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Urban Surveillance and the Struggle between Safe and Exciting Nightlife Districts¹

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Contentious Cities Session: Urban Politics between Contention and Control

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Abstract

Cities attract vast numbers of people at night (Roberts & Eldridge 2009). In recent decades the evening economy has started to play a significant role in city centre regeneration, with alcohol related establishments as the driving force (Hollands & Chatterton 2003). Concerns about personal safety and fear of crime increasingly determine the success of these leisure-based inner-city areas (Judd 2003, Bannister et al. 2006). This attitude is also reflected in academic work, where most studies explore the late night economy in terms of alcohol consumption and disorder (Hobbs et al. 2003, Hadfield 2006, Monaghan 2002, Plant & Plant 2006, Winlow & Hall 2006). Nightlife districts are, however, favoured by its visitors for adventure and excitement (Hubbard 2005). The question raised in this paper is how surveillance measures in different nightlife districts are legitimized, taking into account the fact that cities' nightlife districts do not only need to be safe but also stimulating. Based on an analysis of policy documents, night-time observations and expert interviews with stakeholders in the Safe Nightlife Programmes of Rotterdam and Utrecht, different local safety measures and their legitimizations in different local urban settings will be analysed. What are the social implications of these surveillance measures and what does this mean for the character of cities' nightlife districts?

The Rise of Night-time Economies

From the early 1990s onwards the evening and night-time economy and, more broadly, the 24-hour city started to develop (Heath & Stickland 1997, Lovatt & O'Connor 1995) with many metropolitan cities including the nightlife sector in their regeneration plans. City centres of metropolitan areas have always had late-night culture in some form, but since de-industrialisation concrete policies have been designed to regenerate post-industrial cities. In some cities the nighttime economy has filled the vacuum left by the waning industrial and manufacturing sectors (Hobbs et al. 2003, Roberts & Eldridge 2009). Hollands & Chatterton (2003) point out that the nighttime economy grew not only due to these broad economic changes but also due to cultural factors. The greater participation of women in the workforce, new bars and clubs aimed at women and gay men, the expansion of higher education and the subsequent rise in student numbers, and increasing age at marriage also helped to generate a flourishing nighttime economy. Moreover, Wittel (2001) adds to this that bars and cafes are no longer sites of shared rhetoric and familiarity but nowadays also function as spaces to network with colleagues and clients, turning nightlife districts into spaces of work as well.

The post-industrial city centre is reimagined as a desirable and safe place to live, work but also to play and consume. Just like the daytime economy, the nighttime economy has become vital for the regeneration of city centres. As a result nightlife districts with a variety of restaurants, bars and clubs have started to develop in various larger cities providing jobs and attracting tourists and visitors. The revitalization of nightlife districts is also expected to help make cities competitive and attract certain types of tourists/visitors. In 'Rotterdam in your pocket 2011', a tourist guide offered by the city's marketing office, the city's nightlife district Stadhuisplein is for example

promoted as a place that never sleeps. ‘...For lighter pursuits, every night’s a party in the cafes that line the Stadhuisplein’ (Rzine, Rotterdam in your pocket 2011, p.20)².

There is, however, a pervasive culture of fear surrounding nightlife districts which makes the night time economy different than the daytime economy. People who go out at night are usually seen as problematic, in discourses that involve negative cultural signifiers such as drinking, making noise and hanging out in groups (Bromley & Nelson 2002, Jayne et al. 2008). This violence and drunkenness constitute a danger for a city that wishes to appear an innovative, exciting, creative and safe place to live, visit, play and consume (Harvey 1989: 9). Consumption is only thought to flourish when visitors and tourists feel comfortable and safe (Judd 2003, Bannister et al. 2006, Helms 2008). There is a clear tension between the *urban renaissance*, where city centres are imagined as safe and comfortable places to live and consume, and the narrative of violence and alcohol-related problems that is usually associated with nightlife districts (see also Eldridge 2010). The question we raise in this article is how the struggle between guaranteeing safety and security and at the same time promoting vibrant and exciting nightlife districts materialises in different locations.

