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The Freedom of the City

Ken Worpole and
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'The polis, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organisation of people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be. 'Wherever you go, you will be a polis'.'

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1958

'We live in cities badly; we have built them up in a culpable innocence and now fret helplessly in a synthetic wilderness of our own construction. We need – more urgently than architectural utopias, ingenious traffic disposal systems, or ecological programmes – to comprehend the nature of citizenship, to make serious imaginative assessment of that special relationship between the self and the city; its unique plasticity, its privacy and freedom.'

Jonathan Raban, *Soft City*, 1981

Introduction

After a decade or more of decline, cities in Britain are showing renewed confidence. The often huge outwards migration of the 1970s and 1980s has slowed to a trickle. A flush of funds from sources as various as the European Commission and the National Lottery has revived the activity of urban planners, and fuelled increasingly confident partnerships between the public and private sectors.

But the revived interest in urban renewal, architecture and aesthetics has been coupled with an increasing fear – whether real or imaginary – for personal safety. In Britain today, only half the population dares go out after dark and fewer than a third of children are allowed to walk to school. Few modern city dwellers truly feel that they have the 'freedom of the city', the freedom to walk, roam and wander where they want.

One knee-jerk response, encouraged by the availability of sophisticated technology, has been investment in surveillance. Closed circuit television networks have become so commonplace that most weekend trips around town are captured on dozens of different cameras. Another response is the creation of more insulated and controlled environments like the shopping malls in Thurrock and Meadowhall.

Both responses have their virtues, and both contribute to making public space less threatening. But on their own they are not enough. Their logical endpoint could be to turn our cities into segregated fortresses like many in North America, leaving islands of security amidst a sea of anxiety.

This book offers an alternative. Although many of us would rather live in a rural idyll, most British people live in cities and are likely to do so for the foreseeable future. If we want to improve the quality of life, we have to make cities more liveable places. That depends, in turn, on how free we feel to use the city as we want.

Jane Jacobs put the argument well in her classic book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*: 'The bedrock attribute of a successful city.' she wrote, 'is that a person must feel personally safe and secure on the street among all those strangers,' That attribute is now missing in most British cities.

Instead, this book argues, successful and contented cities depend on promoting activity. In almost every instance, from streets to parks, town centres to suburbs, safety is better guaranteed by the presence of other people than it is by the presence of technologies.

Drawing on eight years of studying town centres, parks and libraries, *The Freedom of the City* calls for a more sophisticated concept of planning which emphasises the opportunities in public meetings rather than plays up the potential for conflict. It looks at ways of creating greater tolerance of difference involving all members of society, rather than conveniently pretending some don't matter, or simply matter less. It argues for a more, rather than less convivial city, as the accompaniment to technologies in the home and at work that often make us more isolated.

At its core is the case that there is no inherent reason why cities should be such bad and divisive places to live. Humans are social animals and get an enormous amount from the conviviality of city life. But unless we take practical steps to underpin the freedom that city life offers, the virtues of the city can only too easily turn into vices.

Geoff Mulgan
Director of Demos

The future of cities

The blessings of city life are in danger of becoming a curse. While the majority of people in post-industrial societies live in cities, there is mounting evidence that many of them would rather not. Research undertaken by the Henley Centre has shown that although 80 per cent of British people are city dwellers, two-thirds of them would prefer to live in small towns or villages were they able to.[1] However, few will ever have that choice. The overwhelming trend, not just in Britain but throughout the world, is for increasing and pervasive urbanisation, even where, as in the UK, the physical fabric and infrastructure of many cities and their processes of governance now seem attenuated or exhausted.

Cities will not go away. But we live in the shadow of a series of legitimate fears that city life is out of balance. Already some British cities show signs of following the disturbing pattern evident in some North American cities where social and racial segregation is held precariously in check by technological surveillance, and large numbers of uniformed police and private security personnel whose efforts are reinforced by a punitive criminal justice regime. Then there is the fear of an imbalance between the different parts of the city. Riots in inner city areas in the early 1980s focused attention on the lack of opportunities for jobs or accommodation, particularly among young black and Asian people. For almost a decade, the 'problem' was defined as localised and that of the inner city. However, increasing

social breakdown in suburban areas, particularly on large public housing estates cut off from city centre facilities[2] demonstrated that the inner city wasn't alone in experiencing stress and social fragmentation. Moreover, there is now growing recognition that in everything from transport to air quality, employment to housing, cities need to be understood as wholes.

It is easy to be pessimistic about the prospects for making cities better. But there are also plenty of grounds for optimism. Across Europe there has been a return to the tradition of the city state, and the idea of the city as a more autonomous actor filling the space that is left as nation-states lose some of their power.[3] Cities like Barcelona, Munich, Montpellier, Hamburg and Milan have become far more confident than a generation ago. In Britain, the so-called 'second cities', such as Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, Cardiff and Newcastle have developed much stronger corporate identities. At the same time appetites for urban ambition have been whetted by the scale of lottery funding already agreed for London projects – Bankside, Royal Opera House, Mile End Park, and many large bids in the pipeline – as well as the recent decision to make Greenwich the site of Britain's Millennium Exhibition. Lottery funding, along with European regional funding, is also producing large new capital projects in many other British cities. The approaching millennium has given the debate about urban vitality an almost religious fervour, as if a single date could mark the end of an old era and the start of something quite radically different in the way in which we live.

Yet while architects, landscape designers and even artists prepare the models and maquettes, and sketch out visions of golden futures, it is imperative not to forget that the physical city cannot be thought of in isolation from the social city. Too many prizewinning buildings have failed in the past, too many open spaces and landscape schemes have turned into urban wastelands or green deserts, and too many triumphalist public sculptures and artworks have become the subject of local derision. Aesthetics alone cannot solve the problems of the post-industrial city. What is more, too many current regeneration schemes are based on the belief that replacing tower blocks with low-

rise housing will be enough to tackle any number of social problems. As the geographer David Harvey has observed on more than one occasion, in post-war modernist planning, aesthetics have triumphed over ethics. It is time to bring the two together again.

To do this means bringing some of the disciplines of urban planning back into the fold, albeit in new forms that are more respectful of human needs. The Thatcherites rejected the very concept of planning, and much of the public felt a sense of betrayal resulting from redevelopment schemes of the 1960s and 1970s. But cities need the planners' insight into population densities, the relations between urban, suburban and rural demographics and lifestyles, and planners' perspective on changing work patterns, transport possibilities, amenity provision, and their methods for balancing conflicting interests.

