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Securitizing public space: A study of King's Cross Station & Square

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Abstract

This paper considers the role of contemporary securitization in the production of public spaces in London through a study of King's Cross Station and Square. It critically examines the security strategies in King's Cross Station and Square and the effect they have on people's ability to access, use and transform this space. I adopt Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space to deconstruct the formal and informal processes that shape the everyday reality of the station and square, and conclude by reflecting on whether security concerns and perceived risks constrain the possibilities for meaningfully producing and reproducing public space.

Introduction

Heavy steel and concrete barriers, separating pedestrians from passing traffic, have become a familiar sight on the bridges of central London since the Westminster and London Bridge attacks in early 2017. These security devices sprung up overnight and, with threat levels raised to 'critical', their appearance went unquestioned. This is representative of the way in which the securitization of the built environment has been depoliticised and framed as a technological solution to violence. It is the purpose of this paper to critically examine contemporary manifestations of security in public spaces in London and their relationship to other processes shaping the city, namely, regeneration and capital accumulation. In addition, the paper will analyse the effects of securitization on the right to access, use and transform public space, employing Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space as a conceptual tool to focus on King's Cross Station and Square.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to define the key terms: *securitization* and *public space*. Securitization is defined by critical security studies scholar, Didier Bigo, as follows:

> It is a kaleidoscope of practices non-reducible to a core meaning or/and a linguistic formulation. The label "security" appears rather to work as a slogan, as a peculiar method through which a dominant group justifies and imposes a political program by assessing who needs to be protected and who can be sacrificed, who can be designated as an object of fear, control, coercion… To declare a referent object as being one of security or insecurity is thus deeply political, and designating it as such does not merely signify things but does things.[1]

In the context of the built environment, this means that if the Home Office, the Department for Transport or Network Rail, designate a particular public space to be vulnerable, at risk, under threat or potentially liable to terrorist attack, this is a political act with real consequences. The space is altered both physically and symbolically. Boundaries are erected to demarcate the territory that requires protection and the way that users perceive and interact with the space changes also.

In order to define the second term, public space, it is instructive to draw on Hannah Arendt's definition of the public realm:

> namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly…The space of appearance comes into being whenever men are together in the manner of speech and

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[1] Thierry, Balzacq, Tugba Basara, Didier Bigo, Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet and Christian Olsson, 'Security Practices', in ed. Robert A. Denemark, *International Studies Encyclopedia Online*. (Blackwell, 2010), p.2.

action… due to this peculiarity of the public realm, which because it ultimately resides on action and speech, never altogether loses its potential character.[2]

Although Hannah Arendt's definition does not refer to public space in its material form, it highlights two important features: intentionality and potentiality. This definition enables us to recognise public space as a common space for encounter, interaction, recognition of difference and the possibility of acting together with others. With these definitions established, it is now possible to consult the literature on securitization and space.

Securitization and space

Literature on the topic of the securitization of the built environment spans the disciplines of geography, sociology, psychology, architecture, design and criminology. Here, it is useful to highlight the themes of the earliest and most influential texts, as well as recent works that consider the contemporary trends in securitization that the paper is concerned with.

Research negotiating issues of security and space originated in the United States in the 1970s and continues to focus on North American cities. New York and Los Angeles are paradigmatic examples, where urban policies of corporate-led gentrification, militarization and zero tolerance policing strategies aimed at improving 'quality of life' have been most entrenched.[3] Similar tendencies are discernible in Western European cities and a substantial body of research has developed since the early 1990s to account for the displacement of marginal populations from British urban centres resulting from policies of regeneration.[4] There are several key themes that have shaped these approaches to designing and understanding cities: first, the assumption that behaviour can be modified through environmental design; second, the institutionalisation, transposition and widespread application of security design strategies against threats ranging from crime to terrorism; and third, the aesthetics and visibility of urban security features.

The first study to directly engage with security and the built environment was *Defensible Space* by Oscar Newman published in 1972. This book emerged out of the increased attention and enquiry by the New York Housing Authority in the late 1960s into the relationship between the design of public residential developments and crime rates across New York City. From the findings of the New York Housing Authority, Oscar Newman drew the conclusion that there was a link between behaviour and environmental design, and on the basis of this, he advocated that design should be instrumentalized in order to combat crime.[5] This assumption has been rigorously criticised for behavioural and environmental determinism.[6] Criminologists, sociologists and architectural critics have argued that these approaches, which reinforce a direct link between physical environment and human behaviour, fail to address the socio-economic factors that contribute to crime.[7] Newman's argument does not question why public housing projects tend to be plagued by violent crime in the first place. This naturalizes the presence of crime among low-income populations rather than considering it a product of institutionalized economic inequality and racial oppression. Furthermore, the spatially targeted design solutions, which such theories advocate, tend to be ineffective as they ultimately only displace crime from one location to another. In regard to this displacement, Schneider and Kitchen ask whether it is 'ethical simply to "move crime around", whether by public or private mechanisms, especially

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[2] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp.198-199.

[3] Nicholas Fyfe, Zero tolerance, maximum surveillance? Deviance, difference and crime control in the late modern city, in L. Lees (Ed.) *The Emancipatory city: paradoxes and possibilities* (London: Sage, 2004), p.40; Peter Marcuse, 'Urban Form and Globalization after September 11th: The View from New York', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, September 2002, p.596.

[4] Iain Borden, Thick edge: Architectural boundaries in the postmodern metropolis. In I Borden and J Rendell (Eds.) *Intersections: Architectural Histories and Critical Theories* (London: Routledge 2000), p.223.

[5] Oscar Newman, *Defensible Space: People and Design in the Violent City*, (London: Architectural Press, 1972), p.2.

[6] Ben Campkin, *Remaking London: Decline and Regeneration in Urban Culture*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), p.91.

[7] For example, architectural historian, Katharine Bristol incisively critiques the problem of determinism in Oscar Newman's theory writing that 'defensible space is based on the assumption that certain "populations" unavoidably bring with them behavioural problems that have to be designed against'. See Katharine G. Bristol, 'The Pruitt-Igoe Myth', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 44. 3 (1991), p.167.

when the displaced crime is more likely than not to end up in already distressed, minority communities?'.[8]

Newman laid out principles for the design of spaces that could be controlled by their residents and defended against crime. These principles included 'real and symbolic barriers, strongly defined areas of influence, and improved opportunities for surveillance', features that have now become motifs in the urban landscapes of major North American and British cities.[9] Newman is sceptical about tackling crime with 'increased police force or firepower' and opposes segregation or a 'total lockup and self-restriction of movement' as a response to the threat of crime.[10] But his proposed alternative of one group possessing unquestionable control over a territory, dictating the activity that takes place there and who its users are to be, is not unproblematic. Fostering citizens' responsibility towards the functioning of their common space as opposed to relying on police intervention is a reasonable and socially sustainable alternative. However, the territoriality that Newman advocates seems to heighten suspicion and animosity towards anyone regarded as an outsider, whereby any stranger is a potential intruder.[11] This is inadvertently illustrated by the example Jane Jacobs presents from her own neighbourhood in New York's West Village, where a crowd of local shopkeepers and residents rounds on a man seen to be approaching a young girl in the street.[12] The man is presumed by her neighbours to be a paedophile, until it emerges that he is in fact the father of the child. Jacobs cites this incident as an example of the commendable civic attitude of her neighbours for watching out for children on the street. But profiling the stranger as a deviant resonates ominously with contemporary tendencies of making assumptions about people in public based solely on their appearance, dress or skin colour.[13]

Newman's study concentrates on crime in residential areas in New York City, but his approach has also been applied to council housing estates in London by geographer Alice Coleman, in her work, *Utopia on Trial*. Influenced by Newman's theory of defensible space, Coleman reiterates notions of territoriality and particularly the importance of a clear distinction between public and private space, arguing that residents are better able and more disposed to police an area that belongs to them.[14] The belief that only private property can foster a sense of responsibility for the security of a space is also found in Jacobs' work – she conflates community with residents and property with propriety when she writes of local residents as 'natural proprietors of the street', instinctively inclined to surveil their turf.[15] In contrast, dangerous or inappropriate behaviour is attributed to those from outside the neighbourhood, like the 'wild kid from the suburbs' who, arriving from elsewhere, is portrayed as a troublesome figure.[16] According to this logic, which privileges private property over public space, those who do not and perhaps cannot afford to reside within the neighbourhood are excluded and necessarily considered suspect. As will be discussed in more detail, the assumption that equates individual ownership with order and security is not confined to residential areas, but is increasingly prevalent in public spaces, which it is fundamentally in tension with.