Safe Nightlife Programmes in the Netherlands

A violent incident in Amsterdam’s nightlife district was the start of a long political discussion on safe nightlife districts in the Netherlands. In the summer of 1996 a man named Joes Kloppenburg was kicked to death after he had intervened when a group of drunken men first kicked a homeless person and then started attacking two students. Kloppenburg died in hospital from his injuries and became the symbol for a large societal and media movement against what was called ‘mindless violence’ (*zinloos geweld* in Dutch). When similar incidents happened in the next few years they were all framed in line with this movement. It was in this context that special policies to promote Safe Nightlife districts came about. Currently violent incidents in nightlife districts are more often referred to as violence related to going out (*uitgaansgeweld* in Dutch).

In 1998 the first national Safe Nightlife guidelines were published. These were most of all a plea for a more structured collaboration between the various partners in nightlife districts (the city council, the nightlife industry and the police). It was also then decided that agreements between different local partners should be made, resulting in Covenants for Safe Nightlife. By 2002 75 out of 163 middle sized Dutch cities with a nightlife district had signed a Covenant for Safe Nightlife (Algemene Rekenkamer 2002) in which the different partnerships, responsibilities and intentions to make nightlife districts safer were specified.

These agreements were, however, not binding and after the first evaluation in 2003 a Quality Indicator for Safe Nightlife (*Kwaliteitsmeter Veilig Uitgaan*) was introduced by the Dutch Centre for Criminality Prevention and Safety³. This indicator was supposed to help with forming more concrete agreements between different

² <http://www.rotterdam.info/cms.php?langid=2&cmspageid=321>

³ This Centre is funded by the Dutch Ministries of Safety and Justice and Internal Affairs to promote public private partnerships to reduce crime.

partners in various cities and in evaluating existing programmes. The recently established Ministry of Safety and Justice (2010) has embraced the Quality Indicator for Safe Nightlife in its safety policy. Riots at a beach party in Hoek van Holland (near Rotterdam)⁴, as well as the 19 people who were crushed to death during the 2010 Love Parade in Duisburg have been a major influence on making Safe Nightlife a political priority in the Netherlands.

Moreover Safe Nightlife Programmes fit in neatly in the larger context of Dutch crime policies, which since the mid 1990s have been extended to include discussions around subjective feelings of safety rather than focusing solely on objective safety and crime statistics. Prevention has become the key focus rather than punishment. Another important idea that forms the basis for this so-called 'integral' safety is that the government is no longer capable of solving safety problems by itself. Public-Private Partnerships, or nodal governance (Shearing & Wood 2003), are presented as the key to success in integral safety policy. Because of declining trust in government, local safety arrangements have been organised less hierarchically than in the past. As well as the government and the police the business sector and civil society are expected to contribute to the safety situation. Safe Nightlife policies are a good example of these flatter, more responsive systems of urban governance, as they clearly promote a structured collaboration between the different actors involved in urban nightlife. It is striking, however, that in the formulation of Safe Nightlife Policies visitors to nightlife districts have hardly been consulted (Author 2009). This raises questions about how integrated and inclusive these policies really are, and who represents the consumers' side.

Little is known, moreover, about how these partnerships work on the ground in different nightlife districts. These policies are often presented as 'one size fits all', but collaborations in Safe Nightlife Programmes are different in each city. Safety issues differ from one nightlife district to another and the precise nature, composition and performance of these programmes are very much influenced by local power relationships. In this paper we examine how the nightlife districts of two Dutch cities (Rotterdam and Utrecht) are governed and how specific choices for different types of surveillance are legitimized in different local settings. Different types of surveillance will be identified as well as the different local rationales behind the implementation of these measures.

Rotterdam's tough policies: an example for many other Dutch cities

Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands and currently has a population of around 600,000. Its population is ethnically diverse, with 46% born outside the Netherlands or having parents born outside the Netherlands. For the age group 0 - 14 years this number is even higher: 62%. As a city Rotterdam has a no-nonsense reputation. It is traditionally the most industrial of the major Dutch cities, dominated by harbour industries. The city's transformation into a post-Fordist knowledge-based

⁴ In the summer of 2009 a police officer shot a young man at a beach party in Hoek van Holland in a situation of panic where the police were attacked by hooligans and lost control.

society has led to high unemployment, especially among the less-educated population. Another, probably related, characteristic of the city is that the local political landscape has changed drastically in the last decade with a populist party (*Leefbaar Rotterdam*) changing the city's strong socio-democratic tradition. Pim Fortuyn, who was shot dead in 2002, started his political career in the city of Rotterdam and had a major influence on the city's political landscape. He, together with the former major and current minister of Safety and Justice, nicknamed 'the Dutch Giuliani', promoted a policy of 'zero tolerance' to make the city of Rotterdam safer. Zero tolerance is not unique to Rotterdam, but the city is one of the few in the Netherlands that is openly communicating it and embracing this new approach. The city's tough policies and its slogan 'Rotterdam Dares' is now a point of reference for many other Dutch cities who want to implement restrictive safety policies.