Recognising that means accepting the importance of a public realm to making cities successful. All too often in the past the public sector and the delivery of public goods became associated with a dreary uniformity of provision delivered on sufferance, and the very word 'public' (public toilets, public transport, public library, public authority) became a synonym for the lowest common denominator, or provision of last choice. Yet the public sphere has also often stood for high ideals, for the common good and the wider interest, and a sense of responsibility to the future. It has also stood for structure and security. As the anthropologist Mary Douglas wrote, 'The markets suck us (willingly) out of our cosy, dull, local niches and turn us into unencumbered actors, mobile in a world system, but setting us free they leave us exposed. We feel vulnerable.'[4]

That vulnerability is most marked today in the spaces that we share. It is in the streets, parks, trains and stations, city squares and alleyways, that consumerist individualism loses its utility. And it is there too that we now need to give practical substance to the idea of a shared public interest.

An argument about public space

What do we mean by public space? Historically, the term referred to physical spaces such as streets, marketplaces, town squares, parks, some buildings such as public libraries, museums and galleries which are open to everybody and impose no criteria of use or entry. Traditionally cathedrals and churches would have fallen within these definitions, at least until the Reformation when religion began to develop exclusionary characteristics.

However, too often the term 'public space', particularly when used by architects or landscape designers, is simply understood as empty space, walkways and piazzas between the buildings which, because they are publicly owned, become public space by definition. However, we would argue that what makes public space is use. As the geographer Doreen Massey has consistently argued, space is dynamic, and only comes into being through use over time.[5] There are many public spaces in British towns and cities, as we discovered in our studies of town centres, and later of parks, which are regarded as being dangerous wastelands and are consequently avoided by most people. In our opinion, this renders their definition as public space null and void.

Public space is defined by use

The very best public spaces have rhythms and patterns of use of their own, being occupied at different times by quite different groups,

occasionally by almost everybody. But their attractiveness, flexibility, and pluralist sense of ownership derived from their popularity, makes them immensely valuable to the life of the city. Some of the best parks in Britain, and most towns have a number of them, can accommodate almost everybody from early morning joggers and dog-walkers, to football, tennis and bowls players, children seeking playground equipment, school games classes, people wanting peace and quiet in which to be on their own, elderly people out for an afternoon stroll, courting couples, teenagers socialising after school, family picnics in the summer, as well as formally organised events such as dog shows, circuses, pop festivals, political demonstrations and so on. Brockwell Park in Lambeth, London, hosted the massive Gay Pride festival, and the Lambeth County Show very shortly after. It is also the home of one of London's last remaining lidos, currently the subject of great interest and popularity.

Our work on public libraries also revealed the very wide cross-section of use by different groups in the community and the range of needs they sought to meet to borrow novels, to study, to seek information or advice, to attend story-telling sessions, to read the Indic language newspapers, to check out a detail of family history in the archives.[6] People spoke of the library as being a safe haven, a place of intellectual and spiritual renewal in an otherwise noisy town centre. Both examples demonstrate that it is *flexibility of use and pluralist cultural values* which define the success of public space, not its location, design or even legal ownership.

Many publics and many interests

Yet precisely because of the non-exclusive nature of public space, it can also, over time, be colonised or dominated by particular groups or interests, thereby losing its inclusive status. There are many recreation grounds, particularly those marked out for football pitches, which women would never use[7] and their fear of certain kinds of urban landscape is now being better documented.[8] Another pervasive example is the domination by young people of many British town centres in the evening which intimidates and edges out older people.

Research by Paul Hoggett into voluntary activity in communities reiterates that:

> … women have less access to the public sphere than men. Muslim women less than non-Muslim women, and so on. It is legitimate for men to go out at night to a voluntary meeting, less so for a woman.[9]

Some public libraries are becoming dominated by students, as the continued expansion of higher education continues apace without appropriate investment in campus-based study provision. As a result, traditional library users are often displaced. Our research has shown that women find public libraries one of the few city centre venues they can visit confidently alone; the same research showed that some young Asian school students use the public library as a 'decompression chamber', an intermediate institution between the very different worlds of home and school, a place to stop at on the way home to quieten down and change gear.

People learn to 'timeshare' their use of such spaces, if they really value the facility, so that older people visit the library or the park while local children are in school, and Sunday morning's football pitch may be used on Sunday afternoon by a women's softball team. Planned timesharing can be used to avoid conflict or create conditions of confidence and security. For example, most public swimming pools now break up the weekly timetable into specialist (women only, adults only, family sessions) and general slots. In some American parks, dogs have to be on the lead after 9am, but can be let loose before then.

Successful public spaces effectively accommodate these different and changing needs. There are also occasions – notably large-scale festivals, firework celebrations, commemorative events – when almost the whole community can, and does, come together and the traditional 'unified public' is recreated again – if only for an afternoon or evening. The Danish architect Jan Gehl, who has done much work on creating successful public spaces in Copenhagen and other cities, has

likened the good city to a good party: people stay for much longer than really necessary because they are enjoying themselves and are always finding something new or stimulating to keep them engaged.'[10]

What about the weather?

Yet whenever these discussions about public space take place, someone always mentions the weather, and the supposed unsuitability of the British climate for a successful outdoor public culture. It is worth remembering, firstly, that it was the English who invented the culture of promenading, or the 'monkey parade' as it became more popularly called.[11] And secondly, that many other European cities with the same or even less hospitable climates (the annual rainfall in Paris is higher than in London) manage to support a busier outdoor life. As Jan Gehl has painstakingly proven, over time a number of Scandinavian cities have actively created a public culture, where little or none existed before, through judicious planning, animation programmes and sensitive landscaping and design.[12] Recent studies in North America of successful public space have concluded that climate is only a partial explanation of success, and that some Canadian public spaces are more heavily used in winter than Californian public spaces in summer.[13]

It is also exposure to the elements and to the natural cycles of life that makes the urban park, for example, so important. As we noted in *Park Life*,[14] many of the people interviewed spoke about their local park as a place where the passages of their own lives had been marked – as playing children, courting teenagers, parents and pensioners. The numerous commemorative benches and a tree-plantings are a permanent testimony of as much.

This is in sharp contrast to the instrumental world of the commercial public spaces such as shopping malls, where there will never be any commemorative benches (the provision of seating disrupts pedestrian flows and encourages undesirables), and where a completely artificial and ordered world is deliberately created through colour coding, emotive background music and lighting. In these

conditions the average human blink rate of 32 per minute 'in a properly lit and laid out store can be reduced to an almost narcoleptic 14 per minute, rising again only when it is time to pay.'[15] These are stark contrasts, and, in a way, represent the twin poles of modern urban public space. We may need both, but the totalising world of the controlled interior is hardly a model of a responsible and reflexive society.

