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of urban space**

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Parkour and Street Culture: Conviviality, law and the negotiation of urban space

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Introduction

Julie Angel observed in *Breaking the Jump* that "...the practitioner of Parkour brings their gift on to the street right outside your window and then dares you to follow" (Angel, 2016, p.7). Many have. Parkour might be viewed as the street sport of the new millennium. Its global spread has been accompanied by a raft of sociological and geographic analyses into the formation of the parkour subculture and its relationship with urban environments (see, e.g., Gilchrist & Wheaton 2011; Mould, 2009; Kidder, 2017; Raymen, 2018). Parkour originated in the Parisian suburbs and then exploded, seemingly overnight, in the mid-2000s to a wealth of urban centres, particularly large cities, where it continues to grow and develop as an everyday presence and cultural phenomenon.

There has been a boom in research, scholarship, and academic commentary on parkour and many efforts to understand the activity, investigating its evolving form, subtypes, participant culture, mediatization, gendered politics, institutionalisation and contribution to international development, amongst others. A persistent theme in the literature has been parkour's connection to space, with commentators employing the theories of continental spatial thinkers such as Alain Badiou, Michel de Certeau, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Felix Guattari and Henri Lefebvre, to help understand its challenge to the conventional ordering of space and its intended use, and the possibilities for transgression, or disruption of the norms and parameters imposed on the city, in late capitalist societies (see, Bavinton, 2007; Saville, 2008; Atkinson, 2009; Mould, 2009; Stapleton & Terrio, 2012; Kidder, 2017).

Following Ameel and Tani (2012) however, we emphasise that in the enthusiasm to interrogate and theorise the subversive use of urban space the nature of encounter between participants and the wider users of urban space remains somewhat overlooked. We seek to shed light upon the dynamics at work in the ongoing shaping of urban spaces as places of autonomy, creativity and expression, and the tensions produced by the need to regulate such expression as the needs and rights of other users and inhabitants of urban spaces are considered. This trajectory puts us into contact with work on the idea of convivial public space in its

concerns with manifestations of spontaneous gathering and the political and legal conditions that mediate the engagements between people and space. This chapter unpacks the concept of conviviality before applying it to street culture and to parkour. Using Barker's (2017) concept of 'mediated conviviality' as its key point of departure, it argues that parkour is a neat vehicle to illustrate this concept and, further, that traceurs - the name given to parkour participants – are beginning to exhibit the attributes of skilled mediators and show evidence of self-regulatory practice and collaborative governance essential to a legitimised presence on the street. We aim to show the importance of these attributes in the power relations attendant to the use of public space for parkour and the role of the mobilisation of law in the socio-spatial processes underpinning the production of convivial space.

The Context of Conviviality

In contemporary parlance to be convivial refers to qualities of friendliness and companionship that make people feel welcome. They are qualities that attach both to people and place. The English usage of convivial relates to a place, or state of mind, known for a festive or jovial atmosphere. The etymological pedigree of the term goes back to the Latin *convivir*, meaning to live together (Barker, 2017), with its French cognate, *convivialité*, describing places characterised by tolerance, and its Spanish equivalent, *convivencia*, meaning coexistence (Rodriguez and Simon, 2015). There is a family relation to ideas of inclusivity in public space and the gatherings of different groups of users that, through their various social interactions, create meaningful encounters in everyday life. Urbanists and sociologists have forwarded a defence of public space on these terms, seeking to encourage a diverse use of public space and a tolerant ethos as the foundations for a democratic vision of urban living (Jacobs, 1961; Mitchell, 2003; Zukin, 2010; Shepard & Smithsimon, 2011).

This is a vision of cooperative social relations amongst loosely connected strangers with public space managed in such a way as to build sociality and civic engagement. Streets – and other public spaces – according to the convivial politics being espoused, become spaces on which to linger or gather, to meet acquaintances, to spark conversations, to mingle with friends, to receive ideas, to establish bonds of care and compassion, and to build social capital. Henry Shaftoe (2008, p.12) defines convivial urban spaces as “more than just arenas in which people can have a jolly good time; they are at the heart of democratic living... and are one of the few remaining loci where we can encounter difference and learn to understand and tolerate other people.” A similar definition is offered by Rodriguez and Simon (2015, p.315) who state that: “Convivial places are characterized by being friendly and lively. Convivial places promote tolerance and mutual exchange of ideas among the people and groups that inhabit them”. Conviviality has gained interest as a way of combatting a lack of interaction in public space, for establishing liveable cities and in confronting urban development agendas that seek to weaken the use values of public space as sites of chance encounter (Lefebvre, 1970/2003; Mitchell, 2003). Franck and Stevens (2007, p.4) posit because of the multiple