Despite the faults in Newman's work, a similar position was assumed by James Wilson and George Kelling in their influential 'broken windows' theory, which posits that a vandalised urban environment invites further criminal behaviour.[17] Newman's guidelines for defensible space have also since been widely adopted and systematised by security, planning and design professionals. The

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[8] Ted Kitchen, Richard H Schneider, *Planning for Crime Prevention: A Transatlantic Perspective,* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002) p.133.

[9] Newman, p.3.

[10] Ibid., p.2.

[11] The concept of 'eyes on the street' put forward by Jane Jacobs in her celebrated 1961 work, taken up by Newman, encourages an awareness of others, but also carries the risk of feeding mistrust of those deemed to be different, a mistrust often based on prejudice. See Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, (New York: Random House, 1961), p.35

[12] Ibid. p.38

[13] Johan Andersson, ''Wilding' in the West Village: Queer Space, Racism and Jane Jacobs Hagiography', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, April 2015, p.11

[14] Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial: Vision and Reality in Planned Housing*, (London: Hilary Shipman,1985), p.10

[15] Jacobs, p.35

[16] Ibid., p.53

[17] Wilson, James Q; Kelling, George L, 'Broken Windows: The police and neighborhood safety', The Atlantic, (1982).

Secured by Design initiative was launched in the UK in 1989 to bring together police officers and industry design professionals for the purpose of 'designing out crime through physical security and processes'.[18] Crime prevention design advisors or police architectural liaison officers set out the guidelines regulating movement, visibility and the demarcation of ownership, reflecting Newman's proposals. This initiative has been implemented in homes, schools, hospitals, commercial properties and stations across the UK.[19] Secured by Design testifies to the continuing authority and general consensus regarding Newman's assumption that design has a direct effect on crime levels.

As discussed so far, early conceptions about securing the built environment in western cities focused on the reduction of crime, specifically, burglaries, muggings, graffiti, littering, prostitution and the sale or consumption of drugs. However, in London in the 1990s the challenge of securing the built environment was faced with a further threat.

The threat of bombings by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (Provisional IRA) in the City of London in the 1980s and 1990s extended and extrapolated efforts to combat residential crime towards the prevention of terrorist attacks. The attack at the Baltic Exchange in 1992 and the 1993 Bishopsgate bombing caused a shift in the perception of threat by businesses and local authorities. Until the 1990s the role of security in architecture and design was to deter street crime in mostly residential areas. However, the Provisional IRA threatened the heart of London's financial district with economic and symbolic losses on a much vaster scale. The cost of damage to the City of London's reputation as a secure global financial centre and the potential loss of investment were too great a risk for the City police and the Corporation of London.[20] The response of the local authorities and private businesses based in the City of London was to adopt a military urbanism on the model of the counter-terrorist cordon installed in the centre of Belfast. The transformation of the City of London in the 1990s in response to the threat of terror attacks has been methodically documented by Jon Coaffee in his book *Terrorism, Risk and the City*. Coaffee describes the physical and technological defences installed around the City of London in an operation referred to as the 'ring of steel' first set up in 1993. The ring of steel was instigated by the Corporation of London and in particular by Lord Mayor and chairman of Policy and Resources, Michael Cassidy, who oversaw the initiative. The enterprise consisted of traffic restrictions, roadblocks, armed checkpoints, public and private CCTV networks and visible policing deployed in order to deter and prevent attacks.

Coaffee records the process between 1992 and 1997, during which the ring of steel was developed, including fluctuations in the intensity of security levels, the westward expansion of the security area and its permanent entrenchment in the urban landscape.[21] Coaffee also demonstrates the process of legitimization of the security initiative with reference to the Corporation's pro-security discourse as well as its emphasis on inadvertent improvements, such as reductions in crime, environmental pollution and traffic congestion to justify these measures.[22] Coaffee's account of the securitization of the City of London is, therefore, highly instructive for contextualising and comprehending the escalation and intensification of security measures in the aftermath of September 11.

The attacks that took place in New York on September 11, 2001 did not produce a rupture in urban design policy, but rather an acceleration of the pre-existing trends of securitization in major urban centres.[23] The barricading, citadelization, concentrated decentralization, marginalisation and exclusion that intensified in American cities, and particularly in New York, have been thoroughly documented.[24] Yet, besides Coaffee's analyses, the impact of post-9/11 securitization in London has received relatively limited attention in academic scholarship. Since 9/11, London's urban-scape has been

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[18] Secured by Design, 'About Secured by Design', n.d., <http://www.securedbydesign.com/about-secured-by-design/> [accessed 5 May 2017].
[19] Ibid.
[20] Jon Coaffee, *Terrorism, Risk and the City: The Making of a Contemporary Urban Landscape*, (Hants: Ashgate, 2003), p.85.
[21] Ibid., p.87.
[22] Ibid., p.160.
[23] Peter Marcuse, 'Urban Form and Globalization', p.596.
[24] Ibid.; Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space,* (New York, London: The Guilford Press, 2003).

marked by security features, some crude and obtrusive others almost imperceptible. The immediate aftermath of 9/11 saw a 'target hardening' defensive strategy around key business and government sites, such as the United States' embassy in Grosvenor Square, which became 'a virtual citadel surrounded by fences, waist high 'concrete blockers' and armed guards'.[25] This strategy continued and in 2003 the Houses of Parliament were also lined with long concrete slabs, subsequently painted black to make them more 'aesthetically pleasing'.[26] Heavy and conspicuous hostile vehicle mitigation (HVM) interventions continue to be used, as the barriers installed along London's bridges in June 2017 demonstrate. At the same time, physical and technological security devices have profoundly evolved and are shaping cities in new and often unexpected ways.

In contrast to the insertion of harsh perimeter barriers, counter-terrorism measures are now being incorporated into the earliest stages of the design process. The new embassy of the United States, located in Nine Elms and set to open in 2018, is exemplifies an aesthetic and technical turn towards stealthy security. The embassy assimilates security into the landscaping and structure of the building. This allows architecture firm KieranTimberlake to boast that their design is based on the ideals of 'openness' and 'transparency' with no walls and no fences.[27] Instead, the embassy is set in a 30-meter blast protection area of spiralling green space and a reflecting pool which functions like the defensive moat of a medieval fortress. The building itself, a sleek cube adorned with solar panels, is constructed with six-inches of blast proof laminated sheets of glass.[28] Steel and concrete bollards that encircle the five-acre site will be hidden within English yew hedges and a wall of seating and sharp level changes, including a traditional British ha-ha, will prevent the access of any vehicle that manages to get through the exterior ring of bollards.[29]

The US embassy project is not unique; it is representative of a shift towards an integration of security into design that makes it less obtrusive and less visible. The use of discreet CCTV cameras, hefty street furniture in the shape of benches and planters that are reinforced with steel and concrete or giant concrete signage, such as the letters that spell out Arsenal at the entrance to the Emirates Stadium, are being increasingly employed across London. Architects and architecture critics objected to the 'ugliness' of HVM barriers and bollards 'unceremoniously and artlessly dumped on approaches to stations, airports', yet, they no longer voice concerns when those security devices are not an eye-sore but discretely embedded in the landscape.[30]

In what follows, this paper will contest these aspects of the securitization of public spaces in London. As securitization becomes increasingly and often imperceptibly entrenched in the urban landscape, its generalisation and normalisation are broadly accepted. Studies of urban transformations in London in the last two decades have analysed the privatisation, gentrification and sanitisation of public spaces as part of a trend in neoliberal urban policy which prioritises entrepreneurship, property rights and capital accumulation above all else.[31] However, distinct securitizing strategies are being deployed in line with the neoliberal urban restructuring of London and these also require sustained attention and debate. Without focusing on any particular minority group, as certain researchers have done, this paper seeks to analyse the effects of securitized public space on the generalized experiences of users, and also perhaps more importantly, the responses of those users to securitization. The paper will

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[25] Jon Coaffee, *Terrorism, Risk and the Global City: Towards Urban Resilience*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), p.241.

