Conflict, Exclusion, Relocation: Skateboarding and Public Space

JEREMY NÉMETH

Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, NJ, USA

ABSTRACT *Policy makers often mark groups of young people in public spaces as threats to public order. As a result, spaces are produced in which teens must show deference to adult definitions of appropriate behaviour. One group experiencing such forms of control and regulation is the street skateboarding culture. This paper discusses this phenomenon in the context of a 2002 skateboarding ban in Philadelphia's LOVE Park, a world-famous 'skatespot' adjacent to City Hall. Through a variety of methods, the paper shows how powerful City interests defined this group as deviant, unruly and worthy of removal. It argues that the skateboarders' exclusion from Center City denies their fundamental right to a space for performance, identity formation and representation in the public forum.*

Introduction

On 5 October 2003, over 400 Philadelphians descended on City Hall to protest the City's decision to prohibit skateboarding in and around LOVE Park, the so-called 'mecca of street skateboarding'. Policy makers had agreed to implement a two-fold plan for a mass renovation of the park in time for a citywide festival. The plan involved both a physical restructuring of the park and the strict statutory enforcement of a 2000 Municipal Code banning skateboarding in and around the park. To reinforce their plan, City officials instituted an around-the-clock police officer patrol of the park area to impose the skateboarding prohibition with $300 citations and possible imprisonment. The ban evoked public protests that have continued to this day, with no resolution in sight.

This paper will unpack this high-profile case, setting it within a broader literature and demonstrating how the case illustrates the tendency of public officials and decision makers to prioritize a particular vision of public space. It begins with a brief review of the relevant theoretical debates around the issue of public space exclusion. Next, the paper provides a concise history of LOVE Park from its conception in the 1950s until the present day controversy. It then offers some potential motivations for the City's actions by exploring the political-economic context in which these more recent events have taken place. The paper then determines how officials were able to garner support for the skateboarding

Correspondence Address: Jeremy Németh, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 33 Livingston Avenue, Suite 300, New Brunswick, NJ, 08901, USA. Email: jnemeth@eden.rutgers.edu

prohibition through both physical and discursive methods. The paper discusses the various implications of the skateboarders' removal from LOVE Park, and concludes that their exclusion is detrimental to processes of social learning and identity formation, and that the relegation of skateboarders to a purpose-built skatepark has successfully placed them out of sight, and, presumably, out of mind. Throughout this discussion, it becomes clear that the actions taken are part of a longer legacy of public control of groups deemed inappropriate, or 'out of place' in public space.

Conflict and Exclusion

Extensive literature exists on the exclusivity of public space as viewed through the lenses of *race* (Ruddick, 1996; Jackson, 1998; McCann, 2000), *age* (Valentine, 1996, 2004; Katz, 1998, 2006), *gender* (Fraser, 1990; Wilson, 1991; Day, 1999; Pain, 2001), and *class* (Mitchell, 1995a, 2003; Sibley, 1995). Much of this discussion focuses on the treatment of particular individuals or groups, such as political protestors or the homeless population. Yet subcultural groups failing to fall within the definition of 'rational' or 'appropriate' users can also be excluded from public space, as social identities are constructed in space (Soja, 1989). In this regard, the way in which we represent *individuals* as insider/outsider or citizen/non-citizen becomes deeply constitutive of our definition of community, and the way in which *public spaces* are represented is then "deeply implicated in [this] process of othering" (Ruddick, 1996, p. 146). Put another way:

> Differences are constructed in, and themselves construct, city life and spaces. They are also constituted spatially, socially and economically, sometimes leading to polarization, inequality, zones of exclusion and fragmentation. (Bridge & Watson, 2000, p. 251)

In addition, recent economic and political restructuring has created strict regulatory regimes to combat an unprecedented preoccupation with perceived and real security and 'order'. These concerns manifest themselves physically in the streets and squares of the urban and suburban public realm, where persons falling outside of the parameters of this order are seen to be transgressive, and are thus made marginal through their rejection from public space (cf. Valentine, 1996; Cresswell, 1996; Young, 2000; Atkinson, 2003). Whether represented by a homeless person sleeping on a bench or a skateboarder sliding on his or her board down a handrail, the transgressor is deemed out of place and thus "threatens to bring about a meaning for a place that is not favored by those involved in creating the [dominant] discourse" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 59). This is fundamentally an issue of power, as what is normal or rational is defined by those with the ability to create these terms. Some scholars argue that the increasing prevalence of gated communities and suburban enclaves is precisely due to the desire for this order and normality in daily life (Blakely & Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003).

This paper builds on this literature, demonstrating how one particular group was deemed disorderly and thus, worthy of removal. While the story of LOVE Park is unique, it represents a classic conflict over the right to define public space. In this case, stakeholders with uneven power presented differing visions of the appropriate use and meaning of a public space, as according to Zukin (1995), "public spaces are an important means of framing a vision of social life in the city" (p. 259). The case demonstrates how competing values within society were

expressed through symbolic struggles over public space, making it clear that a normative view exists over what a space should represent and who should be allowed to use it (Cresswell, 1996, p. 10). This paper adds to our knowledge of the material and discursive processes of exclusion, and reveals how and why such conflicts can arise: in this case between the notion of LOVE Park as skateboarding destination and the more recent reconfiguration of the space by City decision makers supporting downtown revitalization efforts (Wagner, 2004).

The LOVE Park case is not an isolated incident: skateboarders around the world have faced similar measures in recent years. From Huntington Beach, California's early 1990s ban on street skating (in the 'birthplace of skateboarding') to Cape May, New Jersey's recent attempts to cite anyone even possessing or carrying a skateboard on city-owned land, the culture of skateboarding has come under fire in numerous cities (Strauss, 2002). In recent years, planners, architects and geographers have begun to address the tensions surrounding the existence of the street skateboarding subculture in the urban milieu (Thompson, 1998; Childress, 1999; Flusty, 2000; Owens, 2001; Woolley & Johns, 2001; Stratford, 2002; Nolan, 2003). This paper builds on this literature, identifying both the motivations and methods of exclusion involved in one particularly contentious conflict involving this group.

Finally, from observations and research it is clear that street skateboarders are most often teenagers and adolescents (Borden, 2001; Owens, 2001; Woolley & Johns, 2001). As such, this is not simply a story about the exclusion of skateboarders but about young people more generally. As young people are frequently deemed 'out of place' in the public forums of the city, this paper analyzes their treatment of youth in public space by showing how LOVE Park was constructed as adult space, and how the skateboarders were viewed as illegitimate in this context (Valentine, 1996, 2004; Aitken, 2001).

LOVE Park History

LOVE Park, officially called John F. Kennedy Plaza, is centrally located in the downtown business district of Philadelphia (see Figure 1). Originally conceived in
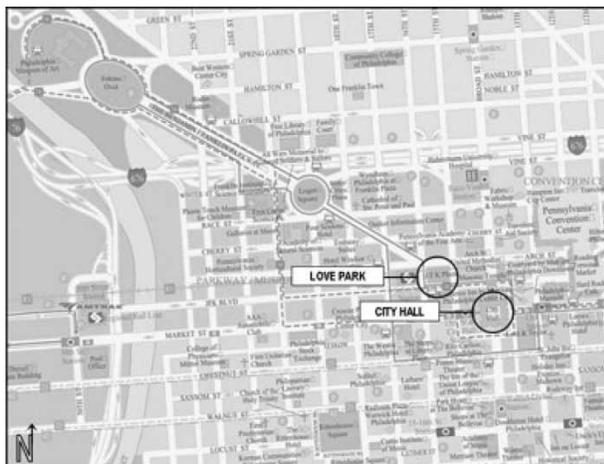

Figure 1. LOVE Park location. *Source:* base adapted from pcvb.org.