There is also another climate to consider, the so-called 'climate of fear' which now attends and cocoons debates about the value and use of public space in contemporary urban life. Though there is no doubt that some of this is attributable to the dramatised genre of crime reporting, documentary making and even reconstruction which is today staple fare on evening television – so much so that even senior police officers are queuing up to reassure the public that it is the perception of fear rather than the likelihood of actual crime that is now the bigger problem – the risks can be real. They can also be addressed.

Dangerous places

In the summer of 1995, there seemed to be a spate of terrible public attacks and murders which horrified the nation and almost created the palpable sense that things had got out of hand. In June, two men seized a woman in the ticket area of Great Portland Street Station in central London, held a knife to her, marched her across six lanes of car traffic into Regent's Park and raped her. This happened in broad daylight. In the same month, a young man, Mark Mayard, tried to stop four youths from harassing a school girl on a bus in Reading, as a result of which he was beaten with a crowbar and suffered a fractured skull, facial and chest injuries. Nobody else on the bus went to his aid.[16] The murder of three children on the same day, Sunday 31st July, in two separate incidents (two boys were fishing, a girl was camping out in a garden tent), caused a national sense of outrage. Such incidents underpin a widespread feeling that even to step out into the street in modern Britain is to invite danger – and that public space is now contested rather than common space. More recent outbreaks of apparently arbitrary violence have included a fatal example of 'road rage' on an M25 slip road in May 1996, and in July, the murder of a woman and her daughter out walking the dog in a country park, and another child murder in Liverpool, not far from the James Bulger murder site. Certainly, statistical evidence supports the view that the risk of being a victim of violent crime has trebled in the past 15 years,

though it is still likely that more violent crime happens in the home rather than on the street, and that more children and young people are likely to be abused, assaulted or even murdered by their parents or close relatives than by strangers.[17]

But some people find streets dangerous places, and of those – the elderly, women on their own, ethnic minority groups – some find them more dangerous than others. It is not just central London streets or town centre buses that are deemed to be dangerous. Other places – railway stations, bus stations, underground car parks, even parks themselves – appear to be increasingly regarded as places of potential danger, and there are now whole housing estates, usually on the periphery (in more ways than one) of our larger cities, which have been described as 'no-go' areas to all outsiders, particularly those occupying positions of authority.[18] Public space is thus being territorialised, contested and occupied by force as increasing social polarisation erodes the fabric of society, not only socially and historically, but spatially as well.

The surveillance society

One response, and at present the most popular one, is to seek to enforce the safety of public spaces by increasing technological surveillance. A recent survey found that:

'Seventy-five towns, including Blackpool, Swansea, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Hull, Torquay, Wolverhampton, Chester, Bath and Brighton have installed sophisticated surveillance systems to watch public areas, and more cities go on-line every week … They are concealed above doorways, inside vending machines, and behind two-way mirrors. They are being installed in bank cash machines, inside buses and on rooftops … Eric Holden, manager of Liverpool council's Traffic Control systems division says he hopes the CCTV initiative will make people feel safer when they walk the streets. 'We want more people to come into the city at night. It should be as busy here at night as it is during the day.'[19]

There is no doubt the public support electronic surveillance is a means of preventing or curbing crime. Recent surveys in Scotland reveal that almost 90 per cent of people support public surveillance

projects, with less than 10 per cent saying the cameras infringe their privacy. The video footage of the abduction of James Bulger from a Liverpool shopping centre etched itself on the public imagination in 1993 and has provided what appears to be an unanswerable argument for video surveillance as a means of identifying criminals and securing their conviction. Yet crime doesn't go away, or rather it does, some argue. It simply goes somewhere else.[20] It is displaced beyond the reach of the camera lens. It is not likely that in the foreseeable future public opinion will move away from supporting the increased technological surveillance of public space, although it may remain important to continue warning people of the potential dangers that this vast network of surveillance could pose to civil liberties if it got into the wrong hands. Marc Rotenberg of the Washington-based watchdog group, Privacy International, has said, 'No society which values freedom should permit the creation of this surveillance infrastructure. One of the responsibilities of living in a free society is to resist policies of crime control that may one day become tools of social control.'[21] It is also worth noting in this context a comment by the great advocate of the 'open society', Sir Karl Popper, who wrote, 'We must plan for freedom and not only for security, if for no other reason than that only freedom can make security secure.'

Apart from electronic surveillance, the 1980s and 1990s have seen an enormous growth in private security companies, and, more recently, private police patrols. Councils in Devon and Cornwall, Northamptonshire and West Yorkshire pay police authorities for additional policing of particular estates and areas, while Sedgefield and Wandsworth have set up their own community patrols and Islington hires private security firms to patrol some public spaces.[22] Coventry Council plans to hand over the management and security of its town centre to a private company employing 75 'ambassadors' who will be responsible for street cleaning, security, monitoring street trading, looking after car parks, liaising with the police on public drunkenness and crime, as well as promoting the city centre as a retailing and entertainment centre. The £2 million budget this entails will be met by council and European funds, with some private sector contributions.[23]

A degraded realm

The factors which diminish the, value and quality of public space are not just threats of physical violence. The 1990/1 Comedia study of twelve British town centres showed that women find graffiti threatening in its own right, and that even litter and a general air of untidiness and lack of care all contribute to a feeling of unease when using public places.[24] People find the sight of homeless people sleeping in shop doorways or on park benches disturbing, and there is a real danger that unless action is taken, public space will increasingly be regarded as a degraded realm, a place for the poor, spaces of the last resort. Some urban parks already give off this air of general dereliction, as the *Park Life* study demonstrated. And this downgrading has already happened to certain kinds of public transport. A report by the London Regional Passengers Consultative Committee, *Get Staffed!*, claimed that in the London region, one in three British Rail stations is now wholly or partly de-staffed, creating even greater difficulties for those who are disabled, among others.[25]

The Conservative Transport Minister, Steven Norris MP, had already decided that public transport was for another class of people when he told a Select Committee in January 1995 why he preferred to travel by car:

> You have your own company, your own temperature control, your own music. And you don't have to put up with dreadful human beings sitting alongside you.[26]

This is a vocabulary obsessed with purity, order and social exclusion, and at its most extreme, a vision of what the future city could be: a series of separated, walled communities or enclaves, a 'carceral archipelago,[27] connected by corridors and motorways, avoiding as much social mixing as is possible. Already parts of some American cities look and feel like this.