Rotterdam's nightlife facilities are spread out and concentrated in different districts. Our research focuses on the area around Stadhuisplein, a square with a large concentration of pubs and clubs in the city centre. In the summer of 2000 the major, the chief of police, the chief public prosecutor and the representative of Promotion Stadhuisplein signed the first Covenant for Safe Nightlife for the Stadhuisplein area. The Covenant contains agreements to increase safety on the square. In the same year the first cameras were installed in public space. The Euro 2000 and preceding football riots speeded this decision and convinced critics of its necessity. Currently, Rotterdam is the city with the largest number of publicly installed CCTV cameras (350) in the Netherlands⁵: we counted 24 public cameras in the nightlife district around Stadhuisplein (18 dome cameras and 6 normal ones).

Map 1: Number of public and private cameras in Rotterdam's Stadhuisplein district



⁵ Although CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) surveillance is not as common in the Netherlands as in the United Kingdom many Dutch cities have now installed cameras in public places. In 2003 1/5 of the Dutch municipalities had cameras, in 2009 this was already 1/3 (van Schijndel et al. 2010).

Empirical research on CCTV practices (Dubbeld 2004, McCahill 2002, Norris & Armstrong 1999) shows that it is not quantity but quality that counts. In other words, it is not the number of cameras that makes this type of safety measure effective, but the technical design of different camera systems, the modus operandi in the control room and the institutional embeddedness of camera surveillance that really makes the difference. The way city camera projects are governed differs substantially from place to place. Webster (2004) distinguishes three types of CCTV systems: those that are pro-active, where the images are watched live, those that are re-active, where images are recorded and one can play them back, and those that are not active, where fake cameras are used. In Rotterdam camera images are watched 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

'In Rotterdam we do not want to create an illusion of safety. We do not have a policy of empty boxes like in other cities. One very important pillar of our safety policy is that we watch the video images 24/7. If we think a camera is needed we put one and if one is there we use it'.

(Municipal official Rotterdam)

During clubbing nights there is immediate contact between the control room and police officers on the ground. Rotterdam is very proud of its 24 hours a day and seven days a week policy of live watching. As well as constant surveillance by cameras there have also been extra on-site patrols by policemen in Rotterdam's nightlife district since the Covenant for Safe Nightlife has been implemented. On Friday and Saturday nights extra police forces are put in place to respond to larger crowds. On Friday and Saturday nights 13 policemen, usually in yellow reflective safety vests, are on duty in the nightlife district, supported by two mounted police. In 2009 Rotterdam's police team for the nightlife district was renamed the *Horeca Preventie Team*, the main difference being that policemen working in the nightlife district are now accompanied by two street wardens and two 'youth stewards': 'hosts in public space who help to prevent trouble and try to reduce potential conflicts'.

'They [the youth stewards] act as a buffer between bouncers and the police. Young people do not want to be seen with the police who correct or arrest them. The police often make youth even more aggressive. When the youth stewards see frustrated boys walking around with aggressive attitudes, you know guys who may have been rejected at the door earlier on, they approach them and have a word to calm them down. It is amazing to see them actually doing the job. They have a lot of credibility. It is all about respect'.

(Municipal official Rotterdam)

Evaluations show that interventions such as these youth stewards have a positive effect on the reduction of violence in nightlife districts (Algemene Rekenkamer 2002). However, since the 1st of April 2011, funding for the youth stewards in Rotterdam has been stopped.