1682 by William Penn, the civic center area of Philadelphia included a void in the space where LOVE Park currently stands. The space was planned in 1952 as part of Director of Planning Edmund Bacon's master redevelopment scheme for Center City. Bacon was a fervent supporter of keeping the site an open space and felt that a park would represent the keystone of the burgeoning development around Penn Center (IHA, 2005a). Architect Vincent Kling designed the park, which was completed in 1965, with a "cascade of curving granite steps" and a large fountain centered in the second of the space's three tiers (IHA, 2005a). Along with these dramatic features, the City placed the existing 'LOVE' sculpture at the southwest corner of the plaza nearest to City Hall. Designed by Robert Indiana, the sculpture still occupies this spot and gives JFK Plaza its now famous moniker, LOVE Park (see Figure 2).

Throughout its history, the space had been home to political rallies, civic events and electoral campaigns (see Figure 3). Its location across from City Hall and at the nexus of Benjamin Franklin Parkway and Broad Street made it a natural gathering point for residents, employees and tourists. The space had also been the site of a large homeless population (cf. Howell, 2005) and a growing drug trade, which peaked in the mid- to late-1980s when several violent drug-related incidents in the park forced political leadership to enforce strict police patrols in Center City.

Around this time, Philadelphia youth discovered that the plaza provided all the elements necessary for a great skatespot (see Figure 4). In the mid-1990s, internationally known skateboarders flocked to LOVE Park and provided word-of-mouth coverage to the rest of the skateboarding world. Described as the "the most famous natural skateboard park in the world," LOVE Park's renown attracted thousands annually from as far away as Australia and Malaysia (Heller & Hohns, 2003). According to some, "Few skatespots on Earth can claim the notoriety of Philadelphia's LOVE Park" (411 Productions, 2004).

However, in March 2000, City Councilman Michael Nutter proposed a Bill banning skateboarding in the space, citing damage caused to concrete ledges and the danger posed by skateboarders to other park users (see Figure 5). The Council passed Municipal Code Section 10-610 but did not strictly enforce it at the time. It reads:

Figure 2. LOVE statue. *Source:* photo taken by the author.

Figure 3. Political speech – City Hall in background. Source: philly.com.

Figure 4. Using park elements. *Source*: photo taken by the author.

> No person shall use a skateboard in the area bounded by Arch Street, Fifteenth Street, Broad Street, and John F. Kennedy Boulevard [the area encompassing LOVE Park]; or on any public property. No person shall use a skateboard on portions of private property, including but not limited to outdoor plazas, that are dedicated to use by the general public … the penalty for a violation of this Section shall be a civil penalty of 300 dollars. (Philadelphia Municipal Code 10-160)

Following the ban, Philadelphia hosted the X-Games in 2001 and 2002, an international extreme sports tournament televised by the ESPN network. Philadelphia became the first city contracted to host the games for more than one year. ESPN officials remarked that LOVE Park was the primary reason why they chose Philadelphia as host city for the event, due to the park's frequent portrayal in skateboarding magazines and a popular video game (Valenzuela, 2002).

Having earned approximately $40 million in revenue from advertising and endorsements during the first year of competition (and $80 million over the two years of the event), the City Council, led by Mayor John Street, closed LOVE Park for renovations in April 2002 (411 Productions, 2004). Officials estimated the skateboarders had caused an estimated $60 000 of damage to the park's ledges and tiles. Several months later the park reopened following an $800 000 facelift: designers installed numerous pink planter boxes with native plant displays to make the park unskateable and placed wooden benches with crossbar dividers around the park to serve the dual purpose of deterring both skateboarders and reclining homeless persons (see Figure 6). The City instituted a 24-hour police presence in the park to enforce the ban. To quell some of the immediate public outcry, officials also began to refer skateboarders to FDR Park, a purpose-built skatepark in South Philadelphia.

Skateboarders and local advocacy groups weighed in heavily on the prohibition. In October 2002, supporters staged a large demonstration in the park and 92-year-old city planner Edmund Bacon skateboarded across the space to protest against the City's actions (see Figure 7). In July 2003, skateboarding supporters hosted a forum discussing the fate of LOVE Park. A few Councilpersons attended and voiced their support for the skaters, and the Council was split evenly over the ban. The issue even played a major part in the mayoral election of 2003, with candidates frankly discussing the prohibition at

Figure 5. Damage caused to ledges. *Source:* photo taken by the author.

Figure 6. After 2002 redesign. *Source:* synterraltd.com.

City Hall and in LOVE Park itself. The candidates used the debate over skateboarding as an indication of their commitment to the youth of Philadelphia. Republican mayoral candidate Sam Katz supported the skateboarder's cause and vowed to return skating to LOVE Park, while incumbent Mayor John Street advocated measures to ensure skaters would not use the park. Street won and upheld the prohibition. Hundreds of supporters once again rallied at the park in October 2003 to pressure City Council to reverse their decision.

In February 2004, the non-profit 'Coalition to Free LOVE Park' submitted a comprehensive adjustment plan to the City of Philadelphia, at the request of the Managing Director's Office. The Coalition, composed of the local groups Young Involved Philadelphia, the Independence Hall Association, and the Skateboard Advocacy Network, consulted with the local community and diverse stakeholder groups to produce a revision to their 2003 'Balanced Solution' compromise plan which had been turned down by the City, who had found the proposal unacceptable. The Coalition's new adjustment plan would "maximize the potential of the park as a skateboarding locale, as well as allowing for pedestrian-only access, to promote the park's mixed-use potential" (Friends of LOVE Park, 2004, p. 3).

Supporters also began to raise money to help fund the enforcement of this revised compromise plan, which was to allow skateboarding only after 3pm on weekdays. After relatively unsuccessful efforts by the advocate groups, the skateboarding company DC Shoes announced it would help ensure that this 'irreplaceable skateboarding landmark' would not be taken away (Anderson, 2004). The California-based company declared it would donate $1 million over 10 years (at $100 000/year) to repair any skateboard damage and subsidize a monitor to ensure skateboarding would take place only during approved times.

Philadelphia Managing Director Phil Goldsmith summarized the City's response to the donation, stating that "the Mayor is never going to let skateboarding into LOVE Park no matter what happens," and "this subject is really just 'a pimple on the hide of an elephant' compared to everything else [the Mayor] is dealing with" (Anderson, 2004). After months of public consultation by the Coalition to Free LOVE Park, the City turned down the revised compromise plan and the donation. Barbara Grant, the spokeswoman for Mayor Street

Figure 8. 2005 protest. *Source:* roadkillskates.com.

Figure 7. Ed Bacon skateboards in protest.
Source: ushistory.org.

concluded: "We gave them an opportunity to fully and fairly air their issues. But we just don't see skateboarding in LOVE Park" (Anderson, 2004).