Lessons from America

In North America, the move towards greater privatisation and segregation of the urban realm is now more advanced than in any

other developed country. In Houston, for example, there are now *de facto* two separate systems of sidewalks, one for white office workers and one for the largely poor black inner city residents. Houston's new private tunnel system connecting all the main office buildings is 6.3 miles long, and is sealed off from the Street. It is only possible to enter the system from within one of the office blocks, ensuring there exists a separate public realm where 'white Americans can now walk safely through the downtown area without fear of crime or of rubbing shoulders with those they perceive to be the criminal classes.'[28]

Mike Davis finds himself writing in apocalyptic terms about the 'destruction of public space' in the US. He argues that the decline of urban liberalism has been accompanied by the death of the 'Olmstedian vision' of public space. (Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed New York's Central Park, was inspired by Birkenhead Park in Liverpool, 'the people's park' which mixed classes and ethnicities.) This reformist vision of public space as the 'emollient of class struggle' and social safety valve, Davis argues, is now obsolete:

> In Los Angeles, once upon a time a demi-paradise of free beaches, luxurious parks, and 'cruising strips', genuinely democratic space is all but extinct. The Oz-like archipelago of Westside pleasure domes … is reciprocally dependent upon the social imprisonment of the third-world service proletariat who live in increasingly repressive ghettos and barrios.[29]

The increased spatial segregation Mike Davis describes, particularly in Los Angeles, and the growth of what he terms 'gated communities' – residential areas to which entry is restricted – have been driven by a 'security offensive', a huge consumption of private security services ranging from private patrols to an array of systems and products. Security, he argues, has become a 'positional good'. Social status is marked by the degree of personal insulation in residential, travel, working and shopping environments. In contrast, the phrase 'street person' is now generally understood to denote homelessness or prostitution.[30]

Privatising spirit of place

Some time ago, *The Times* featured an article which complained about the Notting Hill Carnival. Its thrust? The way in which residential streets are taken over by a vast celebratory crowd for one weekend a year:

> Most of all there is the intrusion on the liberty of those who wish to remain uninvolved, surely a defensible ideal… The elements which make a manageable carnival a wonderful spectacle and a Caribbean cultural celebration could be preserved: the costume parade, calypso and soca music are the traditional music of carnival. But the blaring sound systems, which play everything from jazz to hip-hop could be banned. Numbers could be controlled by charging for entry, so weeding out genuine enthusiasts from hangers-on. If carnival must remain in its current form, then could it not move elsewhere, please?[31]

The failure or unwillingness to understand the symbolic importance of taking over the streets of Notting Hill (the site of Britain's first race riots, primarily because it was also the site of one of Britain's first West Indian communities) and celebrating West Indian carnival traditions is disregarded in this astonishing suggestion that it should go somewhere else. Following this logic, it would make sense to move all football and cricket grounds to ring road and motorway sites, where they would cause less upheaval, despite the fact that many of these grounds – White Hart Lane, Lord's, The Oval – are central to the topography and symbolic identity of the districts in which they are located. But there is also a problem with the notion of 'defensible ideals', which is not so distant from the language of 'defensible spaces' and the privatising or territorialising vocabulary of rightwing urbanism.

Public space, we would argue, is now of central political importance to questions of sustainable, equitable and enriching urban life. The flight from the cities to the suburbs and rural areas, an environmental disaster itself, will only be stemmed if cities and city

spaces are restored to more flexible and open forms of management and codes of public and mutual respect. This is a tall order, and a problematic one, but the alternative – of greater technological surveillance, more no-go areas, streets as corridors for private cars driving past the homeless, abandoned railway stations, run down parks – is even worse. This would be ghost-town Britain.

The modern origins of public space

Defining what is 'public about public space in modern, complex, multi-cultural societies, is clearly difficult. Some of the historical struggles and debates over public space still have a resonance today, and at least provide a context for attempting a more nuanced, modern set of descriptions. The historian Eileen Yeo, for example, has provided much detailed evidence of nineteenth century provincial struggles to create an urban self-conscious public, with its attendant politics related to the physical and symbolic ownership of public space, particularly in the period of great social unrest in the 1830s and 1840s.

In this period, many working class people were determined to create their own social movements and institutions – Chartism, friendly societies, teetotalism, non-conformist religions, meeting halls and libraries – in the belief that their needs and interests were ignored by a hostile, even ruthless, political class and its oppressive set of institutions. Struggles over the right to free assembly followed the Royal Proclamation of 3rd May 1839, empowering magistrates to outlaw (mainly Chartist) meetings or gatherings, more or less at will. The right to free speech was predicated on the right to public assembly which, as Eileen Yeo, observes, 'must have further heightened and developed the consciousness of public rights and public property. One point where attention was concentrated was on the places which

had to be accessible if the right of public meeting was to have any reality.'[32] Consequently, there were demands to hold meetings in town halls and even court houses, which protesters deemed 'public' buildings since they were paid for out of taxes, despite the fact their use was consistently denied to radical movements. Even Anglican church buildings were deemed 'unquestionably the property of the public' and sometimes occupied when not defended by the police or army. As the political climate grew more heated and fractious, the authorities moved to prevent meetings in chapels and pubs as well. As a result, these protean movements turned their back on the state and established their own institutions which amounted to a parallel world of places, institutions, traditions and rituals, social movements, festivals and holidays.

By the 1850s, class relations began to modify again. As Eileen Yeo says, 'The middle class engineered an expansion of new public territory during the midcentury.' There was a movement towards incorporation and amelioration:

> Between 1850 and 1890, there was a burst of building the public parks, libraries, museums, halls (and town halls) with which we often still live and which still colour our definition of the concept 'public'.[33]

It is from this period that we understand the way in which public buildings and spaces were created as *sites of reconciliation* between hostile social groups and interests. Our own research into these very institutions nearly 150 years later has largely found the belief that public space is – or should be – socially neutral and non-judgmental still resonates. This 'civic vision offered the working class a way of understanding itself in terms of a version of citizenship rather than class.'[34] Since then, questions of citizenship, codes of public behaviour, and the use and abuse of public space have been indissolubly linked.