interactions and encounters made possible in public space it is necessary to define them as 'loose spaces', which are central to liveable cities as they "give cities life and vitality. In loose spaces people relax, observe, buy or sell, protest, mourn and celebrate." These spaces valorise diversity, are dynamic, generated by people's actions (Smith, 2016), and are ripe for viewing through lens of conviviality. The work of Paul Gilroy (2004) and Ash Amin (2012) has extended use of the convivial to consider processes of cohabitation and interaction in multicultural democracies, revealing everyday inter-ethnic interaction as a quotidian component of urban experience; the interaction with strangers or acquaintances of cultural difference being part of an everyday acceptance of difference practised by urban inhabitants, and particularly young people (Valluvan, 2016). In this sense, conviviality finds common ground with proponents of a 'right to the city' in its objective of "making the city a site for the cohabitation of differences" (Mitchell 2003, p.18).

The term convivial has a promiscuousness and nuance in contemporary cultural commentary of public space, calling attention to the production of space and the democratic norms and ethical values that are part of its make-up. There is scope to examine the social means by which these values are established. Ivan Illich's *Tools for Conviviality* (1973) showed that conviviality has an inherent ethical value. It takes account of both individual agency and social structure, being "the autonomous and creative intercourse among persons and the intercourse of persons with their environment" (1973, p.11). For Illich, conviviality is about the production of a democratic society where individuals can communicate and participate freely. Conviviality involves a capacity for self-organisation and it is this fervent sense of freedom, exercised in the face of bureaucratising forces, that provides individuals and communities an ability to enrich their environment with their vision. For Illich, the conditions of conviviality are set within a radical pedagogy of meaningful engagement and self-directed action. We argue that these qualities have been present in sport-based street cultures where people have come together through their creative, corporeal and emplaced activity to appropriate and reorient public space to their own ends, but that the language of conviviality has been and continues to be central to the establishment of a legitimate public presence.

Street Culture and Conviviality

Conviviality might be seen as being at the core of street culture. A raft of research has reported the significance of self-organised skate spaces for youth community-building (Beal et al, 2017; Turner, 2017; Borden, 2019) and Beal's (1995) research on skateboarding found the presence a culture of cooperation and systems of informal mentoring, guidance and care across generations that encourage personal growth and self-expression (see also Weaver, 2016). In his recently published history of skate culture, Iain Borden (2019, p.66) notes the presence of "friendly cooperation" in the skateboarding scene, which is part of a skateboarder's authenticity and is demonstrated through friendly behaviours, informality, and a deliberate distancing from a competitive ethos (see also, Beal and Weidman, 2003). As Borden (2001, p.127) further notes, "Skate moves are rarely taught or disseminated through codified means" – moves are learned from other

skateboarders, practices passed down through skateboarding generations in a process of 'constant learning'.

Although questions about accessibility and degrees of inclusivity remain (Säfvenbom et al, 2018), particularly in relation to gender (Atencio et al, 2009; Bäckström, 2013), the evidence is showing that skateboarding, across a range of different urban contexts, is producing tolerant and cooperative convivial space that works across social difference. Consider, in the Northern Ireland context, Drissel's (2012) research with skateboarders. This showed that members of the Belfast skateboard scene were using informal street spaces to provide an alternative space that prefigures a non-Sectarian future, breaking down ethno-religious divides; "Rather than remaining in the fixed ghettoized stasis of Belfast's urban habitus, skateboarders have become de facto agents of progressive social change, acting to ameliorate and overcome social constraints through the productive use of space" (Drissel, 2012, p.134). The work highlights that skateboarding can be a powerful means for personal and social transformation.

The ethical values of conviviality are present in parkour too and have been central to processes of legitimisation in the use of public space, and present too in the role of law and legal understanding in negotiating these spaces (Gilchrist & Osborn, 2017). Sites for the training and practice of parkour have emerged in cities, both on the street and in adjacent 'found' space, through participants working together to establish a public presence and to encourage other potential users to turn curiosity into commitment (Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2011, 2016; Kidder, 2017). The negotiation of space is achieved both through social and bodily interactions. The former involves working collaboratively and collectively to train users in appropriate technique and to distil the philosophies of the discipline. Bodily practices include repetitive performances, manoeuvres and interactions with the environment that stakes an *emplaced* claim to occupation through spatial appropriation (Saville, 2008; Vivoni, 2009; Ugolotti & Moyer, 2016). This is conviviality that is more than coming together to linger or simply hang out. Parkour is becoming an established feature of urban life through deliberate social, embodied and material practices as participants seize, occupy and organise public space for shared encounters between diverse users (Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2016).