However, in late 2004, public officials relented in their campaign against skateboarding in the city. While upholding the skateboarding prohibition in LOVE Park, they agreed to allow the construction of a street-style skatepark located on the banks of the Schuylkill River running alongside Center City. Private foundations would be charged with raising funds for the approved $4.2 million project. Local skateboarders consulted on the future design of the Schuylkill River Skatepark, and although the park promises to be an important skateboarding destination due to its world-class, tailor-made design, others view it is a crucial concession in the fight to skate in LOVE Park itself (Nugent, 2006).

Advocates have not lost sight of the goal to return skateboarding to LOVE Park. Most recently, several hundred protestors marched through Center City Philadelphia in June 2005 in a show of opposition to the skating ban. At one point, several hundred skateboarders gathered on the edge of the park chanting 'free LOVE Park' (Geringer, 2005). Edmund Bacon, then 95 but since deceased, sat in his wheelchair in the park in a display of solidarity with the skaters, while police collided with protestors in the park and on the surrounding streets (see Figure 8).

The various physical tactics used to remove the skateboarders have proven extremely successful, as hundreds of citations have been issued since the 2002 redesign. Yet Bacon observed that "the amazing thing is that the impulse to skateboard in LOVE park is so *strong* that the [skateboarders] still go there" (Bacon in *LOVE Story*, 2004). Skaters sneaking in the park even set up lookouts to signal the group when the police entered the space. The City countered with an additional punitive tactic described by one skateboarder:

There were just these random dudes, dressed as bums, that would just sit there, and they were undercover cops (Margera in *LOVE Story*, 2004).

During this period, public support for the prohibition plunged: a *Philadelphia Inquirer* poll showed that 92% of the over 2000 residents polled were in support of skateboarding in LOVE Park (News Forum, 2004).

To gain popular support for their actions, the City buttressed these physical methods with their public portrayal of the skateboarders as disorderly and unruly. Howell's 2005 paper cites several *Philadelphia Inquirer* articles in which critics equated the skateboarders to rats, vermin, and other 'broken windows' signaling a sense of disorder in the area (cf. Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Three different *Inquirer* articles compared skaters to 'roaches'; deemed them 'skate rats'; and depicted them as "dudes in backward baseball caps who dart between cars, plow into pedestrians, and gouge the granite in public plazas...[and are] dangerous, destructive, even anti-social" (cited in Howell, 2005, p. 34). A Common Pleas Court Judge, Richard B. Klein, even complained that "the average person has been taken off the plaza" (cited in Howell, 2005, p. 34). By portraying the skaters in such a negative light, municipal officials, mainstream media outlets and powerful business leaders tried to rally popular support for the skateboarders' removal.

Two major questions arise. First, in the face of overwhelming public support for the skateboarders, what might have been the City's underlying rationale for the skaters' removal from LOVE Park? Second, what are the implications of these actions and why do some view the newly proposed Schuylkill River Skatepark as an unacceptable alternative? Each of these questions is now addressed in turn.

Rationale for Exclusion

City decision makers provided two major reasons for the prohibition: damage and liability (IHA, 2005b). Although the skaters had caused an estimated $60 000 of damage, the redesign of the park cost the City $800 000 and DC Shoes agreed to add $1 million to offset any future damages caused. The decision to redesign the park in this manner, and to turn down the offer from DC Shoes, hints that the damage itself might not have been as critical an issue as the City claimed. In terms of their legal concerns, a brief by Nims (2002) addressed the City's potential liability in the event of injury to skaters or passers-by. He concluded that while "traditional playground sports such as soccer or football have comparable participation rates, [they] have a much higher injury rate per thousand participants than skateboarding". In addition, not one lawsuit has been filed against the City of Philadelphia by either a skateboarder or a pedestrian in all the years skating had been occurring in LOVE Park (Nims, 2002). Skateboarders in general do not seem to be a litigious group: in California only two cases resulting from skateboarding injuries have ever been levied (Owens, 2001). Nims' conclusions demonstrate that the City's 'official' reasons for the prohibition may have only represented a small fraction of their deeper concerns about skateboarding in LOVE Park.

A Declining Center City

It is instructive to now zoom out from the specific context of LOVE Park. Philadelphia, like many American cities and regions and especially those in the industrial production zones of the Northeast and Midwest, has borne witness to massive economic and political changes since the 1970s. In general, the increased flexibility and mobility of capital, the rise in telecommunications technology

which allows transactions and communication to take place instantly and on a global scale, and the decrease in federal aid to cities, have forced business elites and political leaders in these cities into an entrepreneurial role in promoting urban economic growth (cf. Molotch, 1976; Logan & Molotch, 1987; Frieden & Sagalyn, 1989; Fainstein, 1994). Additionally, deindustrialization and the concomitant growth of suburban edge cities (Garreau, 1991) and technoburbs (Fishman, 1987) have meant that cities must compete against one another to attract footloose capital investment in CBDs (Fyfe & Bannister, 1998, p. 257). In this context, development has been "taken over by a kind of market culture, one made by real estate speculators, institutional investors, and big-time international customers" (Zukin, 1991, p. 198). In order to 'fix' capital in place, cities must make themselves attractive to this itinerant investment, as 'image becomes everything' (Mitchell, 2003). This capital attraction is often embedded in economic strategies that prioritize visual coherence and order, such as urban design or aesthetic improvements, tourist spectacles, city marketing campaigns and slogans, and heavy-handed upgrading and enhancement of security measures (Zukin, 1995; Fyfe & Bannister, 1998; Judd & Fainstein, 1999).

Philadelphia clearly fits this post-industrial billing, and its population has also steadily declined in recent decades. The city has also struggled to maintain a viable environment for commerce and industry in the Center City business district. Concerned with crime in the declining downtown district, many major corporations emigrated from Center City to the massive suburban office parks of northeast Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the 1980s. Recent attempts by municipal officials to attract corporations back to Center City have proven difficult. The revitalization of the physical infrastructure of Center City has been at the centre of these attempts. Most recently, the district has witnessed the construction of several major cultural outlets, the physical upgrade of Benjamin Franklin Parkway, and the renovation of several buildings surrounding LOVE Park.

The City has also set out to attract a new set of residents to the Center City neighbourhood, adding over 8200 new housing units to the district from 1997 to 2005, representing approximately 13 000 new downtown residents (Central Philadelphia Development Corporation and Center City District, 2005a). The Center City population has increased 10% in the last five years, and is now estimated at 88 000, up from 78 902 in 2000. By 2008, an additional 3574 units are scheduled for completion, and if current market conditions persist, "Center City could add … 15 000 new residents in the next five years" (Central Philadelphia Development Corporation and Center City District, 2005a, p. 1).

Additionally, a large Business Improvement District (BID) formed through a partnership of the Center City District (CCD) and the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC) has orchestrated recent upgrades to the urban environment around LOVE Park. The BID's mission is to keep the area "safe, clean, and attractive" and more specifically to enhance the vitality of Center City Philadelphia as a thriving 24–hour downtown, and a premier place to live, work or play. They strive to "strengthen the competitiveness of Center City as the region's central location for business and entrepreneurship" (Central Philadelphia Development Corporation and Center City District, 2005b, para. 2).