Similar historical accounts have been made of a particular public space which was key to nineteenth and twentieth century urban life:

the railway station. For the poet Théophile Gautier, the new railway stations were 'cathedrals of the new humanity, the meeting points of nations.'[35] They carried the first public lavatories, where standards of hygiene were much higher than in most private homes, and railway refreshment rooms which in turn gave birth to the English 'public bar', where customers would stand to drink. The station became a symbol of mobility and inter-connection, a place for all classes, though with specifically different codes of conduct and expectations of appropriate behaviour.

Railway stations symbolised accurate time-keeping, order and discipline among the staff; but order and discipline were expected of the passengers too. Yet by the second half of the 20th century, the railway station had become characterised by 'an overwhelming uniformity (of design), an indifference to its surroundings and to the public … Al1 over the world, new stations have almost abandoned the exterior signs of their civic vocation, the architectural structure of a forum of public life … Originally conceived somewhat poetically as a space for communal and convivial life, the station has progressively declined into a place programmed for consumption.'[36] The international airport now occupies this role as a symbolic meeting place of nations, but is today located far from the city centre, making it inaccessible to non-travellers, and thus, unlike the railway station, no longer a public space in the traditional sense.

Public space, public conduct

It can be seen, then, that the new public institutions, particularly libraries, museums, parks and railway stations, were not only places where all sorts and conditions of people might now mix, but also places that exerted, or attempted to exert, codes of behaviour upon their users. The public library most famously enforced a rule of silence that, although much modified, still exerts a pressure today – notably through the admonitory whispering or disapproving looks that over-boisterous behaviour elicits from other users and library staff. The railway stations created all kinds of differentiated public spaces, each with its own expectations of appropriate behaviour:

different classes of waiting rooms, ladies only waiting rooms, smoking and non-smoking compartments, high standards of public hygiene (at the beginning) and a highly stratified staff structure, with the stationmaster in frock coat, top hat and freshly filled button-hole at the top. Parks also had their own codes of conduct, and as Dr Hilary Taylor recently pointed out:

> There is absolutely no doubt that these (nineteenth century) parks were seen as a means of 'civilising' and cementing a society which was viewed as threateningly unstable in its diversity and explosive growth … They were planned and detailed in ways which were deliberately designed to foster and frame certain sorts of appropriate behaviour, to build a community of values.[37]

Are consumer values different from public values?

The rise of consumer society has had many other ramifications for the importance and viability of public space and codes of public behaviour. David Lyon, in a recent book on electronic surveillance, has argued that modern forms of consumption are largely self-disciplining and that:

> A perfectly plausible view is that, in contemporary conditions, consumerism acts in its own right as a significant means of maintaining social order, leaving older forms of surveillance and control to cope with the non-consuming residue'[38]

This view certainly conforms to patterns we have noted in our own research, whereby private spaces such as shopping malls often act to exclude non-consumers (groups of schoolchildren, the elderly, the poor) either by moving such people on, by actual physical means, or by 'designing out' opportunities for such people to make themselves comfortable, for example, by failing to provide any form of public seating. In contrast, public spaces such as libraries and parks are much more likely to be used by a such 'non-consumers', because they

are free, non-judgemental, equipped with seats and toilets (however inadequate or vandalised), and are still felt to 'belong' to people in their identity as citizens. Private security firms safeguard the malls, while the police are left to deal with the less well-off, the mentally disturbed who are allegedly in the care of the community, the unemployed and the homeless, which they sometimes do by encouraging them to 'hang out' in the libraries and parks where they will be less visible and therefore less aesthetically disruptive.

The official gaze

At the other extreme, there has been the example of the monolithic construction of the public realm, seen until quite recently in the communist bloc countries. Here, public space was designed and planned on a vast scale, but only in order to intimidate and cower the population. Vladimir Sitta has argued that such public spaces were used to strangle plurality and stunt the development of different opinions.[39]

Thus there were vast open squares, ideal for assembling crowds to listen to hectoring speeches, or for staging military displays, but offering few nooks and crannies, or small pocket parks, where people could meet to gossip, or assemble informally beyond the official gaze.

Public space myths

The idea of a specifically public space as an open, and therefore democratic, urban arena has been promoted in some quarters of urban policy development as an unqualified and unproblematic ideal, the antithesis to the process of privatising urban space which is increasingly seen as a threat to the future of cities. However, the distinction between public and private is not as stable or as clear cut as it first seems. In much the same way the term community was actually used to refer to a largely undefined sense of a lack of community, the use of the phrase public space is a kind of euphemism for a general concern over the way towns and cities are now developing. The proliferation of out-of-town shopping, leisure and work centres, the presence of the homeless, fear of crime and the continuing process of suburbanisation have all contributed to a sense that the urban public realm is in terminal decline.

There is no one legally defined form of ownership of land or buildings deemed to be public. Public parks, commons and other areas of open space are held in many sorts of legal agreements and governed by diverse bylaws. The term public is a construct that has, in particular historical periods, both included or excluded certain groups of people, and continuously modified its meaning and embodied the values of different forms of governance. Public space is therefore never totally open, but reflects the tension in any society

between freedom and control. It is the struggle for control that has intensified in recent years and seems to be threatening the values public space represents.

The positive qualities of successful public spaces are also symbolic of wider social values, of individual rights, citizenship and democracy; and as public space is seen to deteriorate, so its attendant values are seen to be under threat. The main justification for greater security and regulation, through the use of CCTV and restrictions to public access, is to assuage the fear of crime and protect the public. The analysis developed by Mike Davis in his writings about Los Angeles is based on the view that a new class war is erupting around the development of the built environment, precipitated by a middle class demand for a greater sense of safety and security. He suggests the development of the urban form is now following an increasingly repressive course.

Judging by many commentators, the golden age of successful urban space and the dynamic, healthy, interdependent urban communities described by writers such as Jane Jacobs is over, certainly in the USA. As Mike Davis sees it:

> Photographs of the old downtown in its prime show mixed crowds of Anglo, Black and Latino pedestrians of different ages and classes. The contemporary downtown 'renaissance' is designed to make such heterogeneity virtually impossible. It is intended not just to 'kill the Street'… but to 'kill the crowd', to eliminate that democratic mixture on the pavements and in the parks that Olmsted believed was America's antidote to European class polarisation.[40]

This argument suggests that urban diversity, the social mix underpinned by social cohesion and a shared set of public values has been eroded as we now live in cities facing increased social segregation, deprivation and crime.

Two important points need to be made. The first being there never was a democratic golden age of successful public space which

provided the setting for harmonious coexistence among different social groups. The second, that successful public space is not just a phenomenon of a past period of urban history.