Since 2009 a collective pub and club banning system has been implemented in the nightlife district of Rotterdam. If someone misbehaves, pub and club owners have the authority to reject them. Under this new rule however, people can also then be rejected by other venues that are part of the collective ban. So far only 3 collective bans have been issued: enforcement is difficult in practice and takes a lot of time, and bar and pub owners in Rotterdam are not very enthusiastic about it (yet). A related safety measure already implemented in some Dutch nightlife districts is the 'Weekend Away Arrangement'. Under this regulation violators who are arrested during the weekend can be detained for the whole weekend and their court case scheduled for Monday morning. The rationale for this is that when people are released sober, this increases their understanding of what they have done. Moreover, they are forced to explain their boss why they could not show up at work on Monday morning. Rotterdam's public prosecutor was against this rule, interpreting it as being against the law since when it is clear from the start what has happened during the night and no further investigation is needed, there is no legal ground to detain somebody for a fixed period of time. Besides, there are special procedures that can be used to detain somebody over the weekend if necessary, making it unnecessary to implement a whole new arrangement.

This reluctance to use these special legal procedures and to implement collective pub and club bans in Rotterdam is, however, countered by an overwhelming fear of escalation of trouble during public events in the city.

'We do not want to take any risks, the violent night in Hoek van Holland in the summer of 2009 is still fresh in our memory'
(Municipal official, Rotterdam)

The risk profiling that takes place before each event in Rotterdam is illustrative of this new focus. Since 2010 all events requiring permits are subjected to a standard risk analysis and categorized into different risk levels. This classification determines which and how many safety measures are required, and has increased the level of surveillance considerably.

'I thought this was post-Hoek van Holland, but we are still in the midst of it. It is killing us. I need to inform everybody about everything we do, even about really minor things. People are completely stressed out. Nothing can go wrong....In the past when I organized an event and I called for a riot squad because I thought we needed it, the public prosecutor often decided it was unnecessary. Now, when I ask for one I get two squads.'
(Police officer Rotterdam)

Table 1: Safe Nightlife Measures in Rotterdam and Utrecht

| | Rotterdam | Utrecht |
|--|--|---|
| Physical measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Safety Lighting ▪ Urilifts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Safety Lighting ▪ Plastic street urinals |
| Dynamic Surveillance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Horeca Preventie Team</i>; police, street wardens and youth stewards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Uitgaan Interventie Team</i>; police |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bodycams and cameras on roofs of surveillance vans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ x |
| Static Surveillance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The whole nightlife district is covered by cameras ▪ Live watching: (24/7) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The whole nightlife district is covered by cameras ▪ Live watching: Mo-wed 18.00 – 02.00, Thu-Sa 14.00 - 6.00, Su 14.00-2.00 |
| Nightlife venue specific measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closing times: Fr-Sa until 02.00 and Su-Thu until 01.00 (half-hour ‘cooling down’ period) ▪ A couple of venues have night-time exemptions (open for 24 hours) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No closing times ▪ No happy hours or special promotions for young people |
| Legal measures, bylaw | <p>Local prohibitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public urinating, public drinking ▪ Fighting ▪ Area bans ▪ City centre appointed as ‘safety risk area’, stop and search permitted | <p>Local prohibitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public urinating, public drinking ▪ Fighting ▪ x ▪ x |
| Legal measures Individual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fast-track detention procedures ▪ Collective Pub and Club ban: 13 venues are connected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘Weekend Away Arrangement’ ▪ Collective Pub and Club ban: 60 venues are connected |
| Legal measures Timely | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk analysis for every permit required event | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ x |

Utrecht: not in favor of large scale CCTV projects

Utrecht is a historic city with a population of around 310,000; it is the fourth largest city in the Netherlands. Like Rotterdam it has a young population, with many inhabitants between 20 and 30, but in Utrecht this is mainly due to the presence of a large university. The number of inhabitants with a non-Dutch ethnic background is much smaller in Utrecht than in Rotterdam: 31% of the population were born outside the Netherlands or have parents born outside the Netherlands. Utrecht has the second highest number of cultural events in the Netherlands, after Amsterdam, with its nightlife facilities clustered in a small area in the city centre.