Set in this context of redevelopment and revitalization, it becomes clearer why the City so fervently advocated the removal of any disorderly presence in the showpiece of their efforts (Sennett, 1970). The park's location across the street

from City Hall also made it an easy target for municipal officials who, according to a Philadelphia policewoman, had to "look down on these kids every day." One skateboarder voiced this concern about the extreme visibility of the park: "I mean, it's right across the street from City Hall. How can you believe that you're not going to have a problem. Everything has to come to an end sometime, look where it's at!" (Oyola in *LOVE Story*, 2004).

A New Creative Class

However, the skateboarders *have* received popular support from various groups. While some argue that the presence of this counter-cultural activity has pushed the non-skateboarder out of the space, others contend that the skaters and their activities serve as a cultural catalyst for development in the Central Business District (Howell, 2005). A broad cast of characters—including Edmund Bacon, LOVE Park architect Vincent Kling, cultural guru and professor Richard Florida, the Pennsylvania Economic League, over half the City Council, and many others—have provided vocal support for the economic benefits occasioned by the LOVE Park skaters (IHA, 2006). Former Republican Mayoral candidate and skateboarding supporter Sam Katz described the view of this group in a 2003 interview:

> There are cities that pay PR firms millions to get the kind of buzz that LOVE Park brought us, and what did we do? We closed it. It's like we put the kabosh on all the youthful energy and enthusiasm that we're trying to cultivate. It's backward thinking that could keep us from being among the elite cities in the country (Anderson, 2003, para. 4).

Here, a convincing argument by Howell (2005) is followed. He claims that the burgeoning skateboarding culture (a $1.5 billion industry) has been co-opted into serving as the first line of Center City Philadelphia gentrifiers. His argument is that skateboarders, who he deems the 'shock troops of gentrification' have generated revenue and produced a marketable image for the city, while deterring the presence of the former homeless population in LOVE Park (p. 40). Thus, in the eyes of some of the skaters' supporters, they represent a wave of creative individuals occupying the streets and neighbourhoods of the *new* Center City. However, this support will be short lived, as the skateboarders are already being phased out for the next wave of urbanites currently reclaiming downtown Philadelphia lofts and artist quarters (Howell, 2005). This issue deserves further exploration in light of the important literature on the benefits and drawbacks of using culture and creativity to define a city (Mitchell, 1995b; Zukin, 1995; Florida, 2002, 2005).

This argument is further supported by the fact that the X-Games were held in Philadelphia because of LOVE Park's fame, and that the Mayor and the State of Pennsylvania fought hard to attract the event, with the State contributing the $1.2 million to fund the bid (McCalla, in Nims, 2002). This was an important event for the city of Philadelphia, as it attracted a television audience of approximately 150 million people worldwide (IHA, 2005a). Mayor Street even posed for several promotional photos during the event. Months after ESPN left Philadelphia following a financially successful first year, LOVE Park was again closed to skateboarders (411 Productions, 2004). This move was felt most acutely by the local skaters:

> That was probably the rudest thing that the City of Philadelphia or ESPN has ever done. You know, there's all these dudes skating it, and everyone's cool with it. Even the Mayor. As soon as everyone leaves it's like 'you're scratching up the ledges'. Yesterday, ESPN was scratching up the ledges and you were clapping! (Margera in *LOVE Story*, 2004).

Whether they represented critical cogs in the gentrification cycle or revenue drivers in two consecutive X-Games events, the skateboarders were supported only when they produced a marketable 'product' for the City.

According to Borden (2001), street skateboarding promotes the 'use value' of a space over its 'exchange value', as it fails to produce any tangible, exchangeable goods. In some opinions, the activity "appears to serve no known purpose in life and does nothing to raise national productivity" (p. 233). Skateboarders are rarely the productive consumers desired by those City officials with goals of economic revitalization (Owens, 1988, 2001). Instead, many skateboarders and teenagers in general prefer to just get together and hang out without focusing on actually *doing* anything at all (Woolley & Johns, 2001). This lack of exchangeable production by the skateboarders is irrational in the eyes of those seeking to create the aesthetic of a more business-friendly environment in the Central Business District (Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998).

> Skateboarders have encountered a politics of space similar to the experience of the homeless. Like the homeless, skateboarders occupy urban space without engaging in economic activity ... to the annoyance of building owners and managers. As a result, urban managers have declared skaters as trespassers (Borden, 1998, p. 50).

The LOVE Park case demonstrates how a restructuring of the 'public realm' is used to "help legitimize conventional orders and power ... to help validate the business- and commodity-oriented city" (Borden, 2001, p. 257). According to Michael Walzer:

> Money buys membership in contemporary society, in the sense of being able to participate in the prevailing norms of rampant material consumption. Those that are unable to conform or choose to hold other norms, or in some way seem to threaten the prevailing order and its value system, may be marginalized from the mainstream and even physically contained or excluded. (1986, p. 475)

The actions taken by the City to ban skateboarding represents a normative (re)construction of LOVE Park as a secure space for the consumption of adults, business people and tourists. This is also evidenced by the recent introduction of expensive wireless computer technology into the park, as officials declared it a 'Wi-Fi Hotspot' in the summer of 2005 to wide fanfare.

Broader Implications

The implications of the recent events in Center City are manifold. To gauge how local skateboarders and advocates felt about the prohibition, informal interviews were conducted with these groups from July 2003 to June 2005. Official press releases from the City of Philadelphia were also reviewed, as well as an extensive set of newspaper articles chronicling the events in and around LOVE Park since

the 2002 prohibition. The website 'Free LOVE Park', created and maintained by the Independence Hall Association (IHA) of Philadelphia, offers a clearinghouse of articles on skateboarding in Philadelphia, and in LOVE Park in particular. Finally, to understand how the space became such an icon to the skateboarding subculture, a multitude of skateboarding magazines and videos featuring LOVE Park were examined. One particularly comprehensive video entitled *LOVE Story* provided the bulk of the quotes reproduced in this paper. From the document and video review, as well as the observations and interviews, several key themes began to emerge.

Interaction, Progression and Performance

While it was undoubtedly a serendipitous natural skatepark with its "curving granite and flat marble", many of the skaters felt LOVE Park was the center of their social lives. Young people would end up at LOVE Park daily, just to see who was present in the park: it was a place to meet up with friends or other skaters (see Figure 9). The marathon skating sessions often involved numerous groups of skaters: "there would be like 25 kids sitting around watching, like wow, wow!" (Brandstetter in *LOVE Story*, 2004). It was a place where teens could hang out without adult supervision, a place to see others and be seen. "LOVE Park was live. Everyone came through, there was like girls walking through everyday. Aw man, it was beautiful. The memories I have up here are priceless" (Williams in *LOVE Story*, 2004).