As has already been noted, the notion of public space has always rested on the definition of the public. As Richard Sennett reminds us, the Athenian *agora* (speaking place) was only open to citizens who, according to estimates, never made up more than 15–20 per cent of the population, or half the adult male population. Slaves, foreigners and women were excluded. Similarly, Clara Greed criticises the idealisation of the village green, which provided the inspiration for the building of playing fields and recreation grounds in the first half of this century, as a site where class differences might be forgotten (especially during the playing of sport), and the ways in which this vision tended to exclude women and demote the importance of private space or the domestic realm.

Urbanity

Over the last 15 years, the rebuilding of good quality public space in the city centre has been part of the process of recreating many of the industrial cities in Britain. Following the collapse of many heavy industries, the new city visions were intended to help attract new investment and the location of service industries. Cultural policy and urban policy met in the design of new city squares and the concern to create a vibrant city culture.

This 'café society' vision has been about an appeal for a new kind of urbanity, one inspired by European cities and the American mall. It is quite different from the gritty industrial experience typified in the British films of the 1950s and 1960s such as *A Taste of Honey, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *Kes*. It is a shift from an experience of the city defined by work and industrial production to one defined by consumption, shopping and service industries.

It is urban design and the desire to create a 'good quality' environment that has driven the development of 'public space' in British cities over the last decade. It is an aesthetic, marketing a certain post-industrial myth of the city. It is an attempt to reinvent or

simply hold together the notion of the city as its underlying structure undergoes quite radical shifts (towards out-of-town, service industries, flight from the city, car use, airports). In the development of city place marketing, Sharon Zukin has pointed to the growing importance of the visual image, arguing that cultural strategies in the USA use visual aesthetics to evoke a vanished civic order. She cites the choice of Victorian-style food booths and Parisian-style park furniture in the redesign of a New York park once associated with drugs and crime. Urban design is used to evoke a social order based on public safety, citizenship, and civility. However, Sharon Zukin argues that the middle class urban order alluded to in urban design no longer exists and that such visual strategies ignore current realities of social diversity, homelessness and crime.

The appeal of public space is also that of creating social cohesion. It is not so much that people are physically afraid of the homeless in the street, rather the discomfort is about the threat they represent. The homeless are a very visible sign that 'the system' or society at large is somehow not working. They represent the threat of lawlessness and disorder. Extremes of rich and poor suggest the breakdown of a universal social cohesion. The new areas of public space in cities are, in part, an attempt to say that social cohesion is alive and well and that it exists in Centenary Square in Birmingham, in Swansea's Maritime Quarter, in Hartlepool's Victory Square, in London's Broadgate or St Ann's Square in Glasgow, among many other recent redevelopments.

The challenge to this sense of public space as the new vision and identity for whole cities such as Birmingham or Glasgow, is the constant rediscovery of poverty, currently characterised in the writings of Bea Campbell and journalists such as Nick Davies as a brutalised and traumatised condition linked to organised crime, child abuse, prostitution, drug abuse and male unemployment. The recent reassessment of council priorities by Birmingham politicians, and the reported turn away from city centre improvements, is an attempt to respond to the problems of urban poverty by a reinvestment in education and housing, particularly in peripheral housing estates.

To see and be seen

Yet it is dangerous to locate the values of the city centre as a counterpoint to those of residential or suburban quarters. People need both. For what optimal public space offers is a chance to see and be seen, to play a small part in the theatre of life, to feel a part of wider pattern of human relations, networks and associations. This was once thought to be a defining characteristic of traditional close-knit working class communities, the source from which street life derived its vitality.

Richard Sennett has argued that it is precisely this theatricality of public life that was losing ground towards the end of the nineteenth century as society became more institutionalised, spatially segregated and industrialised.[41] To be 'one of the crowd' evolved from being in the very centre of life, to becoming a cog in the machine of modern uniformity; in turn, the home replaced the street as the setting for social life and personal identity. Yet people still want to immerse themselves in the unique opportunities public life has always offered such as trying out new identities, encountering the unexpected and cementing the feeling that you belong. 'Experience of life in public diminishes the fear of the strange and the stranger … ', it has been argued.[42] it is also closely linked to the benefits of belonging to a community of whatever kind, whereby public presence is regarded as an engagement with a moral sphere.

> Community is a morally charged concept because it is about the obligations and expectations one has to those people one lives closest to and with whom one shares most in day-to-day life.[43]

As we have found time and time again in our research, what people most often value about the twice weekly visit to the library, or even the daily stroll in the park, is an opportunity to meet other people whether they are neighbours, relatives, close or casual friends, and to have their social identity confirmed in the process of these spontaneous, unorganised encounters. Our social identity is partly formed by these public appearances and relationships, and although

they can also happen in private or commercial settings, there does seem to be something different about life in the free, noninstrumental sanctuary of the library or the park, where one is a citizen rather than a consumer. Not least, the social mix is likely to be wider.

Where are we heading?

Since the early 1990s, one of the most influential trends in Britain's towns and cities has been the adoption of town centre management plans and town centre managers. In 1991, there were eight town centre managers in Britain; in 1996, there are now 160. Town centre management has been one of the fastest growing partnership arrangements between local authorities and the private sector.

It began as a radical notion. Taking a broader view of how a town centre works opened up the planning profession to new questions of use. How easy was it for disabled people to move around the centre? Where were parents to take babies for nappy changes? Did the parking restrictions reduce evening access to local restaurants? What could be done about poorly lit underground car parks? How easy is it for residents to walk into their city centres and cross the collar of ring-roads? How could town centre facilities service extensive networks of voluntary organisations? The shift in focus was about setting a civic lead and making town centres more accessible and usable.

Such plans to manage town and city centres sought to build on a sense of local identity and civic pride. One of the early motives for researching the use of centres was the concern that the retail boom of the 1980s and the spread of the chain store had neutralised the character of British towns and cities. Many consumers now had a choice of several centres (including the new out-of-town variety)

within a short drive of home, though each offered the same menu of commercial outlets. Town centre management was a way of fighting back. New approaches to town centres gave rise to some innovative schemes.