[26] Ibid.

[27] KieranTimberlake, 'Embassy of the United States', London, n.d., <http://www.kierantimberlake.com/pages/view/88/embassy-of-the-united-states-of-america/parent:3> [accessed 5 June 2017].

[28] Oliver Wainwright, 'Fortress London: The New US Embassy and the Rise of Counter-Terror Urbanism', Harvard Design Magazine, No. 42 S/S (2016).

[29] Ibid.

[30] Stephen Bayley, 'Architecture of Paranoia', *The Guardian online*, (2007), <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/artblog/2007/nov/18/architectureofparanoia> [accessed 10 June 2017].

[31] Johan Andersson, 'Heritage Discourse and the Desexualisation of Public Space: The "Historical Restorations" of Bloomsbury's Squares', *Antipode*, September 2012; Phil Hubbard, 'Revenge and Injustice in the Neoliberal City: Uncovering Masculinist Agendas', *Antipode*, September 2004.

endeavour to engage with these issues by employing the theoretical tools elaborated by French philosopher and urban theorist, Henri Lefebvre, which will be outlined in the following section.

Theoretical framework: From Foucault to Lefebvre

Theoretical approaches to contemporary surveillance in cities have often relied on the Foucauldian notion of panopticism to describe and explain the ways in which individuals are subjected to the real or imagined scrutiny that conditions their behaviour.[32] The model of the panopticon, elaborated by Michel Foucault in his 1975 work *Discipline and Punish*, draws on the plan of an ideal prison conceived by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the late 18th century. In the panopticon prison, surveillance functions through separation and individuation: each prisoner can be observed in their cell from a central inspection tower and yet no prisoner is able to know with certainty whether they are being watched at any given moment. The ingenuity of the panopticon lies in the fact that every prisoner feels as though they are being observed and internalises the sense of being watched, modifying their behaviour accordingly. Foucault uses the panopticon prison as a metaphor for the way in which disciplinary power functions across society. He asserts that in disciplinary societies, the internalisation of an unverifiable surveillance produces 'docile bodies', bodies that participate in their own surveillance and can be 'subjected, used, transformed and improved'.[33] With the proliferation of CCTV cameras and other crime-prevention features in urban centres that serve to deter crime, it is clear why the Foucauldian notion of subjects participating in their own surveillance remains relevant. Consequently, the panopticon continues to be the leading reference point for scholars interested in the relationship between surveillance and the built environment.

However, despite the continued importance and explanatory power of Foucault's panopticon model, its focus on disciplinary processes limits the scope of analysis to the exercise of power by the state and its institutions. While Foucault's account of state power is highly insightful, it neglects the agency of the subjects that state power acts upon. Elsewhere in his writing, Foucault acknowledges that 'no matter how terrifying a given system may be, there always remain the possibilities of resistance', yet the panopticon model portrays an exercise of power through surveillance that is overwhelming and unchallenged.[34] Such quotidian acts of resistance to urban surveillance like wearing a peaked cap or hood to conceal one's identity and evade security cameras indicate that the relationship between those carrying out surveillance and those being surveilled is not as straightforward as the panopticon model might suggest. In relation to the problem of contemporary urban securitization, the panopticon may provide an excellent framework through which to understand the driving forces behind securitization and how it comes to be internalised by the public, but it cannot account for the numerous ways in which security is evaded, ignored or challenged. As it is the purpose of this paper to explore the relationship between securitization and the ability of users to access, use and transform public space, the panopticon model cannot adequately account for these complex and varied interactions.

In order to explore the complexity, contradictions and conflicts that emerge in and through securitized public space, I propose employing Henri Lefebvre's concept of the production of space. In contrast to the historical perspective on processes of disciplinary power put forward by Foucault, Lefebvre's approach of materialism and idealism brings together ideas about everyday life, a right to the city and the constitution of space itself. Against Foucault's somewhat deterministic reading of power exercised in confined spaces, Lefebvre's concept of the production of space is an open-ended tool for thinking about how space itself is conceived, perceived and lived. Lefebvre situates the production of space in relation to the capitalist mode of production while acknowledging contradiction as inherent to the process, which accounts for the variations and changes across space. This theoretical approach permits an open and flexible conceptualisation of contemporary spaces and the power struggles that occur within, through and for space itself. In his empirical work on towns and cities conducted from

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[32] David Lyon, *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond*, (Devon: Willan Publishing, 2006), p.4.

[33] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1975), p.136.

[34] Michel Foucault, 'Space, knowledge, and power: interview with Paul Rabinow' in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p.245.

the 1960s and 1970s, Lefebvre focused primarily on technocratic urban planning by the French state.[35] Security was not a focus in Lefebvre's studies, yet in recent decades it has become a major issue as large urban centres, particularly in Western Europe and North America, are becoming increasingly securitized. Hence, it is the aim of this paper to introduce the process of securitization into the theory of the production of space. Renewing the dialogue with Lefebvre's framework in this way ought to demonstrate its continued relevance, applicability and adaptability, as well as shedding light on securitization, a critical feature of urban design that has been well-documented and yet remains under-theorized.

To establish how and why the theory of the production of space lends itself to an analysis of contemporary urban securitization, it is necessary to begin with an outline of Lefebvre's framework. Lefebvre draws on the Marxist theory of production as the task of denaturalizing the mundane and everyday, retrieving the mental and material processes that generate social reality. Redeploying Marx's analysis of the fetishism of the commodity for the analysis of space, Lefebvre deciphers capitalist social space 'by tracing out its inner dynamics and generative moments'.[36] Working backwards from the object of study, Lefebvre seeks to determine the activities and processes that produced it. By doing so, Lefebvre reveals that space is not inert or fixed, it does not exist 'in itself', rather it is constantly changing, constantly being made and remade.[37] This perspective allows us to get away from the simplistic model of space as an empty container or an instrument of control as Foucault would suggest, and instead begin to view space as the product of social relations, and thus liable to change according to its social context.

Having established that space is socially produced, Lefebvre extends the Marxist analysis to embed space in the existing stage of social development, specifically, the capitalist mode of production. This allows Lefebvre to take the analogy of space and the commodity further as he introduces the notion that space is at once 'abstract' and 'concrete': a 'concrete abstraction'.[38] Like the commodity that dissimulates the labour that produces it, space is understood to dissimulate the material social relations from which it arises.[39] This duality of mental and material space is essential for understanding the space of capitalism and by extension, the role of securitization within it. The logic of late capitalism tends towards the production of abstract spaces, spaces which are stripped of qualitative difference and rendered measurable and quantifiable.[40] In capitalism, the value of abstract space, like the value of the commodity, is invariably calculated according to exchange rather than use.[41] Moreover, abstract space is planned and compartmentalized with defined functions attributed to it by planning officials. Architects and surveyors map and design space in the abstract and abstract plans and drawings take on physical forms while retaining a conceptual character and purpose. Indeed, the plans and logic that seek to rationalise space have real and physical consequences for inhabitants and users of those spaces. Subtle ideological and political machinations maintain a 'perpetual dialogue' between space and its users, 'prompting compliance'.[42] Abstract space, writes Lefebvre, is the 'dominant' space of any society.[43] Intimately tied to capitalist relations of production, abstract space reiterates and imposes the order of those relations.[44] This conceptualisation of abstract space lends itself to an analysis of regeneration projects in London, where public land is systematically redeveloped according to aesthetic and security concerns that favour public order and facilitate the generation of profit.