The use of public space for unconventional embodied uses and mobilities has not been without its problems. In Finland, traceurs operating in Helsinki and Jyväskylä have faced intervention from other users of public space who have been bewildered and confused by their training and performances (Ameel & Tani, 2012). For the traceurs their playful practices are ways of expanding their horizons as they find "affordances" in the built environment (Gibson, 1979; Bavinton, 2007). But, inhabitants with a lack of familiarity of the sport have been left confused and have categorised parkour as just another aspect of the trouble-making and unwanted silliness of teenagers hanging-out. In these cities and elsewhere there have been reports of more repressive police intervention, with traceurs reporting that they've been asked to practice elsewhere, not to threaten private businesses, and to respect buildings and trees protected by heritage and conservation designations (Gilchrist & Osborn, 2017). Acceptance of these constraints has been rationalised as part of

parkour's non-confrontational philosophy and viewed in terms of the discipline's quest for free-flowing movement across a city, and so "moving on is a way of continuing practice" (Ameel & Sirpa, 2012, p.25; Lamb, 2014). However, it seems that the material qualities of the built environment contribute to the forms of friction experienced by traceurs as these interventions have tended to occur in dense neighbourhoods under the surveillance of concerned local residents keen to reduce what they perceive as nuisance behaviours (Ameel & Tani, 2012, p.22; Mould, 2016). The creation of a "ludic" city (Geyh, 2006; Stevens, 2007) is not a universally attractive proposition to all urban inhabitants.

Ugolotti's research on the parkour community in Turin provides a further example of the limits of conviviality (Ugolotti & Moyer, 2016). The research followed a group of second-generation migrants as they navigated the streets and public spaces of Turin. Their encounters need to be understood in a broader political context. This context is one in which young migrants have been targeted by a regime of urban surveillance through laws and policies and the actions of police and other law enforcement officers that have deliberately intervened to question the position of migrants as citizens, their rights as workers, and sense of belonging to Italy. Through the construction of the migrant as 'disruptive', 'undesirable' and 'abject', young migrant men are made to stand in as the Other, as objects of social control and 'out of place'. This set of constructions has served to limit the traceur's ability to belong in or to Turin's regenerating spaces. What has become politically palatable to post-industrial Turin has been the presence of cultural diversity through multi-ethnic street markets and food festivals, which appeals to a cosmopolitan urbanist vision of a vibrant multicultural destination. However, the 'multiculturalism from above' has not extended as easily to legitimating the presence of all minority populations, with young migrant men in particular seen as incompatible with the conviviality on offer and targeted as 'disruptive' and 'undesirable' (Ugolotti & Moyer, 2016, p.194).

Traceurs have been subject to anti-immigrant and racist sentiments, 'judging looks', police intimidation, and physical violence, and in this context there has been a limited ability to reason with authority and to socially negotiate a presence in urban space (Ugolotti & Moyer, 2016, pp.202-3). As Wise and Noble note, one of the "paradoxes of convivial coexistence" is that it is "always enmeshed in, mediated by and shadowed by colonial histories, enduring racisms, variegated and uneven belongings and the entitlements, and moral panics of the day" (2016, p.430). Nevertheless, parkour – and capoeira [an Afro-Brazilian martial art that incorporates acrobatics and dance] – have been used to gain control. Intriguingly, Ugolotti found that the psycho-corporeal qualities of these activities has helped to equip the young men to deal with the process of social negotiation. "By constantly working on their bodies they also became conscious of their postures and reactions in various situations, which helped them become aware of how they interacted with the social environment and how they might act differently to bring about change. It was this awareness that allowed them to navigate successfully, avoid harmful situations and maximize opportunities" (Ugolotti & Moyer, 2016, p.200). By continuing to gather in Turin's public spaces, by practicing how to negotiate the urban environment and how to respond to anonymous others, even how to win over a crowd of onlookers, the

(post)migrant young men are exercising the conditions of conviviality Ivan Illich defined, instituting a radical pedagogy of meaningful engagement and self-directed action.