The 1994 24 Hour City conference in Manchester brought together different interest groups, including pub and club owners, the police, taxi-drivers, restaurateurs, city centre developers, city radio stations and cultural organisations, to rethink the legislation surrounding town centre use such as the application of licensing laws, the need to train nightclub bouncers, how to support new businesses, how to facilitate the voluntary sector and children's use, how to create new public places and to establish a mix of residential and other uses.[44]

However, what began as an exploration of ways of facilitating use of town centres is today in danger of becoming a new orthodoxy, a formulaic approach largely overtaken by the ideology of customer care. In those town centre management schemes where the retail interest overwhelms all others, the town centre can become indistinguishable from the indoor shopping centre. The role of the manager is to smooth over difficulties, drive out conflict, market the shops and regulate legitimate street activity (such as collections by local charities) or discourage impromptu and uninvited activity (such as busking). In tandem with CCTV and private security guards, this kind of town centre management is not just designed to mop up crime or social disorder, rather it is geared towards anticipating and preventing it. Thus, potentially disruptive groups can, as Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin point out, be moved on or 'suspicious' individuals followed, as surveillance staff take preemptive action.[45]

Coventry is one example of a city which has contracted out its centre management to a joint public/private sector company which employs a team of customer-service ambassadors. Its investment in CCTV has also prompted the claim that the city centre is 'the safest place in Coventry'. Yet, for all these moves, a recent article asked if this approach really was enough to restore people's confidence and deliver the economic lead to regenerate the city as a whole. Despite successful inward investment, many of the new jobs are low paid and unskilled,

and there is a danger that crime has merely been displaced to other areas of the city.[46] The domination of the customer service ethos and the provision of a worry-free shopping environment at any price may, the author suggests, be a mistaken over-commitment to the American model of 'customer care'.

Centre and periphery

The concentration by management programmes on city centres raises questions about the relationship of the wider city to its centre. In her book, *Goliath*, Beatrix Campbell highlights the outer areas of cities, the low density green field estates, set on the fringes of cities. Many of these areas are effectively cut off from the city centres. Prohibitive bus fares and unemployment mean their inhabitants can be isolated in areas with few public facilities or job opportunities and increasing crime.[47]

New transport links can be significant symbols of the reconnection of a city. The new tram system in Manchester has created links between the north and south of the city via the centre. By becoming a transport hub, it re-establishes, the centre as a site of interchange. As well as improving access to the centre, the trams are a symbol of modernity, movement and individual freedom. An effective non-polluting transport network effectively opens up new possibilities in the relationship between centre and periphery and, inevitably, about where people could live.

Housing density

The planning profession is gearing itself up for a debate about how to deal with the demand for new housing and, in particular, where it should be built. Last year's house demand forecasts from the DoE added to previous estimates quite substantially,[48] and resuscitated planning debates about density levels for house building. In the immediate post-war years, the drive towards slum clearance in cities which had much higher populations than today sought to reduce housing density in the name of public health, social order and improved quality of life. In more recent years, high-rise blocks have

been almost universally condemned as inhuman and unnatural and for many years low-rise, suburban estates have been considered preferable. However, as Beatrix Campbell's studies show, these outer estates can also suffer the consequences of unemployment, social isolation, lack of public facilities and crime as much as any high-rise inner-city area.

While the Council for the Protection of Rural England and other groups concerned to promote the notion of sustainable development are keen to make the argument for re-using derelict urban land and employing good design to make better use of higher housing densities, other commentators suggest the pressure for new settlements outside existing urban areas is unyielding. It is a debate that will be inflected with commentary on social policy:

> Of the 3.5 million forecast increase in households to 2011, no less than 2.76 million – 79 per cent – are one-person households, and more than half of these will be never married people living alone.[49]

The trend towards one-person households might be influenced by income levels, house prices and divorce laws, but already one Minister has voiced his own wish to reduce the level of one-person households and to promote family group households. Nevertheless, some of the reported success stories of city centre regeneration, such as the so-called gay village in Manchester's Whitworth Street area, revolve around centrally based flats and cafés. The debate about household density goes to the heart of the future of city life.

Missing people

One of the main differences between the 'public realm' of 20 years ago and of today, is the large number of paid staff, mostly in what had been the public sector, who have gone missing. British Rail and London Underground have both dispensed with thousands of porters, ticket collectors and platform staff, preferring instead to plump for unmanned ticket machines and self-service trolleys. Where most

buses then had both driver and conductor, today most are singly operated. The Docklands Light Railway was even designed to be wholly automated, except that passenger protests were so voluble, they precipitated staffing on the trains. Housing estates have suffered similar depopulation now that resident caretakers have been replaced by mobile patrols, and parks too now that thousands of keepers have been strategically removed. Public toilets have also been closed in large numbers, their attendants gone with them. Yet such people often fulfilled roles other than their own specific duties, simply by 'being there' in case of trouble or lending a hand if needed. Their presence may well have deterred quite a lot of opportunistic crime. In 1994, John Patten, the then Secretary of State for Education, outlining a (failed) crusade against truancy, called upon bus conductors and park-keepers to do their bit, only to be reminded that they had gone. The underlying economic dynamic of the last twenty years has meant it is 'cheaper' to replace these public sector jobs by machines, or by achieving higher levels of productivity through mobile and casualised contract gangs.

The cumulative effect of abandoning or replacing these types of jobs in public places has been the loss of a human presence which had contributed to a feeling of safety and control in public places. Yet it was not only safety that such a staff presence reinforced; it also signalled their employer's investment in the public place in which they worked. This sense of investment is not reproduced by mobile, usually private, security staff whose only relation to a place is one of enforcing a security function. David Lambert of the Garden History Society has called this traditional form of public space management 'conspicuous care'. The loss of resident caretakers, and in some cases gardeners, from many housing estates is now recognised as a failure of urban policy in the 1980s, and some of the most successful recent renewal programmes have been based on reinstating a concierge or hall porter on the ground floor of high-rise buildings.

The repopulation of public spaces need not take just the traditional form of men and women in council uniform. Other presences can also lend a watchful eye. Cafés, kiosks and market stalls

can all provide an important presence and a focal point of interest to parks, squares and street settings. But here we meet another problem of rational modernity, this time in the form of what are often highly restrictive health and safety regulations. So stringent are the conditions they demand that the park kiosk or sale of home-made cakes on a Women's Institute stall will invariably lose out to the spotless supermarket as a provider of goods. At times, the interests of a bureaucratic public hygiene regime effectively destroys a healthy public social life and culture. This is the fear of philosophers Ferenc Heher and Agnes Heller in their timely book, *Biopolitics*, which argues against an 'holistic environmentalism' that demands codes of public behaviour and lifestyles that may, like other totalising ideologies before it, suppress individual liberties and life choices in the name of a greater good.[50]

Civility cannot be imposed or enforced, either by design or surveillance; in the end, it is a trust or gift relationship. Public space will always be a site of conflict, between different groups pursuing different interests, but yet it is possible to manage spaces and places in ways which minimise conflict and allow for individuals and groups to be conscious of other people's needs.