However, space is constantly being interpreted and used in ways that defy its original conception. Against and alongside commodified and bureaucratized abstract space, the concrete space of everyday

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[35] Lukasz Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space: Architecture, Urban Research and the Production of Theory*, (Minneapolis: Minneapolis University Press, 2011), p.xi.

[36] Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, (New York, London: Routledge, 2006), p.105.

[37] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p.90.

[38] Stanek, p.133.

[39] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.27.

[40] Stanek, p.151.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Merrifield, p.112.

[43] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.39.

[44] Merrifield, p.109.

life and experience asserts itself. The perceptions and actions of inhabitants and users can never be reduced to the purely theoretical and people's everyday activities produce a dynamic exchange between abstract and concrete space.[45] For this reason, the notion of space as a 'concrete abstraction' enables us to capture the sense in which space is at once both concrete and abstract, produced through a variety of conceptual as well as material representations, meanings and experiences.[46]

Lefebvre organises the notion of space as a concrete abstraction through the formulation of a conceptual triad. The triad of the production of space is composed of abstract *representations of space,* concrete *representational space*, and the interactions between them constituted through *spatial practices.*[47] Connecting the conceived, perceived and lived elements of space in this way offers a comprehensive and unified framework through which to grasp for example, how abstract notions of threat and fear are central to the production of physically securitized public spaces. *Representations of space* are conceived by local government officials, developers, planners and security professionals. This space is constituted through discourses, maps, plans and visualisations that impose order and define the activities that can take place there. *Representational space* is the space of images and symbols directly lived by inhabitants and users. The imagination of those inhabitants and users overlays physical space with its own meanings and seeks to change that environment. Representational space is the dominated space linked to the clandestine or underground sides of life and art. These two elements, representations of space and representational space are brought together through spatial practice. *Spatial practices* are the everyday routines and experiences of users of space that mediate between abstract and concrete spaces producing a degree of cohesiveness and continuity that structures lived reality.[48] The production of space, therefore, occurs through a constant interplay between conceived and lived space mediated through spatial practice. The relationship between the three moments is never stable or linear; one moment blurs into the next and the dominance of abstract space invariably overrides concrete space.[49] The flexibility of the framework of the production of space is also its strength and allows it to serve as a practical tool for revealing the dynamic social relations that shape any space.[50]

Having outlined this theoretical framework, we can put it to work through the investigation of King's Cross Station and Square.

King's Cross Station and Square

This examination of King's Cross Station and Square will draw on Department for Transport, British Transport Police and Home Office guidelines, architectural visualisations and the marketing strategy of Argent, the developer. It will also include alternative interpretations of the area by activists, academics and King's Cross residents as well as personal reflections from site visits, diary notations and participant observation and interviews. This constellation of elements will provide a basis with which to conceptualise the production of this public space and to grasp the role of securitization within it.

King's Cross Station and Square lend themselves to this analysis for a number of reasons. Firstly, because the redevelopment of the Station and Square, which began in the mid-2000s, presented an opportunity, in a context of increasing privatisation of public land, to open up 7,000m² for public use. The Square, which was redesigned by Stanton and Williams Architects, is 50% larger than Leicester Square with a footfall of 140,000 passengers and pedestrians a day.[51] Thus, it has the potential to

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[45] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.40.

[46] Stanek, p.134.

[47] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.33.

[48] Ibid; Eugene McCann, 'Race, Protest and Public Space: Contextualising Lefebvre in the US City', *Antipode*, 31. 2 (1999), p.172.

[49] Merrifield, p.111.

[50] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.40.

[51] RIBA, 'King's Cross Square', *RIBA Journal*, n.d., <https://www.ribaj.com/buildings/king-s-cross-square> [accessed 30 May 2017].

serve a great number of uses. But financial interests and security measures have shaped the production of this public space to the extent that the 'publicness' of the Square is in question.

Secondly, King's Cross Station and Square have formed part of a 67-acre, £2.2bn redevelopment project, the largest inner-city regeneration in Europe.[52] The development is significant; because of its scale and currency, it exemplifies a tendency in urban planning, which has been emerging over the last few decades, towards entrepreneurial governance. A public-private partnership is formed with corporate developers investing in the regeneration of neglected city districts and attracting new capital investment.[53] The King's Cross Central Limited Partnership, which owns the land around King's Cross Station, now comprises Argent, the UK property developer that has overseen the project from its inception and AustralianSuper, Australia's largest pension fund.[54] The prominence of corporate interests raises questions about the purpose and uses of the new privately-owned public spaces emerging on the site. Correspondingly, although King's Cross Station and Square are publicly owned by Network Rail, they must be considered in the context of the corporate-led regeneration taking place in the surrounding area.

Thirdly, the King's Cross area has been the site of intensive policing and security interventions since the submission of development proposals in the early 1990s. As a result of the emergence of the international terrorist threat in the 2000s, the area now also hosts numerous counter-terror design features. Whether the perceived threat manifests itself in the form of petty crime, anti-social behaviour or terrorist attack, the tools employed to combat it are deeply political and ideological. If we return to the definition put forward by Bigo, securitization can be understood as a mechanism by which a population is divided according to who needs to be protected and who poses a threat. Thus, securitization is necessarily the consolidation of a dominant order against attack and the privileging of certain strategic sites and bodies over others. For the last two decades, King's Cross has been portrayed by security professionals as dangerous and in need of directed security intervention.[55] From being described as a 'frightening place' by Tony Blair in the mid-1990s, King's Cross, now a major transport hub, is characterised by the Department for Transport as a 'very attractive target' for terrorist activity.[56] The continuities and intersections of anti-crime and counter-terror initiatives demonstrate the interconnectedness of security measures with the regeneration and efforts to improve the image of the area. The marketization of Network Rail and the redevelopment of King's Cross sheds light on the role of security in ensuring and supporting processes of cleansing and control intended to attract investment to the area. The case of King's Cross demonstrates that targeted urban security measures must be conceptualised in relation to the political-economic context of increasing property value.

For these reasons, the examination of the production of the space of King's Cross Station and Square will yield an indication of how this public space is shaped in relation to the security and business interests that regulate the area.

a) REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

Lefebvre defines representations of space, denoting abstract, scientific, conceptualized space, as the dominant space in any society.[57] It seems appropriate, therefore, to begin with official representations of the King's Cross area.

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[52] Department for Transport, 'King's Cross completion shows us Britain knows how to deliver', says infrastructure minister', 26 September 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/kings-cross-completion-shows-us-britain-knows-how-to-deliver-says-infrastructure-minister> [accessed 11 July 2017].
[53] Phil Hubbard, 'Revenge and Injustice in the Neoliberal City', p.667.
[54] King's Cross Partnership, 'About the Development', n.d., <https://www.kingscross.co.uk/about-the-development> [accessed 15 July 2017].
[55] Carolyn Payne (dir.), *Sex, Drugs and Videotape: The Cleaning up of King's Cross*, (UK, 1999).
[56] Phil Hubbard, 'Cleansing the metropolis: sex work and the politics of zero tolerance', *Urban Studies*, 41. 9 (2004), p.1693; Department for Transport, 'Security in Design of Stations Guide', (London, 2012), p.4.
[57] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.39.

