



## **Policing of live music in England and Wales**

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# POLICING LIVE MUSIC

## WHO'S RUNNING THE SHOW?

LUCY BRYANT, FIRST YEAR PHD

### LIVE MUSIC POLICING IS NOT JUST BOUNCERS!

From government creating licensing legislation to CCTV capturing concertgoers – live music policing is a complex system involving state actors (like police and local councils), businesses (including live music venues and private security firms), and even members of the public.

### SO, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Some controversy surrounds this policing – including suggestions that police target "black or black inspired" genres (Talbot, 2011, 87) and that licensing and noise abatement powers are used excessively by councils in order to force venues to close to make way for new developments (e.g. Ellis-Petersen, 2014; Music Venue Trust, 2015, 18–9).



"They say they are trying to help us but they are not, they are trying to shut us down. Licensing...seems to be going to war on venues..."  
John McCooke, former London venue owner (Raffray, 2016).

### WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

Live music policing has never been analysed as a whole system. However, research into similar areas of policing in the night time economy (e.g. nightclubs) has found that policing here can exclude ethnic minority and lower income groups (Measham and Hadfield, 2009), and has led to "the criminalization of black spaces" (Talbot and Böse, 2007, 113). Further, it has been shown to contribute to gentrification, through the closure of subcultural venues (Talbot, 2006).

### WHAT DON'T WE KNOW?

#### KNOWLEDGE GAP:

Live music policing has never been studied as a whole system. Only isolated elements have been examined (e.g. the licensing process (Talbot, 2006)).

#### MY CONTRIBUTION:

To analyse the policing of live music as a whole system. This will allow us to understand not just how individual actors operate, but how their decisions affect each other, and how this might lead to the exclusion and closure of subcultural spaces that other researchers have identified.

### METHOD:

A study of a small number of London boroughs. Interviews with venue staff, private security, police, local authorities, artists, promoters, and concertgoers, plus observation of security procedures at live music events and analysis of licensing decision documents from councils and police.

Ellis-Petersen, H. 2014. Madame Jojo's, legendary Soho nightclub, forced to close. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/nov/24/madame-jojos-legendary-soho-nightclub-forced-close>. Accessed December 2017. / Measham, F. and Hadfield, P. 2009. Everything starts with an 'E': Exclusion, ethnicity and elite formation in contemporary English clubland. *Adicciones*, 21(4). / Music Venue Trust. 2015. Understanding small music venues. Retrieved from: [http://musicvenuetrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/music\\_venue\\_trust\\_Report\\_V5-1.pdf](http://musicvenuetrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/music_venue_trust_Report_V5-1.pdf). Accessed December 2017. / Raffray, N. 2016. 'Last live music venue in Kilburn 'under threat of closure''. Retrieved from: <http://www.kilburntimes.co.uk/news/last-live-music-venue-in-kilburn-under-threat-of-closure-1-4725670>. Accessed November 2017. / Talbot, D. 2006. The Licensing Act 2003 and the Problematization of the Night-time Economy: Planning, Licensing and Subcultural Closure in the UK. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 30(1), pp.159-171. / Talbot, D. 2011. The juridification of nightlife and alternative culture: two UK case studies. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 17(1), pp.81-93. / Talbot, D. and Böse, M. 2007. Racism, criminalization and the development of night-time economies: Two case studies in London and Manchester. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 30(1), pp.95-118. / Image credit: Dorothy Bryant, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/doffybryant/> / Design template from canva.com

# TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK

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