This is why the 'café society' model of urban renewal doesn't quite go far enough, although it is evidently an improvement on the previous property-led model of urban life. Certainly, we support the endeavour to construct new urban economies around services, cultural industries and a responsiveness to changing lifestyles which such notions as 'the 24 hour city' represent. But there remains a significant population, and another kind of public domain, that remains isolated, even excluded, from this new urbanity, and for whom the traditional, free, public spaces and institutions such as libraries, parks, and even forms of access or adult education, are often lifelines to the wider world.

Towards a new urbanism

One way to involve people in processes of urban renewal is to include them in decision-making and ongoing management. The old paternalism of local and national government is breaking down and the more imaginative attempts to break from the cycle of decline on monolithic housing estates and in large peripheral parts of the city have been community-based. Active participation from residents has gone beyond having a greater say in housing issues, to greater involvement in education, job creation and newer forms of local self-government.[51] In *People, Parks and Cities*, we saw that many of the examples of best practice in urban parks renewal were based on forms of self-management and community control.[52] In that report and others, we called for a 'mixed portfolio' of local open space, overseen by the local authority but involving city farms, community gardens and allotments alongside some parks which are directly owned and managed.

In the ascendant days of the Thatcher era, we were urged to follow the North American model of urban regeneration based on retailing and consumer-based leisure. More sanguine voices urged us look to Europe for our models of the ordered, dignified civic realm. But might there not be a distinct British tradition of urbanism which has emerged from the ashes of our postindustrial society?

There are a number of ways in which British cities actually do

things rather well. For example, despite all the ever-present problems of job discrimination, poverty and other forms of exclusion, it is still true to say that ethnic minority communities in British cities are more integrated, better represented in the political realm and have a stronger cultural presence and self-identity than they do elsewhere in Europe, or indeed North America. Equal opportunities policies have been partly effective. British urban cultures have been very creative settings for the development of music, media production, fashion and the arts, which are also widely admired in other parts of the world. In addition, one could point to the rich tradition of British voluntary and associational life which again helps foster urban cultures which are multi-layered and resonate with people's identities and lifestyles, rather than being static and dependent. So despite all the problems, there are strengths on which to build.

There are, then, grounds for optimism in the concern to define and promote a new urbanism. This will be one inflected by concerns for inclusiveness, a just balance between ethics and aesthetics, a commitment to cultural pluralism, flow rather than fixity, the outdoor world and the vagaries of the weather as much as the controlled indoors; free access and a respect for the richness of associational life, varied forms of management and funding, a degree of elasticity (or perhaps a lack of zealousness) towards public regulation, the spirit of play, and the gift relationship, learned rather than imposed modes of public behaviour, policing by consent rather than coercion, and for an acceptance of the patchwork city rather than the zoned or masterplan city. There will be freedoms for all in such a city, but there will also be respect and tolerance, and nobody left on the margins or locked outside.

Some guiding principles

Cities and citizenship

- Urban public spaces provide the settings for more democratic and convivial forms of citizenship to develop. Their protection and enhancement is vital to a higher quality of urban life.

Variety

- Cities need places of large scale congregation, for festivals and events, for the pleasure of being one of the crowd. But they also need places of sanctuary and quiet (memorial gardens, together with a growing variety of sensitive open space projects based on creating public spaces out of old churchyards and urban cemeteries).

Centre and periphery

- Public investment in city centre spaces should not be negatively counter-posed to public spending on outlying estates, or on social services, education or other more 'practical' local needs. People need access to both.

Management and programming

- Design and good architectural development is not enough. Successful public spaces are created by popular

use, over time, and under differing conditions. Management and programming are as important as the physical fabric.

Ethics and aesthetics

- Cultural diversity and cosmopolitan values are more than just an aesthetic sensibility; the homeless, the poor and the marginalised also have a stake in successful urban policies. Ethics are as important as aesthetics; in fact they properly reinforce each other.

Trust and solidarity

- Electronic surveillance, while helpful, can only provide a safety net in the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour. In the long term new forms of trust, respect for difference, and more sociable forms of urban solidarity need to be developed.

Conspicuous care

- Public spaces need not only management but forms of staffing dedicated to conspicuous care. The loss of estate caretakers, railway and bus ticketing staff, park-keepers, and other people whose job involved significant elements of public safety, is a pyrrhic victory of short-term economics. The costs in terms of vandalism, crime, personal injury, ghettoisation, and a rising prison population, have never been adequately calculated.

Over-regulation

- Over-zealousness with regard to the enforcement of rigid health and safety measures, often effectively prohibiting the provision of stimulating or challenging play areas, small café-kiosks, street markets, or the sale of local produce, may well kill the very thing these measures were designed to ensure: a better quality of life and more local, informal activity and enterprise.

Flexible spaces

- New public spaces should be designed in close consultation with neighbouring communities and potential users. Flexibility and adaptability are the key ingredients. Proposals for new spaces should include detailed plans as to how the space is to be funded, managed, programmed and staffed in the long term, particularly in the present time when capital investment through lottery funding is much more readily available than long-term revenue funding.

Defined by use

- Successful public space is not defined by legal ownership so much as use. It should be amenable to both public and private sector investment in facilities, amenable to both regular and occasional events, to both daytime and evening use, and to both festive and meditative uses. Its management should reflect the interests of both its funding agencies, its investors and its users. Where possible, it should be inclusive space, open to all within the normal laws governing public behaviour, although there are times and circumstances in which specific entry criteria – children only, women only, no alcohol, no dogs – may be used to achieve other civic goals.

Notes

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16 All these incidents were reported in a feature article in *The Independent*, 21 June 1995.

17 *The Independent*, 21 June 1995. See also Mayer Hiliman's research on the restriction of children's mobility in Hillman, M., ed., 1993, *Children, mobility and the quality of life*, PSI, London.

18 'No go Britain' was an *Independent on Sunday* feature which caused a lot of controversy when it named '40 estates and districts with fearful reputations. To people living near them, public sector workers. The emergency services and police they are places to approach with care or avoid altogether. Most of them have distinct identities, marking them out from their surroundings. They share higher than average unemployment, low home ownership and a high percentage of young males with time on their hands. Many are plagued by drugs, delinquency and violence.

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22 *The Guardian*, 6 July 1995.

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26 *The Guardian*, 9 February 1995.

27 The phrase belongs to the American geographer, Ed Soja.

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