In the mid-19th century, the construction of the railway along with the development and operation of the canals and gasworks, transformed King's Cross into a vital centre for goods and industry.[58] However, a century later, between the 1950s and 1970s, the waning of the coal industry and technological changes including shifts from canal to road transport and from steam power to diesel and electricity, put the area into slow economic decline. By the 1980s, King's Cross had also gained a reputation for being afflicted with social problems, criminality, sex work and drug-dealing. The perception of the area in the mid-1980s by politicians and the media was of an unproductive 'wasteland' in need of investment and a social and physical 'clean-up' campaign.[59]

In 1988 regeneration proposals were put forward. Norman Foster, architect and master-planner, was appointed to provide a rational solution for the site, which he described as 'ridden with all the problems of the inner-city'.[60] Foster's proposals were later abandoned, but it was clear that the problems perceived were not limited to the derelict landscape, but also referred to the 'undesirable' people living in the area.[61] The cleaning-up of King's Cross began in the early 1990s with Operation Welwyn, a squad of 24 police officers based at Islington Police Station charged with the responsibility of tackling vice in the area. This visible policing initiative along with the urban regeneration noticeably reduced crime in the King's Cross area.[62] Extensive building work was also cited as a major factor in the disruption of illicit street activity, simply by restricting access to spaces frequented for those purposes.[63] Specifically, situational crime prevention features such as King's Cross Partnership hoardings, which functioned at a micro-design level to keep drug users, dealers, sex workers and squatters out of boarded up shop-fronts, were regarded an effective measure for countering what authorities considered to be anti-social behaviour.[64]

More effective still were the Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) with imposed exclusion zones. According to one report, ASBOs had 'successfully rid King's Cross of its visible population of street level dealers and sex workers'[65]. However, ridding King's Cross of the visible signs of crime often simply resulted in its spatial displacement or forcing illicit activities 'underground'. This did not seem to pose a problem for the local police force as the purpose of the operation was not to redress entrenched social problems, but rather, as one police officer put it, to make them 'disappear'[66]. In contrast to the visible success story, displacement to other wards and boroughs is reported to have had a detrimental effect on displaced persons.[67] From their introduction in 1998 to 2005, over 200 ASBOs were granted in King's Cross and the surrounding area, which testifies to the customary approach of displacing or invisibilising crime from the ward.[68] So ~~It is clear that the reinforcement of~~ the notorious reputation of the King's Cross area served as a justification for intervention by the Metropolitan Police Force and the King's Cross Partnership developments, though it is debateable whether these interventions sought to eliminate crime or simply eliminate its visibility.

The presence of crime and insecurity in the King's Cross area are now presented by the Partnership as a thing of the past. The regeneration is framed by the KCCLP in terms of an unambiguous before and after. A description of the King's Cross area on the KCCLP website reads: 'What was an underused industrial wasteland is being transformed into a new part of the city with homes, shops, offices, galleries, bars, restaurants, schools, and even a university. It's a whole new piece of London with a brand new postcode, N1C.'[69] The emphasis on newness is an explicit attempt to draw a line between what the area was and what it is in the process of becoming and, in particular, to distance the ongoing

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[58] Ben Campkin, *Remaking London: Decline and Regeneration in Urban Culture*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), p.106.

[59] Campkin, p.108.

[60] Norman Foster in Sue Crockford (dir), *King's Cross: David and Goliath*, (UK,1992).

[61] Campkin, p.119

[62] Centre for Social and Evaluation Research, 'Crime Displacement at King's Cross: A Report for Camden Community Safety Partnership', (2006), p.5.

[63] Ibid, p.6.

[64] Campkin, p.121.

[65] Centre for Social and Evaluation Research, (2006), p.89.

[66] Carolyn Payne (dir.) *Sex, Drugs and Videotape*.

[67] London Assembly, 'Street Prostitution in London', (London, 2005), p.9.

[68] Centre for Social and Evaluation Research, p.4.

[69] King's Cross Partnership, 'About the Development', [accessed 15 July 2017].

development from any association with the people and activities that the area was previously stigmatized for. This description is intended to reinvent the reputation of the area and to reassure investors and middle class visitors that this is a place for them.

The effort to attract visitors and investment is not limited to the internet – in fact, it is built into the design of the development. The majority (56%) of use allocation for the site is devoted to highly profitable office space for corporations including Google, media giant Havas, Universal Music and Louis Vuitton.[70] Residential use makes up the second largest portion of the development, where apartments dedicated to 'refined living' with 'elegant flourishes including brass accents, custom made door handles and oak panelling give a sense of understated glamour'.[71] Based on the information on the King's Cross website, it is not possible to establish how many of the 2,000 new homes constitute affordable housing.[72] The scheme, down to the costly construction materials, is targeted at the white-collar professional and the affluent consumer. In a reflection of this profit-driven strategy, the desired ambiance was one that 'engaged and inspired' and is projected to be achieved by 'attracting the right cafes, bars and shops'.[73] High-end retail outlets, restaurants, cafes and bars are thus curated to draw customers with a commensurate disposable income. From the planning stages and allocation of uses on the site, it is evident that the profit motive of premium price office space and apartments determines the development. In this context, rather than achievements in their own right, the much-lauded open spaces, privately-owned public spaces ('POPS'), of which Granary Square is the largest on site, appear instrumental to attracting investment and potential customers to the surrounding retail, food and drink outlets. Correspondingly, advertising King's Cross and St Pancras Stations as 'not only travel hubs, but shopping and eating destinations in their own right', supersedes the original function of the stations for the imperative of consumption.[74]

Formal attempts to embellish and enliven King's Cross Square can be encapsulated in the publicly commissioned sculpture and the artisanal Real Food Market open Wednesday to Friday. The sculpture is uninspiring and is most commonly assumed by weary travellers as a place to rest. The artisanal food market attracts more attention while reinforcing the sense that one ought to be spending money in order to justify one's presence in the Square. It is doubtful whether these top-down efforts to stimulate activity effectively promote inclusivity or diversity, particularly when the price of top-quality artisanal food is not affordable for people on lower incomes.

In addition, the particularity of the King's Cross image currently being constructed by the Partnership, lies in the deployment of the area's 'gritty' past. On this subject, geographer Guy Baeten has written that 'downtown dirt and danger is a source of bourgeois contempt but, in its neatly polished and commodified version, quickly turns into a source of bourgeois desires.'[75] In this sense, the Partnership is able to repurpose the 'industrial wasteland' for the added real estate value of 'industrial heritage' without the associated dirt or dangerous working conditions. Thus, once functional elements of the site, like the gasholders, are retained as ornaments to frame the luxury apartments of what is now the high-end residential complex, Gasholders London. Moreover, the 'edgy' run-down red-light district reputation of the area has been a selling point in media discourses.[76] On one hand, visitors are allowed to enjoy the excitement of the past erotic imaginary risk-free while the Partnership capitalises by reinforcing the negative reputation of the area. On the other hand, this negative reputation also serves the Partnership as justification for regeneration.

This representation of King's Cross produced and marketed by the Partnership, described by the architecture and design critic of the Financial Times as a 'mix of grittiness and shininess',[77] exists

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[70] King's Cross Partnership, 'Overview', (2017), <https://www.kingscross.co.uk/downloads> [accessed 16 July], p.3

[71] Ibid., p.67

[72] King's Cross Partnership, 'About the Development', [accessed 15 July 2017].

[73] Peter Bishop and Lesley Williams, *Planning, Politics and City Making: A Case Study of King's Cross,* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2016), p.177.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Guy Baeten, 'Hypochondriac geographies of the city and the new urban dystopia', *City* 6. 1 (2010), p.111.

[76] Campkin, p.125.

