discussed in this article. This public interest seems to be establishing itself around an evocation of “a rhetorical appeal to an essential community of ‘the city’ or ‘the people’ ” (Goss 1996: 228). This has reworked the notion of the public and tied it to an ideology of urban patriotism as articulated by city mayors, growth managers, and other new and old primary definers. Behind the glamour of city patriotic fervor and its much vaunted promises of growth are hidden the less palpable effects of neoliberal rule that are often presented as the suitable enemies and socially unworthy.

Challenging neo-liberal state power and the official discourse surrounding it is difficult. As noted elsewhere, critics of CCTV are portrayed as “enemies

of the public interest” (Davies 1996: 328), opponents of crime fighting and, by implication, friend of the criminal. However these predictable and simplistic reactions do not refute the arguments here. In returning to an analysis of political-economy, what this article has argued for is an understanding of camera surveillance as implicated in a drive to re-moralize city spaces from the vantage point of the political architects of that space. With the advent of CCTV came the political recognition of lowered horizons and a diminished sense of the public interest, couched in rhetoric that speaks of government and state impotence in the face of a range of social and economic problems. While failing to tackle the roots of inequality, states are increasingly seeking to manage its more visible manifestations through a range of “judges of normality” (Foucault 1977: 304), armed with their increasingly sophisticated surveillance systems. If it can be said CCTV is successful, it is in Foucault’s sense of producing knowledge about the criminal. As this article has argued, this knowledge is tendentious and constructed through a form of moral totality that traverses socio-spatial transformation and bolsters a landscape of denial that is intensifying the criminalisation of poverty. Knowledge from the camera lens is helping to construct and reinforce a condemnatory gaze on the powerless. Criminologists who contribute to this knowledge do so at the expense of an ever more necessary critical scrutiny of those agents and agencies that, among other activities, are giving rise to the surveillance society that denies the cultivation of a political discourse for understanding contemporary inequality. It is not only knowledge of the criminal that is limited, but also a sense of a progressive and equitable public interest.

Notes

1. The increased role of the private sector in urban decision making and economic growth should not be exaggerated (Harvey 1985) but has been influential in the ability of city government not merely to respond to market forces but to act as “very much a part of global restructuring, and a pernicious part” (Loving 1997: 79).
2. As part of re-imaging campaigns, cities have marginalized or manipulated images of the past; for example, in the romanticisation of manual labor along with a idealization of class deference associated with the Nineteenth Century city.
3. The construction of heritage sites, “high art’ and public sculpture are placed alongside, and within, normal consumption spaces in an attempt to collapse any distinction between art, history, and commodities. In promoting consumption as a cultural activity and achievement, the contemporary built environment can be understood as “a system of signification that gives symbolic expression to the cultural values of consumer capitalism” (Goss 1993: 19).
4. As Currie (1997: 136) argued: “There is a widespread acceptance of harsh methods of controlling and disciplining the poor and the deviant. It reflects a sense of being ‘fed up’ with troublesome people – people who are just unsightly and irritating as well as those who actually pose some real danger to life and limb.”

5. These processes involve senior police personnel speaking at business conferences and acting as the symbolic – if not actual – guarantors of order.
6. ‘Joined up government’ has been New Labour’s attempt at coordinating the partners within a neo-liberal state. This has been enacted “through a combination of inducements . . . and sanctions” under a mantra of “corporate populism” which has assumed a key role for business, in coalition with other “responsible” partners, in the provision of local ‘services’ (Fairclough 2000: 121).
7. A more detailed account can be found in (Coleman 2003) and in Coleman (2004) (forthcoming).
8. According to *Friends of the Earth*, it is the poorest communities around Liverpool bearing the brunt of pollution of this sort (*Liverpool Echo* 2001). See Coleman, Sim and Whyte (2002) for a discussion of harmful corporate activities in Merseyside ignored in mainstream safety discourses.
9. The need of local people for lower-end priced products and so-called bargain shopping is borne out by the fact that Liverpool was ranked the poorest area in the UK in terms of average incomes, with a high proportion of families surviving on around £8,000 a year (*Liverpool Echo* 1999). This reality of the working class city has been hard to re-image for local marketers.
10. The city is currently 33rd out of 80 European cities in terms of wealth creation. In terms of Gross Domestic Product per head (an index of real wages), the city lies 72nd (*Daily Post* 2002a).
11. Interestingly the skaters themselves, through picketing the City Council, offered an alternative vision of the city and their place in it: “Skating in the streets adds to the atmosphere and is part of the fun. It’s a real kick in the teeth that the council have decided they want to ban us from the streets in the summer holidays. I don’t think the skateboarders are doing any harm. A lot of people enjoy watching us doing our tricks” (*Liverpool Echo* 24 July 2002).
12. In the UK smart cameras are already in use. With no need for continuous human monitoring, these cameras alert police to pre-programmed suspicious activity with the promise of predicting crimes before they happen. These systems build up models of normal movement patterns in public spaces and then alert operators to that which is irregular (*The Independent on Sunday*, 21 April, 2002).
13. In 2001, only 2% of city jobs were being filled by black people, which amounted to a 1% improvement since 1988 (*Liverpool Echo*, 3 July, 2001).
14. Scholars of urban surveillance have been “strangely silent about the militarization of city life so grimly visible at street level” (Davis 1990: 223) that have formed a key aspect of contemporary social ordering. In Liverpool, this form of policing included armed patrols and the use of the Operational Support Division. The latter received record complaints in 1998; and the use of CS gas received more complaints in Liverpool than anywhere else in England and Wales for 1998 (*Liverpool Echo* 1999a).

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