Whilst 'loose space' (the use of public space in contrast to its original designed intent) might contradict some tenets of traditional urban design practice, it also offers a more effective way of negotiating conflicting demands on space and provides diversity. However, street cultures and its convivial discourses are not universally accepted, notwithstanding the fact that many traceurs are civically engaged and often attempt to negotiate their rights to space (Ameel & Tani, 2012). What Ugolotti's work indicates is that negotiation of public spaces requires knowledge and confidence, something that was not explicit in his Turin case study, and that strategies need to be developed to help users negotiate space, especially where attempts to challenge or regulate are adopted. As we show below, parkour helps loosen public space and provides a possible means for its negotiation.

Law, mediated conviviality and negotiated space

Carr has illustrated in the context of skateboarding how skaters literally 'skate around the law.' He illustrates how efforts to exclude and circumvent their activities has been countered by finding and exploiting 'seams within the law' (Carr, 2010, p.991) and by finding ways to adapt or appropriate legal logics to establish new types of terrain for the activity. All of this is seen as part of a dialectical struggle to assert their right to the city. That the law can be used in a positive way, sometimes attaching it to the issue of social benefit, can also be seen in parkour (Gilchrist & Osborn, 2017). That said, whilst the role of law can be reframed as a positive tool to support street culture, legal issues may nevertheless disadvantage and deter informal groups (Jeanes et al, 2018). For parkour, traceurs have reinterpreted the rights of citizens to reclaim public space and have illustrated methods of self-modifying their activities to help negotiate and manage these spaces. Some of this behaviour is self-negotiated, with traceurs adopting implicit understandings of the implications of their activities, stress testing likely impacts. Traceurs have limited their behaviour through treating car roof tops as no-go zones; restricting practice from the inner space of shopping malls and by responding to requests to vacate cemeteries, warehouse rooftops and other private land, keen to differentiate their activity from other activities that are often frowned upon and associated with juvenile delinquency, such as loitering, trespass, drinking or acts of random vandalism (Ameel & Tani, 2012, p.23; Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2011).

This approach has echoes and antecedents in fan and consumer behaviour in other recreational spaces. For example, the legal issues concerning the call for returning to standing areas at professional soccer are well known (Rigg, 2018), but research conducted for the Football Supporters Federation showed that in Germany an interesting bi-product of re-introducing standing areas was the emergence of self-regulating processes amongst the fans (FSF, 2007). This suggests an approach

where the fans are mindful that their hard-earned privileges may be threatened by the poor behaviour of others so they themselves will intervene to ensure standards of behaviour are met. This inculcation of self-regulatory norms can also be seen in behaviour in premises licensed for the sale of alcohol. Research has shown that in superpubs, transient in nature and predicated on Male Volume Vertical Drinking (MVVD), self-regulation is difficult but in public houses, local in nature and based around a more sociable café style approach, positive benefits in terms of behaviour can be seen (Roberts et al, 2006). As Chatterton (2002, p.34) notes in contradistinction to the anonymity and transience of superpubs, “Many smaller, alternative, independently owned venues, rather than using formal policing methods and relying on door security, draw upon self-regulation through customer identification with the ethos of the premises”.

Parkour exhibits these self-regulatory and self-modifying behavioural tendencies. However, given its youthful participation base, culture of risk-taking and tactical appropriation of a variety of urban spaces (Kidder, 2017), the key may be working out strategies to achieve a culture of self-regulation and self-modification in the management of the diversity of these loose spaces. A possible way forward comes through collaborative governance which replaces adversarial or management approaches to the resolution of complex disputes through seeking to coordinate, adjudicate and integrate the goals and interests of multiple stakeholders (Ansell and Gash, 2008). The collaborative governance approach has been recommended as a mechanism for managing informal sport, using collaborative networks, harnessing different stakeholders and developing skills such as negotiation to develop consensus-oriented solutions to problems such as access to public space for informal recreational participation (Jeanes et al, 2019). Ruth Jeanes and colleagues recommend the use of ‘boundary spanners’ (Williams, 2002) as one mechanism to facilitate communication between different networks, especially where tensions exist. Boundary spanners are individual actors who develop inter-organisational relationships and operate as an interface between organisations or institutions (Haas, 2015). In the informal sport context such individuals, write Jeanes et al (2019, p.91), “would need to have the skills to work across the various networks and, in particular, be able to prioritise the voice of informal participants, the group that is currently lost and rendered powerless in negotiations over space and resources”.