Utrecht's first Covenant for Safe Nightlife was signed in 2002 by the police, the city council, the public prosecutor and the nightlife industry with the aim of making nightlife districts safer. It was also explicitly stated that 'a good balance between a lively, safe and liveable area was striven for' (Gemeente Utrecht 2002:3). The rate of violence related to clubbing in Utrecht's nightlife districts was relatively low for the city's size (Snippe et al. 2006). Utrecht's municipal council consists of a coalition between the social democrats (PvdA), the social liberal democrats (D66) and the Green Party (Groen Links), and is more reluctant to implement safety measures than the city of Rotterdam. Local political discussions about CCTV have clearly been dominated by privacy arguments whereas '*in most Dutch cities that ship has sailed and privacy is no longer a topic when CCTV is discussed*' (Dutch researcher, CCTV evaluations). In 2001, one year before the first Covenant for Safe Nightlife was implemented, the first public camera was installed in the city centre of Utrecht. The difference with Rotterdam was that CCTV images were only actively watched during club nights, which in Utrecht are Thursday, Friday and Saturday. This local camera policy was backed up by the following argument:

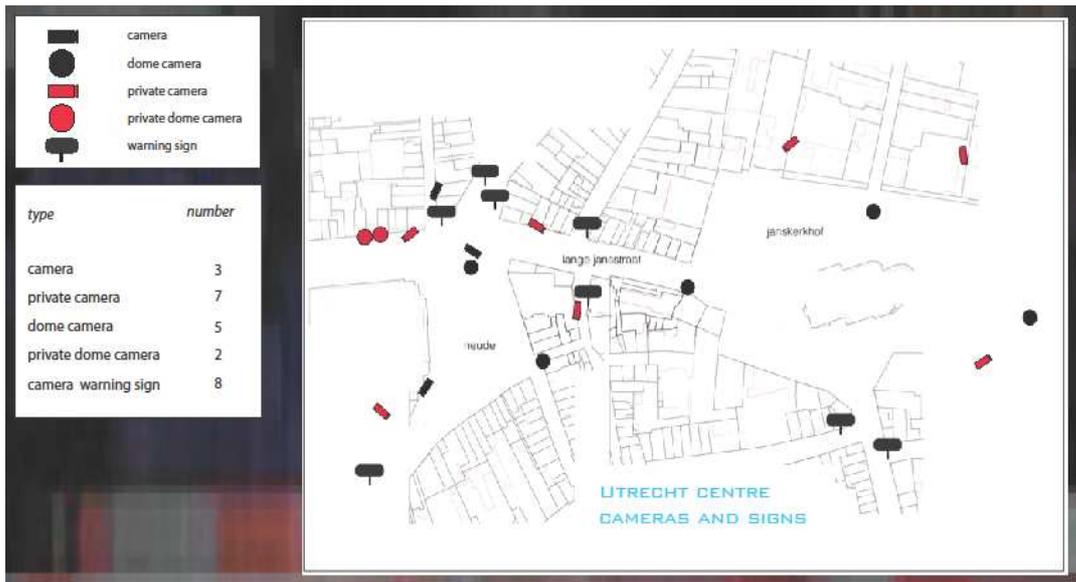
'In Utrecht we do not want to spy on innocent citizens, we only watch camera images if there is a considerable risk that something might happen'
(Municipal officer, Utrecht)

Expectations for CCTV were high in Utrecht, as in many other cities, but in this case were concretely quantified by the city council. In their first report on camera surveillance the city council reported that crime figures should drop by 10% in the two years following the instalment of CCTV. When the first evaluation showed that the crime reduction target had not been met (Gemeente Utrecht 2002) this finding was publicised and discussed.

Cameras are still, however, often presented as 'the' solution to violence in nightlife districts, and even in Utrecht, regardless of local criticism. When in 2008 during student induction week a student was partially paralysed as a result of a serious fight, once again the discussion immediately focussed on CCTV. The boy's parents claimed in the media that their son could have been saved if a camera had been there. In fact there had been a camera covering the location of the accident, but on a Wednesday evening the images were not watched live. After this incident the mayor increased the surveillance hours for CCTV so that now images are also watched in the evening on non-clubbing nights (see table 1 for exact hours of live watching).

There are currently 87 cameras in Utrecht. In 2009 Utrecht's city council decided to freeze them at this number and to discuss more intensively their necessity, effectiveness and the safeguarding of legal rights. The general impression that after installation, cameras were never removed was an important trigger for this ruling. In our research area we counted eight public cameras (five dome cameras and three normal ones).

Map 2: Number of public and private cameras in Utrecht's nightlife district



It must be said that in contrast to this limit on cameras in the city centre, the number is rising rapidly in Utrecht's Central Station area. This area, however, falls under counter-terrorism regulations that reach far beyond local city council's remit.

