



REGULATING LIVE MUSIC: WHO'S RUNNING THE SHOW?

LUCY BRYANT, SOCIAL POLICY PHD STUDENT, L.E.BRYANT@LSE.AC.UK

[Police are] just shutting down the community the same way they used to go to an area and say, 'Oh, this is an ASBO area, everybody get off the street'. That's the same way we see them shutting down our raves.

Grime artist, JME (Noisey 2014)

What is live music regulation?

A complex system operating at national, regional, and local levels, involving state actors (like police and local councils) and private actors (like live music venues and private security firms).

Why research it?

We know controversy surrounds it – including concerns that police target “black or black inspired” genres (Talbot 2011 p. 87) and that commercial actors involved lack public accountability (Hadfield and Measham 2015).

What could we learn?

Plenty. Relatively little is known about how live music is regulated – which ‘problems’ are regulated, who is charged with their regulation, and who is targeted?

Wider lessons?

Features of live music regulation, like the heavy involvement of commercial and private actors, mean it offers a useful setting to explore contemporary policing, regulation and social control more broadly.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

HOW IS LIVE MUSIC REGULATED IN ENGLAND AND WALES?

- What are the areas and ‘problems’ regulated in this system?
- Who is responsible for this regulation?
- Who is subject to and targeted by this regulation?
- How do private and public actors operate and interact?
- How are formal and informal regulatory strategies deployed?
- How are regulator decisions made and motivated?

METHOD

Examining ‘cases’ of three local authority areas through semi-structured interviews with regulators and those regulated, documentary analysis of licensing decision documents, and observing other regulatory activity such as private security teams.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Responsibilisation

Local authority actor reported encouraging venues to manage own risk.

Closure

Musician told of local venue sold by council to private housing developer – now demolished.

Unawareness

Sound technician unaware of legal health and safety protections that apply to them.