Whilst Jeanes et al suggest that local authority inclusion officers might be best placed to undertake the role of boundary spanners, we take this further and argue that the individual practitioners themselves best fulfil this role, and in fact already exhibit these skills and tendencies across a range of street sports. Beal et al (2017) observe how parents have taken on roles as community advocates in the world of skateboarding, working collaboratively and in partnership with community, city authorities and participants to help develop neighbourhood skate parks and to help negotiate conflicts. Lombard (2016) also talks of the civically-engaged skateboarder who is taking an active role in governance and community leadership. These actions accord with the idea of mediated conviviality outlined by Barker (2017, p.849), and particularly the idea that social order needs to be facilitated; “at its core it conceives of social order not as spontaneous but rather as something needing to be facilitated

and mediated in a manner that is responsive to the context, situation and conduct of those social groups and individuals being regulated". In addition to the suggested mediated conviviality approach, Barker outlines three different governing mentalities which either intensify marginalisation and significantly diminishes the rights of those it targets (preventive exclusion), are highly symbolic attempts to foster a positive perception of security and order in public spaces (reassurance policing) or privileges and re-centres rights in public space (right to the city). Barker (2017, p.849) argues that the debate on the regulation of public space needs to be reframed and she presents "...an alternative perspective that challenges these assumptions and related developments in urban policy that promote prohibition, enforcement and exclusion as solutions to the problem of order in everyday life". The tool Barker adopts is mediated conviviality, which argues, in contrast, that coexistence in public spaces can be reframed by utilising deliberate strategies as "...the quality and inclusiveness of public spaces, its social and political use values and safety amongst citizens can be enhanced and expanded by certain regulatory principles and practices that are responsive to the context/situation and conduct of the regulated" (Barker, 2017, p.855). Convivial public spaces move beyond festivity (Gilroy, 2004) to interaction and towards a cohabitation of difference, but Barker (2017, p.856) argues these convivial spaces must be *mediated*:

The notion of 'mediated' conviviality derives from the idea that social gatherings and living together with 'lightly engaged' strangers may not always be festive and harmonious. Public space may not be convivial if all have untrammelled rights – or that *anything goes* - as implied by a right to the city mentality.

To do this Barker suggests first that rules are minimal and, after the liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill, harm-based. Secondly, tolerance towards others must be actively fostered. Barker talks of 'skilled mediators' fulfilling this function, a concept that appears to be similar to Williams' notion of boundary spanners. What we propose is that rather than being channelled by intermediaries, the functions of these skilled mediators or boundary spanners is performed by the participants themselves.

Conviviality and the mediation of parkour

A key way in which the role of the boundary spanner is being exercised is via public demonstrations of parkour as a skilled discipline. Coaches and leaders of localised meet-ups for training (known colloquially as 'jams') emphasise the importance of safety, responsibility, training and calculation, involved in the proper execution of movements. This is captured in Jeffrey Kidder's (2017) term 'hedgeworkers', a counterpoint to Stephen Lyng's notion of 'edgework' (Lyng, 1990) meaning the lauding of risk for risk's sake, to demonstrate instead qualities of motivation and performance that disavow thrill-seeking and emphasise rites of risk couched in rituals of symbolic safety. Kidder's ethnographic research with the Chicago parkour community has revealed how safety-minded instruction has been important for counterbalancing the destructive potential of stunts performed in more risky fissures

of the city. He observed that repetition of disciplined movement is emphasised with disparagement of 'slackers' who failed to live up to these expectations (2017: 76).

Leaders and coaches involved in facilitating parkour jams in public space are keen to emphasise the seriousness of disciplined manoeuvres and not being seen to be messing around (Kidder, 2017: 76). This is mediated conviviality in the sense of an ethic of care being extended to participants and being demonstrated to curious onlookers whose unease with unfamiliar and daring bodily movements is allayed. When run-ins with police officers occurred, Kidder notes, there was frequently an attempt made by members of the parkour crew to explain the philosophy and practice to police officers, attempting to win their favour and enrol them as allies (Kidder, 2017: 78). Tactics of persuasion and normative compliance with 'codes of conduct' for parkour are also present through other mediums, through signage observed in sanctioned parkour spaces in the UK, for example, that emphasise the importance of self-regulated good conduct (Gilchrist & Osborn, 2017).