As well as CCTV there is also on-site patrolling taking place in Utrecht's nightlife district. Like Rotterdam, the city of Utrecht decided in its first Safe Nightlife Covenant that it would need a special police team to patrol the nightlife district. In this Covenant (2002-2006) this team was called *Centrum Zorg Plus* (Center Security Plus). In the second Covenant (2007-2010) they were renamed *Uitgaans Interventie Team* (Nightlife Intervention Team). Unlike in Rotterdam, these teams consist only of 'traditional' policemen, numbering six on Thursday and Friday nights and eight on Saturdays. Despite Utrecht's reluctance to install public cameras and its rather traditional way of policing on the ground, it is one of the few cities that has implemented the Weekend Away Arrangement and is very proud of its implementation of a collective club and pub ban. Currently 60 venues are collaborating to try to keep 'troublemakers' out, and after some discussions with the Dutch Data Protection Authority the city council has now amended an approved Protocol on collective bans to the second Covenant for Safe Nightlife.

Legitimizing Surveillance at Night

Both Rotterdam and Utrecht have implemented a broad variety of safety measures in nightlife districts. City councils have invested in the physical environment of these districts to make them safer and more attractive to visitors. Social safety lighting, for example, is part of both Safe Nightlife Programmes. A concept created by the American architect Oscar Newman in 1972, 'defensible space' involves design changes to the built environment to maximize its natural surveillance potential. According to this approach, alterations to the physical environment will increase detection and deter potential criminals but also improve people's sense of safety. There is very little research conducted on the effects of low-tech measures such as lighting on curtailing crime, but it has been shown that good lighting programmes may be very effective in creating feelings of safety in public space (Custers & Dubbeld 2008). Farrington and Welsh (2002) were the first to systematically review the effects of improved street lighting on crime. They found a 20% reduction in crime, which in British cities reached 30%, yet street lighting improvement measures do not make up part of the UK government's crime prevention policy.

Another very visible physical measure taken in nightlife districts has been public urinals. Local residents of nightlife districts and club and bar owners complain about public urination by clubbers and drinkers. In Utrecht six plastic urinals have been placed in hot spots in the nightlife district to prevent public urination. In summertime and during weekends extra urinals are added. Rotterdam has found a more aesthetic solution to tackle the problem of public urination, installing its first *urilift* in 2001. *Urilifts* are urinals that can disappear underground during the day and can be 'lifted' at night when public toilets are less accessible and the needs often higher. The city currently has the highest number of *urilifts* operating in the Netherlands (15). Street wardens and cleaners, but in some cases also bar owners, operate these lifts. In policy reports and interviews conducted with experts in Rotterdam and Utrecht, lighting and public urinals did not appear to be topics that are discussed intensively. This limited discussion around physical measures is in sharp contrast with the discussions around CCTV.

Even when there is very little substantive evidence to suggest that CCTV works there is a real rush to install cameras in public space in the Netherlands (even though discussions differ from city to city, as shown above). Welsh and Farrington (2003) conducted a meta evaluation of 22 British and US analyses and found that half of the studies included showed a positive effect, while the other half showed no or negative effects. The tremendous popularity of CCTV is legitimized by consistently overplaying the general effectiveness of cameras (Welsh & Farrington 2003, Norris et al. 2004). The literature on CCTV raises many questions about the assumed link between CCTV use and crime reduction, since research shows that it works in certain circumstances. It is, for example, proven to be very effective in closed locations such as car parks and when it involves more rational forms of crime. This type of location is easy to surveil, and criminals who are actively trying not to get caught are aware of cameras. For the same reasons CCTV has proven not to be very effective in curtailing street crime and violence that occurs impulsively, such as when alcohol and/or drugs are involved (Welsh & Farrington 2009). This is a remarkable finding when we look into the legitimization of

safety measures in nightlife districts, since most city councils introduce CCTV in their cities to reduce exactly these types of violence, whereas research shows that this is the type of crime against which CCTV has been proven to be the least effective.