[77] Edwin Heathcote, 'A place for cyberspace', *Financial Times online*. (2013), <https://www.ft.com/content/31ff7e18-661b-11e2-bb67-00144feab49a> [accessed 15 August 2017].

alongside the representation of King's Cross conceived by Network Rail, the Department for Transport, the Home Office, British Transport Police and Metropolitan Police. For these government and security bodies, King's Cross Station is first and foremost a major transport hub, which also signifies a 'key target' for terrorist attack.[78]

A second, related official representation of the station is, therefore, constructed around the notion of the station as high-risk and requiring securitizing intervention. According to the Department for Transport, these security interventions ought to begin at the 'design and planning' stages of station infrastructure.[79] Recommendations are clearly in line with Newman's defensible space theory and 'designing out crime'. Indeed, the 'synergies between countering crime and countering terrorism' are emphasised across the security guidelines.[80] In relation to the design of stations, recommendations include increasing 'blast stand-off distance' by maximising 'as far as practicable the distance between vehicles and the station'. In this regard, King's Cross Square acts as an effective buffer-zone or stand-off area, enabling total vehicle exclusion directly in front of the station while also mitigating the effects of a car bomb for the entrance and façade of the station, should an explosion occur on Pancras or Euston Roads. Building materials, such as Polyvinyl Butyral (PVB) used for laminate glazing, are also incorporated into the internal and external structure for the precise purpose of minimising the effects of an explosion.[81] Following these guidelines, hostile vehicle mitigation (HVM) is also built in around the station in the form of bulky steel and concrete seating, which is designed without any gaps so as to 'make it impossible to hide anything underneath'.[82] In addition, the sparse planting consisting of a few London plane trees encased in granite, as well as the absence of any water features, results in an emptiness that facilitates surveillance. To avoid the use of rubbish bins, which pose a security risk, private cleaning staff are hired to collect litter. Lighting is also used as a security device to support the CCTV system in place at the station and in various discreet locations around the square. The most intrusive HVM measures are the heavy steel bollards with deep foundations that line King's Cross Square at 120cm intervals.[83] These bollards delimit where heightened security begins and ends.

Besides the bollards, most of the physical security design features could be described as discreet and unobtrusive. These features are not intended to impede passenger movements, on the contrary, passengers are expected to pass through the Square as swiftly and safely as possible. The purpose of these security measures is not to instil fear or attract attention, but to deter and prevent criminal and terrorist acts. Additionally, the presence of security features is intended to reassure visitors that these measures are in place to protect them. From the sheer number of security design interventions, it is clear that authorities identify security as a principal interest of the public. However, the tangible result of security measures and financial interests taking precedent over other interests in the production of this space is a clean, safe but rather nondescript and uninviting environment.

Security of the Station and Square is not limited to design and planning. Regular public announcements through the tannoy system remind passengers that the site is monitored by CCTV and patrolled by security personnel 24 hours a day. In November 2016, the British Transport Police also launched the 'See it. Say it. Sorted' campaign, which introduced announcements and posters for

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[78] Department for Transport, 'Security in Design', p.4.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] EVERLAM, 'About Everlam', (2016), <https://www.everlam.com/about> [accessed 25 July 2017].
[82] Department for Transport, 'Security in Design', p.4.
[83] It should be noted that although most of these features are observable on-site or advertised on manufacturers' websites, it is almost impossible to find specific intelligence concerning security technologies and practices at King's Cross. The difficulty of accessing detailed information regarding these security features at the Station and Square is likely a result of precautionary measures, as advocated by the Home Office. In their guidelines on denying useful information it is stated that an 'exact site schematic, precise details of security equipment (e.g. number of, placement, make and model) or other interventions (e.g. number of security officers and patrol patterns)' constitute details that should be 'removed' on the grounds that there is 'no need for the normal site user to know this information' and 'hostiles will then need to put themselves at risk detection (sic) to obtain this information'. The National Counter Terrorism Security Office also declined to provide information on request.

'raising public awareness' and 'reporting any unusual items or behaviour'.[84] Passengers are thus invited to be alert constantly to any risks and to actively partake in maintaining their own security.

Evidently, these security measures are introduced and laudably so, to prevent terrorism rather than prosecute it afterwards. However, it has to be admitted that this manner of preparedness is in many ways futile. It is impossible to guarantee absolute security. At best, such security measures will protect certain people and targets on site, while inevitably leaving countless others on the public pavement and streets beyond the King's Cross Square exposed and vulnerable. In practice, the unexpected and unpredictable nature of terrorism, as well as the recent spate of attacks on 'soft targets', demonstrate that securitizing key locations displaces violence and serves to create a more divided city with enclaves of safety and security.

Moreover, this combination of multiple security design features and practices at King's Cross Station and Square contributes to the state of what Cindi Katz refers to as 'banal terrorism'.[85] Katz describes banal terrorism as the 'everyday, routinized, barely noticed reminders of terror or the threat of an always already (*sic*) presence of terrorism in our midst'.[86] She argues that these everyday performances of security in the urban landscape produce a prosaic conception of terrorism, while also obscuring or mystifying the social, cultural, political-economic relations that drive terrorism and entrench the security state. Some of the designed-in security features, like PVB glazing or HVM seating at King's Cross are not noticeable enough to conjure up the sense of an imminent terrorist threat. Others, however, like the background noise and signs exhorting passengers to report anything suspicious, patrolling security personnel or the ring of HVM steel bollards around the Square, produce and reproduce a dreary spectre of terrorism. These dull, routinized security measures that blend into the urban landscape may provoke little immediate reaction, but over time induce a generalised docility towards and acceptance of the pervasive security structures.[87]

It is interesting to consider the coexistence of these formal conceptions of King's Cross, both as a space of militarized security and as a space of leisurely consumption. It may seem paradoxical to invite visitors to the station to eat, drink and shop while simultaneously instructing them to remain vigilant for any suspicious behaviour. Yet, this is logical if we consider that the security in place is intended not only to keep the public safe but to maintain the smooth functioning of commercial activity. What the imperatives of this security-regeneration nexus result in will be analysed in more detail, as we proceed to examine King's Cross Station and Square through the representational space and spatial practices of its users.

b) REPRESENTATIONAL SPACE

Lefebvre asserted that representational space is 'lived space'; it is the 'passively experienced space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate'.[88] In contrast to the space conceived by designers and security professionals, representational space is the space of symbols and images of inhabitants and users, which may equally be linked to 'clandestine or underground sides of life'.[89] An example of the representational space of King's Cross is captured in the nightlife prior to the area's redevelopment. King's Cross was known for its lively nightclub scene with Bagley's, The Cross and The Key opening in the 1980s in the run-down railway arches owned by Network Rail.[90] Billy Reilly, who took over running the three studios, spoke in an interview about the site: 'It was derelict land, a red-light district, which I found quite inspirational when I opened the club. I liked the seediness of the

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[84] British Transport Police, 'There when you need us: Annual Report 2016/17', (2017), p.4.
[85] Cindi Katz, 'Banal Terrorism: Spatial Fetishism and Everyday Insecurity' in *Violent Geographies: Fear, Terror, and Political Violence*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), p.350.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Katz, p.350.
[88] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.39.
[89] Ibid., p.33.
[90] Campkin, p.125.

site. It was my own part of heaven in the wastelands. It was like a utopia for me.'[91] The view Reilly expresses, though nostalgic and idealised perhaps, captures the sense of excitement and possibility that the area once offered. The popularity of the weekend raves that took place there testifies to the attraction of the music, energy and atmosphere of the railway arches in the 1980s and 1990s, when the 'abandonment' of the area meant that ravers and pleasure-seekers felt free to abandon themselves to music and festivity. Palpably less polished and less controlled than King's Cross today, the nightclubs brought people together in unrestrained, shared enjoyment. In 2009, the railway arches that housed the trio of clubs were cleared out to make way for what will soon become Coal Drops Yard, a 'unique new shopping destination for London'.[92] Compared to the carnivalesque atmosphere of the 1990s raves, the forthcoming 'unexpected mix of independent, individual shops together with signature retail brands' seems rather tedious and tame.[93]