The park had gained worldwide fame and attention, but to those using the park on a daily basis, LOVE Park was a stage, and its downtown location afforded its 'performers' a broad audience. Local employees, tourists and residents would often sit in the park just to watch the skateboarders perform their tricks (411 Productions, 2004). One skater remarked in an interview that "the City had tried to move us to the spot on Arch Street [a municipal parking lot located nearby] but no one ever went there". The central stage of LOVE Park allowed the skaters to progress in their skateboarding proficiency, learning from others who were perhaps more skilled. Skateboarders noted how, if the park were still open, "every

Figure 9. Watching and learning. *Source:* ushistory.org.

trick would be done" (Getz in *LOVE Story*, 2004). This creativity and progression was vital: skaters began with simple tricks but soon progressed to 'popping up tiles' from the park's flat area, using them as ramps to jump over trash cans and other objects. The skateboarders learned from each other and copied others' tricks, constantly trying to one-up the other skaters (cf. Woolley & Johns, 2001).

While the majority of skaters in LOVE Park were young white males, often from suburban, middle-class backgrounds, younger black skaters from inner-city Philadelphia also used the park regularly (411 Productions, 2004; Howell, 2005). At times, there was conflict between these two groups:

> There were two different crews though. There was the Ricky crew [predominantly white], which was like Matt Reason and all those guys. And then Stevie and his crew [predominantly black], with Jason and Rasool. When Rick and those guys would go skate a certain spot, they wouldn't invite the young guys, and when the young guys would go skate a certain spot they wouldn't invite the older guys. And so there was always this weird little tension. (Kalis in *LOVE Story*, 2004)

Stevie Williams, born and raised in Philadelphia and now a world-famous skater with numerous sponsorships, played a large part in the development of the park as a skateboarding icon. He describes the uneasiness between groups of skaters in the park:

> I don't know, it seemed like LOVE Park was segregated. It was like they had their clique and we had our clique. And there was always like, tension and beef, and we should have just all got along. (Williams in *LOVE Story*, 2004)

Clearly, LOVE Park represented much more than a series of skateable elements. It was a place to just *be*, and a stage for the formation of personal and group identities.

Un'adult'ered Space

The story of LOVE Park is also indicative of the treatment of young people in public space. The skateboarders were considered out of place in the space due to the inherently transgressive and alternative nature of their activity. Officials saw their use of LOVE Park as confrontational because public space is viewed predominantly as adult space; in this context these youth are often seen as 'out of order' (Cresswell, 1996; Valentine, 1996). In this regard, the exclusion of skateboarders from LOVE Park represents another example of the tensions around the appropriate place for children in the city (Churchman, 2003). LOVE Park was a space where youth could escape the clutches of regimented school or home life and enter the exciting stage of Center City. Often, the LOVE Park skateboarders were not from Philadelphia itself, but traveled in from the suburbs. Although these young people often self-organized into homogeneous groups based on age, race or skill level, the experiences in LOVE Park provided them unsupervised opportunities to come into contact with people from very different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds than their own (411 Productions, 2004).

Katz (2006) argues that this sort of access to the public environment allows children and adolescents to learn and internalize vital social skills, and build

autonomous social cultures (p. 115). Spaces like LOVE Park give teens the opportunity to explore 'individual and social imaginaries' in everyday spaces, free from the 'shackles of parental regulation' (Valentine, 1996, 2004; Aitken, 2001). Spaces in which unadultered social interaction occurs are especially important as opportunities for public, uninstitutionalized and unregulated play have become increasingly rare; most youth now only encounter peers in after-school clubs and organized sports (Valentine, 2004). The controlled environments of school clubs and supervised play represent additional sites "in the social and cultural landscape of childhood where adults try to shape children's use of space" (Smith and Barker, 2000, p. 246). By dropping children off at activities, as opposed to allowing them to discover and shape their own play environment (as in LOVE Park), parents are "robbing children of the opportunity to develop their *own* understanding of their local environment and giving them a dislocated sense of space" (Valentine, 2004, p. 74).

LOVE Park also represented a physical focal point for the skaters. The space was crucial to the skaters' understanding of urban space, as some of the best skaters would navigate the city on their boards and end up in the park. Their free movement through the city streets and sidewalks allowed them to develop 'natural mapping skills', as the skaters' transitory reading of the city was quite different from that of a pedestrian or vehicle passenger (Valentine, 2004, p. 74). Their understanding of the urban landscape allowed them to become more 'street literate' than other youth only able to experience the city intermittently. Their subsequent exclusion from LOVE Park and Center City has diminished their ability to develop these spatial skills and geographical knowledge (Cahill, 2000; Katz, 2006, p. 115).

Exclusion by Provision and Relocation

The City was able to publicly defend their decision by referring skateboarders to the existing, publicly-funded FDR Skatepark in South Philadelphia. While FDR Skatepark is a respected park in the eyes of the skateboarding community, the park is located over four miles from LOVE Park and Center City, and is thus inaccessible to many younger skateboarders (Franklin's Paine, 2006). Tucked underneath a bridge carrying Interstate 95, FDR Park has elements that allow for a very different type of skating than occurs in LOVE Park. While LOVE Park skaters perfected the art of street skating, using benches, rails and flat ground to complete tricks, FDR Park's ramps and pools only allowed for *transition* skating, a more fluid, faster style of skateboarding (Franklin's Paine, 2006). The two styles are quite different, akin to the discrepancy between figure and speed skating, or between long-distance cycling and BMX. Clothing styles, parlance, and equipment also differ significantly among the two styles.

With regard to the newly proposed Schuylkill River Skatepark, some critics have wondered whether the construction of the park was a trade-off granted by the City in exchange for an agreement to give up the fight for LOVE Park (Nugent, 2006). Indeed, the president of Franklin's Paine Skatepark Fund, which has raised the bulk of funding for the new skatepark, claims his group:

> fought hard to educate the City about LOVE and why it was important to skateboarding on an international level, to youth culture, and to attracting and retaining college graduates. At the same time, we never

> stopped advocating for a dedicated space for skateboarding in Center
> City, just in case the City never came through on allowing skateboarding
> at LOVE. Ultimately [though], that was like trying to be two voices at
> once … (Nugent, 2006)

While some skaters and advocates support the new skatepark, interviews showed
that some were wary of the very idea of a purpose-built park. In addition, studies
have shown that teenagers in general, and skateboarders in particular, value the
'natural terrain' of the urban landscape over programmed playgrounds and
parks, as the latter are seen to restrict their behaviour and control their activity
(Owens, 2001, p. 791; see also Thompson, 1998; Woolley & Johns, 2001). Skateparks
remove the freedom and spontaneity enjoyed by participants (Rebus, in Owens,
2001), and skateboarders are less likely to frequent these spaces that require
protective padding or require an entry fee, as opposed to those they discover and
make their own. In her extensive studies of children's recreation opportunities,
Owens (2001) describes how "skateboarders want a place to skateboard, but also to
be able to skateboard when and where they want", claiming that the construction
of skateparks place further control over the activities of teens and adolescents
(p. 791). Additionally, the provision of a purpose-built skatepark often enables
urban officials to better justify the prohibition of skateboarding in the plazas and
sidewalks *elsewhere* in the city (Woolley & Johns, 2001).

In the Philadelphia case, the location of the proposed Schuylkill River
Skatepark is also an important issue. The new park will be located just over a mile
away from LOVE Park on a patch of previously undeveloped land donated by the
City (see Figures 10 and 11). Although the surrounding environment is very
different from that around LOVE Park, many groups support its construction,
including the successful Skateboard Advocacy Network and Franklin's Paine
Skatepark Fund.