How, then, has CCTV come to be such a popular safety measure in nightlife districts despite the fact that research shows it only has limited effects on impulse-driven violence and crime? First, local incidents and the media play an important role in its popularity. When a student was beaten up during the student induction in Utrecht, the live watching of CCTV images was immediately increased, regardless of local political actors' critical attitude to the cameras. Second, cameras are very popular with the public. When the first cameras were installed in Utrecht in 2001, the city council was reluctant and communicated its criticism. Arguments in favour of still going ahead with them despite local criticism and the disappointing crime reduction figures were drawn from a local survey that showed that Utrecht's residents were largely in favor of CCTV. The strong symbolism of CCTV in solving crime often results in 'quick fix' thinking. There seems to be a general opinion that cameras work in preventing crime regardless of the nuanced conclusions of research in this field.

Interviews with experts involved in these Safe Nightlife Programmes also show that CCTV is most of all important in creating the impression that something is being done in response to public anxieties, but not necessarily toward curtailing crime. The police in both the cities of Rotterdam and Utrecht referred to the importance of good communication between the control room and the police, which often prevents 'trouble'. A police officer in Utrecht, for example, said:

'These people in the control room, they are trained, they know patterns, they know how it goes. It is usually pulling, pushing, fighting, so when someone gets physical they immediately call us and we can intervene'.

In this case it is not at all clear whether something would have happened if the police had not intervened, but the message that something is being done immediately is clearly communicated to visitors of nightlife districts. CCTV in these districts seems most helpful, then, in deterring undesirable behaviour and showing nightlife district visitors that immediate action is being taken and anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated. A particular image of safety is thus created through these practices in nightlife districts.

In the same vein both Rotterdam and Utrecht have adopted a *zero tolerance policy*⁶ toward 'disorder' in nightlife districts. The increase in fines for not behaving 'appropriately' in public space (such as public urination or drunkenness) is illustrative of this approach. Since 2009 both Rotterdam and Utrecht have amended the ban on fighting in their local bylaws to avoid discussions with visitors to nightlife districts whether a given fight is real and/or who started it. Other recent measures introduced in

⁶ The policy of Zero Tolerance was first adopted by the New York Police Department in 1994 and from there exported all over the world. It is centred on the idea that an authoritative use of coercive police powers towards low level public disorder offences such as graffiti, vandalism and public drunkenness can prevent more serious types of crime and disorder.

Dutch nightlife districts under Safe Nightlife Programmes to discipline and control visitors who do not behave, such as 'Weekend Away Arrangements' and area, pub and club bans, were initially introduced as exceptional measures but have quickly become routinized and adopted in many other nightlife districts in Dutch cities. These measures have made it easier to remove the 'undesirable' from nightlife districts. They are legitimized by arguing that a strong message that certain behaviour will not be accepted is needed to keep these districts liveable and comfortable. These safety measures, however, also raise questions about the privacy of visitors to these areas. It is striking that in the city of Utrecht, where privacy was such a hot topic when CCTV was discussed, the collective pub and club ban is popular because of its ability to remove anonymity.

'The good thing about this regulation is that it allows us to break down the anonymity of potential troublemakers'

(Club owner Utrecht)

This 'new-style crime prevention' (Belina & Helms 2003) posits a quasi-natural distinction between law abiders and criminals and refers to the enforcement of codes, standards and moral ideals held by society (Johnston & Shearing 2003). This agenda regarding anti-social behaviour is a major challenge to traditional conceptions of criminal justice because of its strong element of discipline. It raises questions about the definition of 'disorder' and 'anti-social behaviour' and the power dynamics behind it. Boutellier (2005) talks about a 'semantic dragnet' for all sorts of issues that are considered morally wrong but are not necessarily connected with crime. This dragnet primarily represents a desire for order. The rise of street warden programmes and youth stewards is also indicative that policing in nightlife districts can no longer be seen in isolation from other forms of social control and discipline (Helms 2008). Attempts to regulate the nighttime economy through restricting access and excluding 'undesirables' offers a serious challenge to key criminal justice values and principles.

Social and Spatial implications of Safe Nightlife Programmes

In Utrecht it is remarkable that despite the critical attitude toward CCTV with regard to privacy, other safety measures such as the collective club and pub ban are implemented without much opposition. Interviews show that there is a view that by excluding the 'wrong type of visitor', problems in nightlife districts will be resolved. As an administrator from the city council in Utrecht said:

'It is very simple, these troublemakers, nobody really wants them in the area'.