Parkour UK, the national governing body for the sport, have their own codes of conduct and suggested strategies for negotiating the spaces of parkour. They provide guidance suggesting a number of approaches relating to issues such as the safety of the spaces selected as a training location, but also recommend that practitioners are cognisant of other issues such as the impact of the activity on local residents. The guidance stresses the role of respect, for the environment and others, as at the heart of the activity. Their guidance includes the following:

Treat others as you expect to be treated; encourage and support others to create a positive training environment for all.

If somebody asks you to leave an area, be courteous, explain what Parkour/Freerunning is and be prepared to comply with reasonable requests to practise somewhere else.

Parkour/Freerunning is still a relatively new and unfamiliar sport/activity, and it is understandable that some members of the public are unsure of it. Anything you can do to give it a good name will help in making it more understood, improving relations with the public and generally advancing the sport in the eyes of the surrounding community.

This approach is echoed in skateboarding, where, as Will Harmon put it in an interview with Ocean Howell (2018); "If skaters want to be considered, they have to consider others." What Parkour UK are suggesting is, we would argue, a form of mediated conviviality where the users themselves are the mediators, facilitators, and boundary spanners and where rules and codes of conduct are minimal, though essential, if the practice is to continue.

This is not to suggest that situational strategies when confronted with requests and orders to cease practice from agents of social control have always been successful. Whilst Kidder's research has shown a more compliant attitude toward police officers on requests to leave adopted training locations, certainly when

compared with the seemingly more rebellious skateboarding subculture, in fact the traceurs he followed had ambivalent relationships to authority which left outcomes related to permitted use more uncertain. In Millennium Park in Chicago, traceurs engaged in games with the private security guards, taunting them and testing limits (Kidder, 2017: 80-81). Similarly, in Turin, even though traceurs were able to win police and public support if they practiced in the regenerated Parco Dora area, they railed against the limitations of sanctioned containment to authorised convivial public space and have sought to spread their practice to the “cracks and fissures” of the city, turning driveways, parking lots, pedestrianised pathways and flyovers into hallowed training spots (Ugolotti and Silk, 2018: 775-6).

Recent interventions in the UK have also shown the importance of organisation-level boundary spanners in establishing conditions of use. When Horsham District Council in southern England attempted to apply a Public Space Protection Order – a device under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that empowers local authorities to intervene against behaviours deemed to be detrimental to the quality of life of those in the locality – to ban parkour from the town centre (Horsham DC, 2016), it was partly through our legal advice and intervention (Gilchrist, Osborn & Sheridan, 2017), working alongside Parkour UK and Liberty, that the PSPO was reframed to remove the specification of free-running and parkour as a problematic activity (Horsham DC, 2018).

Conclusion

Parkour has established itself as perhaps the pre-eminent street sport of the new millennium and, as we have illustrated is symbiotically related to questions of space. We have attempted to map the development of the practice of parkour against Barker’s concept of mediated conviviality, showing that there are signs of the qualities and characteristics of mediated conviviality beginning to emerge within parkour in a range of international urban contexts. Crucially, we argue that the identity of what Barker terms institutional mediators and boundary spanners, may be, for parkour, the practitioners themselves as best placed to negotiate public space and understand the competing interests that may exist.

This observation must however be qualified. First, we acknowledge that parkour itself is not homogeneous and, like other street sports, is riven with conflicting approaches. Parkour’s position as countercultural force has been challenged by its recognition as a sport for example, and the distinction between parkour in sanctioned and unsanctioned spaces is a real one (Gilchrist & Osborn, 2017). Second, parkour itself is not without its own issues and problems in terms of how it contributes to convivial and inclusive urban space. This is not only in terms of some traceurs being hostile to external norms rules and regulations (Wheaton & O’Loughlin, 2017) and its repositioning by embryonic national governing bodies as a formalised and regulated activity, but more fundamentally that even if it is seen as a convivial sphere it is convivial in a masculine context and has some way to go in

addressing gendered power and female exclusion (Wheaton, 2016). Yet, it is interesting to note that the process of institutionalisation, leading to the formation of national governing bodies such as Parkour UK, has not abandoned informal practice on parkour as a street culture and has set out inclusive rules of governance and guidance that works toward the production of convivial space, aware of the diversity of informal and formal spaces, or loose and tight spaces, that contribute to the growth of the activity. These steps are embryonic though and bigger questions remain to be answered about whether this prominent street cultural practice can establish the conditions for mediated conviviality in all urban contexts and whether this always necessarily entails the drawing of symbolic boundaries around 'proper' and 'improper' practice, formal or informal space, and to whether acquiescence to the demands of conviviality will frustrate participants that imagine a more playful relationship for cities.

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