The City's 'exclusion by relocation' provided a skate*park* in place of a
skate*spot*. LOVE Park was simultaneously made available to the 'average citizen'
(see Judge Klein's quote above) as opposed to this counter-cultural group. By
providing a park where skaters cannot be seen except by visitors purposefully
doing so, officials also removed one of the important elements afforded by a space
like LOVE Park: the very visibility of the skateboarders themselves. Scholars have
written extensively about this concept of visibility and its relationship to
representation and citizenship in public space, and these topics will be discussed
further in the final section.

The design and development process for the new skatepark is also an
interesting topic. The City donated only the land for the skatepark and a start-up
grant of $100 000 (to commission preliminary architectural drawings), forcing
the advocate groups to finance the $4.2 million skatepark through private
donations alone. The Skatepark Fund has been quite successful so far, and hopes
to raise more funds from corporate donors (Van Allen, 2005). In fact, any donor
willing to bankroll the project gains naming rights to the park, similar to
stadium sponsorships like Petco Park, Heinz Field or Bank One Ballpark. Several
questions naturally surface. If corporations are considering funding the park,
what power and leverage will they be able to exert when decisions about its
design or future usage arise? In addition, with a donation of this magnitude, will
companies feel the urge to display advertisements and other corporate regalia in
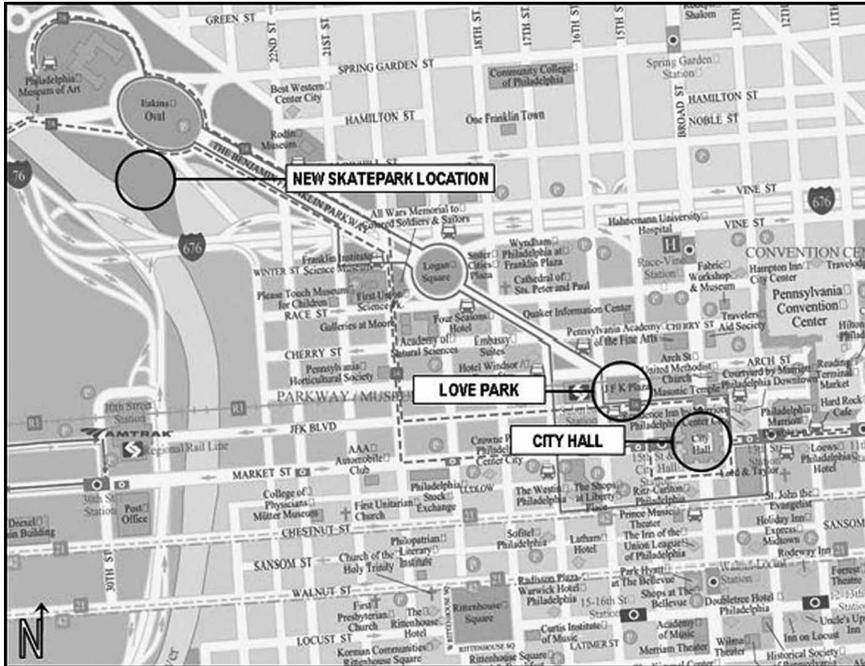the park?

Figure 10. Location of new skatepark. *Source:* base adapted from pcvb.org.

It is useful to look at the precedent of New York City, where the Department of Parks and Recreation recently hired a marketing director to guide the selling and sponsorship of park property to pay for daily operating costs of the city's public spaces. This marketing scheme resulted in "basketball backboards covered in advertising copy" and spaces rented out for weeks at a time for corporate events (Katz, 2006, p. 119). The City of Philadelphia has compelled the Skatepark Fund and others to raise this large sum of money, and advocates have been forced to turn to high-powered corporations to cover the park's hefty price tag.

Figure 11. Skatepark context. *Source:* skatenerd.com.

Creative Use of Urban Landscape

Although LOVE Park was created by architects and planners for the purposes of relaxation and respite, the skaters transformed the park into a space of creativity and exploration and an important youth icon: "Neither Vincent [Kling, LOVE Park's architect] nor I would have had the slightest premonition that our work would become world famous, and I think if we had tried to do something world famous, we would have missed" (Bacon in *LOVE Story*, 2004). Describing his concern for the recent events in the park, Bacon continues:

> I think that this issue is a very, very deep issue. It really is historically important. I think that the older generation of the physically incompetent has had a heyday, and I do not think the skateboarders yet have learned how to make themselves part of the ongoing society. And they have allowed themselves through the media and through the actions of old and perverted people to be categorized as dirty, irresponsible, knocking down old ladies, and a public nuisance, and it is the absolute reverse. It's really one of the most wonderful examples of their having created the whole thing themselves. (Bacon in *LOVE Story*, 2004)

Recent work describes the dynamism and energy that accompanies the spontaneous or alternative creation of space (Campo, 2002). Studies have shown that adolescents and teenagers prefer to appropriate their *own* spaces instead of "formally designated and provided play site[s]" (Valentine, 2004, pp. 75–76; see also Jones, 1997, Woolley & Johns, 2001).

The skateboarders made LOVE Park their own playground by utilizing the rails, benches and ledges to maneouvre themselves through space (see Figure 12). LOVE Park was important to skaters and the broader skateboarding community precisely *because* these teens had made it their own by using urban elements in an innovative and unintended manner. They showed appreciation for what the non-skateboarding residents had overlooked in the previously underutilized, concrete space in Center City (Howell, 2005). In this sense, the very meaning and nature of LOVE Park had been contested by these young people. The exclusion of the skaters was then justified because of their use of this landscape in ways that challenged the normative construction of the space (Nolan, 2003). LOVE Park was purified of the 'polluting presence' of this counter-cultural group, a process described as "the rejection of difference and the securing of boundaries to maintain homogeneity" (IHA, 2005b, para. 11; see also Sibley, 1988; Valentine, 2004). By removing the skateboarders from Center City and cordoning off their activity to the new skatepark, officials have strengthened the boundaries between skaters and non-skaters. Critically, this fragmentation of social activity serves to exacerbate suspicion, fear and perceptions of difference between these groups (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1996; Oc & Tiesdell, 1997).

Identity and Representation

Scholars argue that truly 'open-minded' public spaces present opportunities for discussion, deliberation and unprogrammed, spontaneous encounters with those maintaining diverse viewpoints on the world (Young, 1990, 2000; Mitchell, 1995a; Rogers, 1998; Blomley, 2001). For this reason, such spaces represent important sites of social interaction, in which personal identities are constructed through

Figure 12. Alternative use of elements. *Source:* roadkillskates.com.

contact with others, educating the city-dweller about the 'other' and teaching true urbanity (Rogers, 1998; Frug, 1999; Lofland, 2000; Young, 2000). The exclusion of certain individuals and groups from public spaces then becomes a question of citizenship, which consists of "the right to be considered in the range of forums, alliances and nodes which constitute governance" (Rogers, 1998, p. 206). The denial of access to, or inclusion in, public space then becomes a denial of citizenship and representation in the public forum. As citizenship and representation are directly related to visibility and to making physical appearances in public space, space cannot be called truly public if its "maintenance requires the marginalization or exclusion" of a particular constituency: in this case the skaters of LOVE Park (Valentine, 1996, p. 217; Arendt, 1958; Fraser, 1990; Young, 1990).