These specific safety measures, however, raise important questions about the role of the nightlife industry in defining who 'potential troublemakers' are. Club and pub owners may have different interests in keeping people out from the police and/or the city council, focusing on a specific type of consumer. One club owner in Utrecht was very clear about the type of customer he preferred:

'I like students to come to my bar, they know how to handle alcohol, they know their limits, they are quite mature and they know how to make a good party'.

He did not mention how much they spent, but this probably also plays a role in his preference. Thus nightlife has the potential to become like the daytime economy, 'a bland consumerist playground of chain stores and fast food outlets in which new forms of exclusion take place' (Lovatt & O'Connor 1995: 133). There is a danger that nightlife districts may become homogenised spaces geared towards people who can spend - excluding the poor. This 'justice of exclusion' is increasingly viewed as a necessary condition for securing the safety and pleasure of consumers and 'decent' citizens (Helms, 2008). It poses serious questions about what sort of behaviour is defined as 'undesirable', by whom and what type of visitor is envisioned when cities' night-life districts are, as part of urban regeneration processes, designed, managed and policed to foster the comfort and sense of well-being of their visitors.

Even though various safety measures have been legitimized by arguing that visitors' feelings of safety will increase, very little research has actually been conducted on this. What do visitors to nightlife districts think of the safety measures taken to deter 'potential troublemakers'? Aiming for complete safety in these districts may result in the exclusion of certain types of users, but also marginalizes spaces that are deemed risky. Too many safety measures may result in sterile, predictable public spaces where everyone is watched by security guards and nothing unpredictable happens. In the urban literature these spaces where urbanity is to a great extent ignored are called *urbanoid environments* (Goldberger, 1996, Hannigan 1998). Keeping the thrill of going out at night in a city that also needs to be secure is a challenge for designers and politicians.

Conclusion

There is a paradox in the governance of nightlife districts. Late night consumption has been expanded in many cities, often as part of urban regeneration policies, whereas the effects of this expansion have been criminalized. This article has shown that the search for a risk-free nightlife that many cities are undertaking under the banner of Safe Nightlife Programmes is problematic. The inter-agency partnerships to promote Safe Nightlife that many cities have instituted reflect a broader change in crime control, from the sole duty of the police officer to a shared responsibility. These nodal governance and public-private partnerships are celebrated by local politicians and owners of nightlife venues without much realism about their limits. Where large groups of people gather many things can go wrong, and going out is in itself a risky process. The risk is sometimes even explicitly part of the thrill when people experiment with alcohol and drugs. It is naïve to think that 100% risk-free nightlife can even exist.

An analysis of the safety measures that have been taken in Rotterdam and Utrecht shows that there has been a steady increase in safety measures since the end of the nineties. It also shows that the promotion of night-time economies has sparked new social fears about disorder, violence and alcohol and drugs. Attention has clearly shifted

from traditional crime prevention to tackling disorder and anti-social behaviour. Public urination, fighting and public drunkenness, rather than crime reduction, have become the centre of attention of Safe Nightlife Policies, resulting in safety measures that cannot always be legitimized by their effectiveness in reducing crime. The public private partnerships underlying Safe Nightlife Policies have created a common sense morality of public space that constructs and demarcates 'responsible' and 'irresponsible' uses of city spaces. These constructions clearly complement and reinforce the broader vision for order in the entrepreneurial city and they bring under punitive control target groups and individuals who are deemed 'incompatible' with the neoliberal urban vision.

The question remains whether these public-private partnerships really promote the interests of *all* citizens. Nightlife districts are not experienced in the same way by everyone. Police patrols, private security and club bouncers can increase safety in nightlife areas, but at the same time can cause unease amongst clubbers. A quick scan of Rotterdam clubbers (COS 2010) showed that stop and search programmes and fines for smoking weed and drinking alcohol in public space lead to the highest level of annoyance. Earlier research on feelings of safety in the nightlife districts of two Dutch cities (Arnhem and Apeldoorn) show that the presence of police and public security leads to ambiguous feelings (Author 2009). For some, more surveillance can lead to feelings of certainty, security and trust because immediate action can be taken. For others, it has a negative effect on the atmosphere and increases feelings of mistrust and insecurity. Going out must not only be safe but also needs to be exciting and fun (Hubbard 2005).

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