Another alternative representation to that of security and consumption was envisaged in the 1980s and 1990s by community members, academics and activists who, working together, formed the King's Cross Railway Lands Group (RLG). The RLG established itself in opposition to the Partnership's plans for renewal, arguing that contrary to the developer's characterisation of King's Cross as a wasteland, there was in fact a large residential population in the area. They argued that the 'low rents, cheap land, low property values and good accessibility had resulted in a diverse community'.[94] Moreover, this combination of factors allowed a number of important small-scale socially oriented institutions, including charities, trade unions and civil rights organisations to flourish.[95] The residents, activists and academics tried to reassert this identity of King's Cross as a place of difference, radical politics and creativity. They actively resisted aspects of the development which they viewed as profit-driven, particularly the large amounts of office space. In regard to King's Cross Square specifically, members of the RLG exacted changes to the planned proposal. In practical terms, they expressed the demand for bicycle stands closer to the station to serve the needs of users. Aesthetically, the dark granite cladding and paving was described as 'oppressive'. As for the function of the square, the plan to enlarge the Egg in order to include shops was rejected. The Group asserted that the 27,000sqft of shops and restaurants on the Western concourse 'sounds like enough'.[96] In sum, concerns were expressed that the Square was 'becoming an arrivals concourse that was short on space and of encouragement for people to linger'.[97] The rejection of the provision of retail space in the Square by representatives of the local community is noteworthy because it signifies a small but meaningful resistance to the designation of public space for private business. The absence of any mention of security apparatus on site is also noteworthy. If the security details, such as bollards and CCTV cameras were not included in the plans discussed by the RLG, why was their absence not remarked on by community representatives? Perhaps there was no sense among the community representatives that such security measures were required. Or conversely, it is possible that the presence of security features was expected and accepted to the degree that it was not considered contentious.

Despite their efforts, the RLG, were unable to substantially alter the planned proposals for King's Cross Square. The group was discontinued in April 2013, but their demands and gains in other areas of the development are a testimony to a vision of King's Cross alternative to that conceived by Argent and Network Rail. The lack of more recent representations of King's Cross that counter dominant conceptions demonstrates the overwhelming influence of the security and consumption paradigms in producing the space. The presence of Pret A Manger and a Doddle package delivery store in the Square designated for public use is symptomatic of the prioritisation of business interests over the provision of public space. It reduces what might be considered common space, in the general interest

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[91] Adam Bychawski, 'Britain's Railways Created the Country's Biggest Clubs and Gentrification Shut Them Down', *Vice*, (2014), <https://thump.vice.com/en_uk/article/d7eb5x/how-railways-created-the-uk-biggest-nightclubs-and-gentrification-closed-them-bagleys-studios-kings-cross-cable-crash-vauxhall> [accessed 19 August 2017].
[92] King's Cross, 'About the Development', [accessed 19 August 2017].
[93] Ibid.
[94] Campkin, p.111.
[95] Michael Edwards, 'King's Cross: renaissance for whom?' in ed. John Punter, *Urban Design and British Urban Renaissance,* (London: Routledge, 2010), p.19.
[96] King's Cross Development Forum, 'Submission of the King's Cross Development Forum to Camden Council on King's Cross Square', (2011).
[97] King's Cross Development Forum, 'Minutes of Annual Review Meeting', (2011), p.2.

of users of the Square, and allocates it to the purchase of food products and package delivery services. Likewise, the security measures which, though only visible to varying degrees, produce a level of conformity in conduct that discourages any behaviour that may appear suspicious. The authority of security and consumption in this space limits the possibility for alternative, unexpected uses of the space to arise. Yet, if we turn to the third component of Lefebvre's triad, spatial practice, we begin to see that in spite of the restrictions imposed by security and consumption, the ways in which people use King's Cross Station and Square produces a space that is more dynamic and complex than may initially appear.

c) SPATIAL PRACTICES

Spatial practices are the everyday routines and experiences that produce society's social space.[98] They structure lived reality by mediating between the boundaries of conceived space and users' perceptions and uses of space.[99] Thus, by observing the users of King's Cross Station and Square, it is possible to decipher a combination of patterns of behaviour which comply with conceived space subject to security and consumption as well as those behaviours which might be unintended, emerging out of users' own appropriations of the space.

In the first instance, it is clear that the role of the Square as a 'welcome mat' takes precedence over other uses.[100] The Square is a point of passage for users entering or exiting the station. Lefebvre explains that when an 'urban square serving as a meeting place isolated from traffic is transformed into an intersection… city life is subtly but profoundly changed, sacrificed to that abstract space where cars circulate like so many atomic particles'.[101] Although King's Cross Square remains sheltered from the traffic of cars, it functions like an intersection where pedestrians navigate exits and entrances to their next destination, all in an individual and atomised manner. This performance bears a strong resemblance to that described by Marc Augé in his anthropological study of 'non-places'.

The non-places that Augé refers to are typically spaces of movement and transit, 'air, rail and motorway routes', transient spaces which people swiftly pass through on their way to somewhere else.[102] The in-between-ness of these spaces leaves them disconnected from the surrounding area, as the ring of bollards around King's Cross Square signifies. These are impersonal spaces of dislocation that 'cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity'.[103] This captures the experience of King's Cross Station and Square because, despite the 150-year-old Victorian façade, one has the impression of being in a newly built train station anywhere in the world. The high visibility of familiar international brands at the station reinforces the sense of 'similitude'.[104] Interestingly, Augé cites the 'town square' as a contrasting example to the non-places he describes, one that facilitates chance encounters and the possibility of spontaneous, unmediated human interaction. Squares have traditionally been perceived as places of commercial activity as well as leisure and public gatherings, yet in the case of King's Cross Square the two latter functions are sacrificed to the commercial imperative. In King's Cross Square, the controlled atmosphere is more akin to a train station waiting area than a town square. This is even more noticeable in inter-personal relations: the 'civil inattention' with which people treat each other.[105] Augé describes relations in non-places as 'contractual', with users silently consenting to the rules and norms that govern non-places and produce fixed patterns of behaviour.[106] At King's Cross Station this is discernible in the way that passengers wordlessly purchase train tickets from a ticket machine and follow messages from signboards and announcements. These are not spaces intended for communication: time should be

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[98] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.38.
[99] Ibid.; Eugene McCann, 'Race, Protest and Public Space', p.173.
[100] RIBA, 'King's Cross Square', [accessed 30 May 2017].
[101] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.312.
[102] Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, (London: Verso, 1995), p.79.
[103] Ibid., p.77.
[104] Marc Augé., p.103.
[105] Erving Goffman, *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*, (New York: The Free Press, 1963), p.84.
[106] Marc Augé, p.101.

managed effectively and interaction is reduced to the direct transmission of information so as to manage people in an orderly and efficient manner.

In similar terms, Lefebvre, describes a 'contract' which imposes the conventions of use of a particular place and valorises certain relationships over others.[107] He presents the contract as 'subtle ideological and political machinations that maintain a perpetual dialogue between space and its users'.[108] These subtle ideological and political machinations can be understood in the context of King's Cross Station and Square, to be the interests of order and passive consumption. Lefebvre refers to this contract as a 'non-aggression pact' that makes attacking another person in the street a criminal act.[109] However, the convention that prevents public acts of physical aggression goes further in deterring and suppressing the emergence of confrontation or conflict of any kind. In a space that imposes 'reciprocity and communality of use',[110] there is in effect, little room to challenge the space's conceived function. When, according to Network Rail, the 'circulation patterns of arriving and departing customers have been planned', any deviation from the predetermined patterns of movement would appear inappropriate, anti-social even.[111] In King's Cross Square, public use is designated for the swift circulation of passengers, so to remain in the Square, to linger with no apparent direction, appears unconventional. An illustration of these regulations of public space can be found in Samuel Beckett's description of the plight of his fictional character, Molloy:

> But a little further on I heard myself hailed. I raised my head and saw a policeman. Elliptically speaking, for it was only later, by way of induction, or deduction, I forgot which, that I knew what it was. What are you doing there? he said. I'm used to that question, I understood it immediately. Resting, I said. Resting, he said. Resting, I said. Will you answer my question? he cried. So it always is when I'm reduced to confabulation, I honestly believe I have answered the question I am asked and in reality I do nothing of the kind. I won't reconstruct the conversation in all its meanderings. It ended in my understanding that my way of resting, my attitude when at rest, astride my bicycle, my arms on the handlebars, my head on my arms, was a violation of I don't know what, public order, public decency.[112]

The absurdity and inflexibility of rules of conduct in a public space are demonstrated when Molloy is taken to jail, questioned and then released for no reason other than being in public while not engaged in an activity that appears purposeful. In his study of behaviour in public places, Erving Goffman describes how activities such as 'reading newspapers and looking in shop windows' are often employed by people in public as these are considered 'legitimate' diversions.[113] One is expected to be involved in some suitable activity and if one is not, the act of doing nothing might attract attention. Goffman explains further that 'even the seediest vagrant can sit in Grand Central all night without being molested if he continues to read a paper'.[114] This may not however be true of all major stations, and King's Cross is not a station where one finds anyone that might be described as a 'vagrant'. This is noticeable, as it is not uncommon to see rough-sleepers on the streets that adjoin the Station, like Pentonville Road, Gray's Inn Road or York Way. The Big Issue is sold on Euston Road, not within King's Cross Square. Occasionally, one may see a beggar pass through the Square asking for change or a cigarette and occasionally, an amical exchange might occur. Most visitors at King's Cross Square who linger justify their presence by engaging in the 'legitimate' diversions of smoking or using their mobile phones. In a mundane way, this demonstrates the prevailing rules and norms that structure this space. This structuring of public activity also resonates with Lefebvre's description of space as 'implacably hard as a concrete wall, being not only extremely difficult to modify in any way but also hedged about by Draconian rules prohibiting any attempt at such modification'.[115]

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[107] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.56.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Network Rail, 'Station Design and Passenger Movement Report', (2006), p.4.
[112] Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*, (New York: Grove Press, 1955), pp.25-26.
[113] Erving Goffman, p.59.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.57.

Returning to the notion of confrontation, in such a context, to challenge the purpose of King's Cross Square as a place of passage, to actively disrupt the flow of people en-route, would be perceived as an opposition to the conceived design. Of course, conventions remain invisible until their validity is tested. Yet, the convention that prevents confrontation is an incredibly significant one if we consider that disagreement is essential to what we understand to be urban life. The coming together of different people naturally produces conflicts of interest and such conflicts are not only desirable, but necessary for an open and just exchange of opinions and ideas. A space without any confrontation, without spontaneous interactions and exchanges is a contrived, artificial space where consensus is imposed and behaviour is restrained. As Arendt explains, the 'attempt to do away with this plurality is tantamount to the abolition of the public realm itself'.[116]

Securitized and commodified public space enforces consensus. Yet, this appearance of publicness, openness and harmony in no way excludes the removal of an individual or group that does not abide by the social conventions of the space. Lefebvre maintains that 'sight and seeing, which in the Western tradition once epitomized intelligibility, have turned into a trap: the means whereby, in social space, diversity may be simulated and a travesty of enlightenment and intelligibility ensconced under the sign of transparency'.[117] In the neoliberal spirit of enterprise, individual freedoms are upheld and everyone is welcome as long as this does not interfere with commercial activity. When it comes to safeguarding business and property, this space leaves no room for dissent. In this controlled environment, security concerns and perceived risks ultimately dictate what may or may not take place, whereas in order to thrive, a public space must constantly be produced and reproduced meaningfully by those who use it. In a BBC Channel 4 documentary about the King's Cross regeneration, what particularly stands out are the drawings and plans of children from a local school who were asked to design their own proposals for the King's Cross development. It is striking how the children's priorities differed from the developer's: from work to play, from managing traffic to green spaces and from profit to pleasure. For example, in contrast to the luxury flats that will soon fill the gasholders, the children imagined gasholders filled with fish, butterflies and a bandstand.[118] Without the possibility of bringing forth such disparate visions through conflict, confrontation and exchange, imagination is stifled and creative alternatives dismissed.

Yet, the spatial practices of users of King's Cross Station and Square reveal more than compliance and complacency. During an interview, one woman observed that the area around the station was much cleaner than she remembered it, while at the same time remarking that 'It would be good to have some buskers. There are enough people here waiting to be entertained.' This expression of desire for impromptu activity in the Square, for music and diversion, implies a sense that despite its orderly presentation, the space is in some way felt to be lacking, unengaging or unfulfilling. This is also evidenced by the public reaction to the sudden appearance of a falcon in the Square. People who had hardly acknowledged each other's presence were suddenly drawn together in excitement at the sight of the strange bird. The falcon and his keeper were commissioned to scare away pigeons, but they inadvertently attracted a social gathering. Only a small disturbance is required for a crowd to gather, for strangers to acknowledge one another and exchange comments and smiles. However brief, this gathering demonstrates a willingness, an eagerness even, to embrace the unexpected and engage with others given the right circumstances. A more deliberate appropriation of the Square could be observed on a sunny bank holiday, when young people gathered to socialise and drink around the vents of the Station. Pointedly ignoring the planned seating, they stretched out and reclined across the warm granite ground. Another deliberate attempt to appropriate space in the Square is marked on a different occasion by the appearance of graffiti on one of the vents. Though these are rather minor and seemingly insignificant events, they indicate the restlessness of everyday life in a public space. The Square's architects planned for a steady stream of people to and from the station; they did not anticipate that the vents would provide a spot for sunbathing and socialising. In the same way, Network Rail and the British Transport Police did not intend the HVM steel barriers to become more like a bar counter used to prop up elbows and rest frappuccinos. These small acts are a sign that

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[116] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p.220.
[117] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.84.
[118] Sue Crockford (dir.).

everyday life cannot be contained by rings of bollards and projected lines of movement; in practice, life spills out at the edges in unforeseen ways.

Conclusion

Applying Lefebvre's conceptual triad of the production of space sheds light on the need to theorize security in the context of other processes that shape public space. Through this approach, it is possible to envisage King's Cross Square as a more versatile space, where security and consumption are not the overriding concern. The siege mentality of recent years has led to a situation where authorities must be perceived to be protecting the public: weaknesses are to be identified and eliminated and security measures, once in place, are unlikely to be reversed. In 2017 alone, London has suffered four terrorist attacks, all of which have involved a vehicle or public transportation. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the siege mentality has been widely accepted, particularly, when the swiftness with which protective measures are taken leaves no room for debate. To question any expansion of security resources in the aftermath of recent attacks seems almost heretical.[119] Yet, it should not be assumed that the consent of the public has been obtained on this issue without an open discussion of the inequality, selectivity and effectiveness of security measures or the resulting displacement of violence and crime. At present, political and ideological measures are enforced as technological solutions, even when these are based on discredited assumptions about designing away social problems. These problems, may be better addressed through investment in social services including mental health services, youth community engagement projects and visible, local and accessible support workers.[120] Security responses dictated by fear infringe the right to public space and the right of individuals to simply be, without justifying their presence with commercial validation. The fact is that the logic of the city under siege is incompatible with urban life, for which differences and antagonisms are essential and constitutive. The representational spaces and spatial practices of users demonstrate that space is never fixed but constantly shaping and being shaped by the social relations that govern it. Contrary to the hopes of security professionals, security cannot predict or determine the behaviour of those who use a space. Consumption and security may deter and regulate certain behaviours through environmental cues and unspoken conventions, but it is clear that these conventions can only be enforced with the adherence of the public. Clearly, the appeals to look out for and report anything suspicious make evident that the strength of the security apparatus ultimately depends on the cooperation and participation of passengers and users. Without the compliance of the public using the Station and Square, the security apparatus is ineffective. Space cannot be controlled absolutely. Thus, public space remains unfinished, open to new interpretations and uses still to be enacted.

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