In the prevailing model of public space, dominant individuals and groups are protected from the "moral confusion that might result from an unmediated confrontation with social difference" (Jackson, 1998, p. 178). Indeed, controlled spaces allow for a separation of uses and users, as those leading lives of privilege rarely venture into the 'mean streets' of the city (cf. Young, 2000). Yet in ideal, truly inclusive public spaces, powerful groups are forced to become aware of existing inequalities and deal with such difference rather than detaching themselves from reality. Therefore, some argue that *only* in universally inclusive public spaces can marginalized groups claim space and be counted as legitimate part of the public (Mitchell, 1995a). The exclusion of skateboarders from LOVE Park signals the destruction of a public space that had been formed through the interaction of diverse groups staking such claims (Németh, 2004).

Conclusion

The story of LOVE Park is about much more than skateboarding. Rather, it is an important case with deep implications for how the uses and users of public space are treated in cities. To demonstrate the gravity and scale of this case, the story was set in the broader literature on exclusion, placing it within the growing scholarship on skateboarding and urban space. The article went on to outline the physical tactics used by the City to remove the skateboarders from the space, which were reinforced by a negative discourse portraying the skaters as unruly and disorderly (Howell, 2005). Attempting to uncover the City's genuine rationale for their actions in the face of unrelenting popular support for the skateboarders, it was proposed that the skateboarders' 'polluting presence' in LOVE Park did not support the City's desired image for their redevelopment efforts. This discussion was broadened to demonstrate how the skateboarders were only supported when they produced substantial exchange value for the City, either in the form of X-Games revenue or as the front line of the gentrification of Center City.

The next section of the paper detailed the various implications of the recent actions. It argued that LOVE Park was constructed as adult space, and in this context the young skateboarders were seen as out of place. The paper then revealed how the removal of the skaters from the space was detrimental to the social and emotional development of the youth, as the space has represented a stage for the performance of their social identities. Building on the literature on youth geographies, the piece argued that 'discovered' spaces like LOVE Park build natural mapping skills and geographic knowledge, and allow young people to come into contact with those very different from themselves.

Finally, the benefits and drawbacks of the new skatepark construction were debated. The paper broadly concluded that the City used the provision of the Schuylkill River Skatepark to draw attention away from the controversial action taken in LOVE Park. It also demonstrated that, in the skateboarders' opinions, the iconic space of LOVE Park could not be replaced, even by the new park and its world-class design. It showed how the space had attained worldwide status as a cultural landmark, and "just as [one] cannot move Independence Hall, we cannot move LOVE Park" (Sibley, 1988, p. 409; see also Valentine, 2004). Research was cited showing that street skateboarders prefer spontaneous skatespots as opposed to purpose-built parks with constrained hours and supervision by safety monitors and parents.

It is important to make clear that this issue has become so controversial and divisive because LOVE Park is the nexus of multiple groups, including homeless persons, skateboarders, local employees and tourists (Stratford, 2002). By defending the presence of certain groups while denying access to others, the City has prescribed a more narrow definition of the appropriate public for this public space. The LOVE Park skateboarders were successfully portrayed as irrational, disorderly and worthy of removal by Philadelphia's decision makers, and their exclusion diminishes potential opportunities for creative expression. Once a space where difference thrived, recent decisions have refashioned the LOVE Park into an unrecognizable space.

This paper has painted a rather bleak picture of the spatial politics of LOVE Park. But if it can be agreed that the meaning and nature of public space is constantly produced, reproduced, contested, negotiated and reconfigured (as they have been in this case), then it can also be argued that there will always be the

potential to defy the order imposed over a space, always a chance to overthrow this control (Mitchell, 2003). Put another way, our concern with control and exclusion "tells us nothing about how spaces can be appropriated and contested" (Lees, 1998, p. 250). Indeed, claiming the right to public space and to the city *requires* never taking that right for granted (Mitchell, 2003). Through legal briefs, nighttime skating sessions, and massive public protests, skateboarders and advocates have changed the terms of the debate, receiving overwhelming support for their struggle for the right to the space they had once called their own.

References

411 Productions (2004) *Love Story on Video (Winter), DVD*.

Aitken, S. (2001) *Geographies of Young People: The Morally Contested Spaces of Identity* (London: Routledge).

Anderson, C. (2003) Wheels of fortune shut out of LOVE Park?, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 30 May.

Anderson, C. (2004) Cover story: City to boarders and shoe $$: keep walking, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 2 June.

Arendt, H. (1958) *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Atkinson, R. (2003) Domestication by cappuccino or a revenge on urban space? Control and empowerment in the management of public spaces, *Urban Studies*, 40(9), pp. 1211–1245.

Blakely, E. & Snyder, M. (1997) *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution).

Blomley, N. (2001) Introduction, in: N. Blomley, D. Delaney & R. Ford (Eds) *The Legal Geographies Reader: Law, Power, and Space* (Oxford: Blackwell).

Borden, I. (2001) *Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture of the Body* (London: Berg).

Borden, I. (1998) An affirmation of urban life: socio-spatial censorship in the late twentieth century city, *Archis*, 5, pp. 46–51.

Bridge, G. & Watson, S. (Eds) (2000) *A Companion to the City* (Oxford: Blackwell).

Cahill, C. (2000) Street literacy: urban teenagers' strategies for negotiating their neighbourhood, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 3(3), pp. 251–277.

Campo, D. (2002) Brooklyn's Vernacular Waterfront, *Journal of Urban Design*, 7(2), pp. 171–199.

Central Philadelphia Development Corporation and Center City District (2005a) Residential Development: 1997–2005. Available at http://www.centercityphila.org/docs/ residentialdevelopment2005.pdf (accessed November 2005).

Central Philadelphia Development Corporation and Center City District (2005b) Website. Available at http://www.centercityphila.org (accessed November 2005).

Childress, H. (1999) *Modernist Missions: The Hidden Programme of Skate Parks and Youth Centres* (San Luis, CA: Jay Farbstein & Associates).

Churchman, A. (2003) Is there a place for children in the city? *Journal of Urban Design*, 8(2), pp. 99–111.

Cresswell, T. (1996) *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

Day, K. (1999) Introducing gender to the critique of privatized public space, *Journal of Urban Design*, 2(4), pp. 155–178.

Fainstein, S. (1994) *The City Builders: Property, Politics, and Planning in London and New York* (Oxford: Blackwell).

Fishman, R. (1987) *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books).

Florida, R. (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How it's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books).

Florida, R. (2005) *The Flight of the Creative Class: The New Global Competition of Talent* (New York: Harper Collins).

Flusty, S. (2000) Viewpoint: thrashing downtown: play as resistance to the spatial and representational regulation of Los Angeles, *Cities*, 17(2), pp. 149–158.

Franklin's Paine (2006) Franklin's Paine Skatepark Fund Website. Available at http://www. franklinspaine.org (accessed February 2006).

Fraser, N. (1990) Rethinking the public sphere: a contribution to actually existing democracy, *Social Text*, 25/26, pp. 56–79.

Frieden, B. & Sagalyn, L. (1989) *Downtown, Inc., How America Rebuilds Cities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).

Friends of LOVE Park (2004) Report and Site Change Proposal. Available at http://www.ushistory.org/lovepark/more/images/love_report.pdf (accessed November 2005).

Frug, G. (1999) *City Making: Building Communities without Building Walls* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Fyfe, N. & Bannister, J. (1998) The eyes upon the street: closed-circuit television surveillance and the city, in: N. Fyfe (Ed.) *Images of the Street: Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space* (London: Routledge).

Garreau, J. (1991) *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Doubleday).

Geringer, D. (2005) For few hours, they lift boards at Park, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 22 June.

Heller, G. & Hohns, A. (2003) Free LOVE Park! Available at http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~brisson/lsna/freelovepark.pdf (accessed November 2005).

Howell, O. (2005) The 'creative class' and the gentrifying city, *Journal of Architectural Education* (November), pp. 32–42.

Independence Hall Association (IHA) (2005a) The History of LOVE Park. Available at http://ushistory.org/lovepark/history1.htm (accessed November 2005).

Independence Hall Association (IHA) (2005b) Public Safety, Liability, and Why Here. Available at http://www.ushistory.org/lovepark/more/publicsafety.htm (accessed November 2005).

Independence Hall Association (IHA) (2006) Free LOVE Park Website. Available at http://ushistory.org/lovepark (accessed February 2006).

Jackson, P. (1998) Domesticating the street: the contested spaces of the high street and the mall, in: N. Fyfe (Ed.) *Images of the Street: Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space* (New York: Routledge).

Jones, O. (1997) Little figures, big shadows, country childhood stories, in: P. Cloke & J. Little (Eds) *Contested Countryside Cultures* (London: Routledge).

Judd, D. & Fainstein, S. (1999) *The Tourist City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press).

Katz, C. (1998) Disintegrating developments: global economic restructuring and the eroding of ecologies of youth, in: T. Skelton & G. Valentine (Eds) *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Culture* (London: Routledge).

Katz, C. (2006) Power, space and terror: social reproduction and the public environment, in: S. Low & N. Smith (Eds) *The Politics of Public Space* (New York: Routledge).

Lees, L. (1998) Urban renaissance and the street: spaces of control and contestation, in: N. Fyfe (Ed.) *Images of the Street: Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space* (New York: Routledge).

Lofland, L. (2000) Urbanity, tolerance and public space, in: L. Deben, W. Heinemeijer & D. van der Vaart (Eds) *Understanding Amsterdam: Essays on Economic Vitality, City Life and Urban Form* (New York: Het Spinhuis).

Logan, J. & Molotch, H. (1987) *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).

Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (1996) Cracks in the city: addressing the constraints and potentials of urban design, *Journal of Urban Design*, 1(1), pp. 91–104.

Loukaitou-Sideris, A. & Banerjee, T. (1998) *Urban Design Downtown: Poetics and Politics of Form* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).

Low, S. (2003) *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuit of Happiness in Fortress America* (New York: Routledge).

McCann, E. (2000) Race, protest and public space: contextualizing Lefebvre in the U.S. City, *Antipode*, 31(2), pp. 163–184.

Mitchell, D. (1995a) The end of public space? People's park, definitions of the public, and democracy, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 85, pp. 108–133.

Mitchell, D. (1995b) There's no such thing as culture: towards a reconceptualisation of the idea of culture in geography, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 19, pp. 102–116.

Mitchell, D. (2003) *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guilford Press).

Molotch, H. (1976) The city as a growth machine, *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(2), pp. 309–332.

Németh, J. (2004) Redefining security in public space: the case of LOVE Park, *IEEE Technology and Society*, 23(4), pp. 19–20.

News Forum (2004) Philly.com online poll. Available at http://forums.prospero.com/n/mb/message.asp?webtag = kr-localnews&msg = 1606.1&ctx = 1 (accessed February 2006).

Nims, J. (2002) Approaches to liability for the City of Philadelphia in the context of skatepark construction. Available at http://www.ushistory.org/lovepark/more/liability.htm (accessed November 2005).

Nolan, N. (2003) The ins and outs of skateboarding and transgression in public space in Newcastle, Australia, *Australian Geographer*, 34(3), pp. 311–327.

Nugent, B. (2006) People, plazas, politics: an interview with Josh Nims, *Focus Skateboarding Magazine*, January/February.

Oc, T. & Tiesdell, S. (Eds) (1998) *Safer City Centres: Reviving the Public Realm* (London: Chapman).

Owens, P. (1988) Natural landscapes, gathering places, and prospect refuges: characteristics of outdoor places valued by teens, *Children's Environments Quarterly*, 5(2), pp. 17–24.

Owens, P. (2001) Recreation and restrictions: community skateboard parks in the United States, *Urban Geography*, 22(8), pp. 782–797.

Pain, R. (2001) Gender, race, age and fear in the city, *Urban Studies*, 38(5–6), pp. 899–913.

Rogers, A. (1998) The spaces of multiculturalism and citizenship, *International Social Science Journal*, 156, pp. 201–213.

Ruddick, S. (1996) Constructing difference in public spaces: race, class and gender as interlocking systems, *Urban Geography*, 17(2), pp. 132–151.

Sennett, R. (1970) *The Uses of Disorder* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).

Sibley, D. (1988) Survey 3: purification of space, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 6, pp. 409–421.

Sibley, D. (1995) *Geographies of Exclusion* (London: Routledge).

Smith, F. & Barker, J. (2000) Out of school, in school: a social geography of out of school childcare, in: S. Holloway & G. Valentine (Eds) *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living, Learning* (London: Routledge).

Soja, E. (1989) *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso).

Stratford, E. (2002) On the edge: a tale of skaters and urban governance, *Social and Cultural Geography*, 3(2), pp. 193–206.

Strauss, R. (2002) Drop that skateboard. Uh, nevermind, *The New York Times*, 30 November.

Thompson, J. (1998) A good thrashing — skatepark design, *Landscape Architecture*, 8(3), pp. 78–100.

Valentine, G. (1996) Children should be seen and not heard: the production and transgression of adults' public space, *Urban Geography*, 17(3), pp. 205–220.

Valentine, G. (2004) *Public Space and the Culture of Childhood* (London: Ashgate).

Valnezuela, R. (2002) Love crimes, *Philadelphia City Paper*, 15–21 August.

Van Allen, P. (2005) Skate backers wheel, deal, *Philadelphia Business Journal*, 1 July.

Wagner, J. (2004) The myth of liberty place: race and public memory in New Orleans, 1874–1993, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of New Orleans.

Walzer, M. (1986) Public space: pleasures and costs of urbanity, *Dissent*, 33, pp. 470–475.

Wilson, E. (1991) *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, The Control of Disorder, and Women* (London: Virago Press).

Wilson, J. Q. & Kelling, G. (1982) Broken windows, *The Atlantic Monthly* (March), pp. 29–38.

Woolley, H. & Johns, R. (2001) Skateboarding: the city as a playground, *Journal of Urban Design*, 6(2), pp. 211–230.

Young, I. (1990) *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University).

Young, I. (2000) *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Zukin, S. (1991) *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).

Zukin, S. (1995) *The Cultures of Cities* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell).