A Mall, a Mosque and Martin Place:
Publics, publicness and urban space

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Statement of Originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University Digital Repository**, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Adam Tyndall

March 2013
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## Contents

Title Page ................................................................................................................................. i  
Statement of Originality ........................................................................................................... ii  
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................. iii  
Contents .................................................................................................................................... iv  
Abstract ...................................................................................................................................... x  
List of Figures ............................................................................................................................. xi  
Abbreviations .............................................................................................................................. xii  
Dedication .................................................................................................................................... xiii  

### Chapter One

1.1 A Fairey Tale .................................................................................................................................... 3  
1.2 Overview ....................................................................................................................................... 6  

### Chapter Two

2.1 Publics ........................................................................................................................................ 13  
2.2 What is Publicness? .................................................................................................................. 14  
   2.2.1 Coming to Terms with Publicness .................................................................................. 14  
   2.2.2 Maintaining a Distinction ............................................................................................... 18  
2.3 How Do Publics Work and for Whom? ..................................................................................... 20  
   2.3.1 The Liberal Public .......................................................................................................... 20  
      Arendt .................................................................................................................................... 21  
      Habermas ............................................................................................................................. 24  
   2.3.2 Questioning the Liberal Public ....................................................................................... 27  
   2.3.3 Subaltern Counterpublics and the Politics of Difference ............................................. 32  
      Fraser ..................................................................................................................................... 32  
      Young .................................................................................................................................... 35  
2.4 Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 39
Chapter Five

5.1  ‘It’s a public, I reckon’: Publicness and a shopping mall in Sydney ......................94

5.2  Making Space for a Consumers’ Public.................................................................96
    5.2.1  Enclosing the Market: Gruen’s vision (un)realised .................................96
    5.2.2  Creating the Enclosed Market .................................................................98
    The RPI and Institutional Investors .................................................................99
    The RPI and Retailers ....................................................................................100
    The RPI and Local Government ..................................................................101
    5.2.3  Controlling the Enclosed Market .............................................................103
    Architecture .................................................................................................103
    Regulation and Management .......................................................................104
    Leases ...........................................................................................................105
    Marketing the Mall .......................................................................................106

5.3  Between Traditional Public Space and the New Town Square .......................107
    5.3.1  Writing the Mall:
            From the end of public space to a new form of publicness ....................108
    5.3.2  What of Other Shopping Malls? .................................................................112

5.4  Being Public in the Consumers’ Republic ......................................................113
    5.4.1  A Consumers’ Public in Place—Westfield-Liverpool ............................114
    5.4.2  Engaging with the Consumers’ Public ....................................................119
    5.4.2  Time, Place and Publics .........................................................................120
    5.4.3  Security and (in)security .......................................................................121
    5.4.4  Consuming Politics .................................................................................126

5.5  Conclusion .......................................................................................................132
Chapter Six

6.1 ‘It’s a public space but one with certain ethical requirements’: .........................................
   Publicness and Auburn Mosque .........................................................................................135

6.2 Space, Religion and Publicness .........................................................................................137
   6.2.1 The Public vs. Religion? ..........................................................................................138
   6.2.2 Geographies of Religion Post-secularisation .........................................................142

6.3 A Place for Australian Islam ..............................................................................................147
   6.3.1 Australia’s Religious Landscape and Islam ............................................................148
   6.3.2 Australian Islam .......................................................................................................150
   6.3.3 Auburn and Islam .....................................................................................................154
   6.3.3 A Place for a Religious Public ................................................................................156
   6.3.4 Engaging with a Religious Public ..........................................................................160

6.4 A Public Ethic in Religious Space .....................................................................................161
   6.4.1 Enabling Australian Islam .....................................................................................161
   6.4.2 Bridging to Others .................................................................................................164
   6.4.3 An Ethic of Publicness ...........................................................................................166
       Time and Ritual .............................................................................................................167
       The Subject of Religion ...............................................................................................168
       Expecting a Culture of Place? ....................................................................................171
   6.4.4 Circulations of Muslim Publicness .........................................................................173

6.5 Conclusion ........................................................................................................................176
# Chapter Seven

7.1 Absence and Address in Martin Place .................................................................180

7.2 A Spectre and (Public) Space ..............................................................................183
   7.2.1 Derrida’s Spectre, Barnett’s Ghost ..............................................................183
   7.2.2 Grounding the Ghostly Public .................................................................187

7.3 The Place of Martin Place .................................................................................191
   7.3.1 The Materiality of Martin Place .................................................................192
   7.3.2 Connecting Martin Place ...........................................................................194
   - Economic Life ..................................................................................................194
   - Cultural Life .....................................................................................................196
   - Institutional Life ..............................................................................................199
   7.3.4 Martin Place and Global Sydney ...............................................................200

7.4 Chasing Two Ghosts in and around Martin Place .........................................205
   7.4.1 Sydney Festival ..........................................................................................206
   7.4.2 Stop Bush ..................................................................................................213

7.5 Conclusion ........................................................................................................230

# Chapter Eight

8.1 And Finally Fairey Again ..................................................................................234

8.2 Tracing Publicness, Thinking Publics ...............................................................236

8.3 Three Propositions ............................................................................................240
   - Beyond Categorical Practice and Place ..........................................................241
   - Beyond Presence and Absence ......................................................................242
   - Toward Process ...............................................................................................244

References .............................................................................................................246
Appendices

Appendix A: Westfield-Liverpool, Indicative Interview & Focus Group Schedules
A1. CBD Coordinating Manager (Planning)—Liverpool City Council ..................267
A2. Centre Manager—Westfield-Liverpool ..........................................................269
A3. Community Development Worker (Aged & Disability)—Liverpool City Council ...271
A4. Community Development Worker (Youth)—Liverpool City Council ............272
A5. Director of Tenancy Services—Australian Retailers Association ..............273
A6. Project Leasing Manager—Westfield-Liverpool ...........................................275
A7. Westfield Liverpool Focus Group—Seniors ..................................................277
A8. Westfield-Liverpool Focus Group—Youth ....................................................279

Appendix B: Auburn Gallipoli Mosque, Indicative Interview & Focus Group Schedules
B1. Secretary Auburn Gallipoli Mosque ............................................................282
B2. Strategic Planner Department of Planning and the Environment—
Auburn City Council ............................................................................................283
B3. Focus Group Auburn Gallipoli Mosque .......................................................284

Appendix C: Martin Place, Indicative Interview Schedules
C1. Communications and Events Manager—City of Sydney Council ..............286
C2. Head of Production—Sydney Festival ............................................................288
C3. Public Events and Film Liaison Manager—City of Sydney Council ............289
C4. Spokesperson NSW Council of Civil Liberties .........................................290
C5. Spokesperson Stop Bush Coalition ..............................................................292
Abstract

This work explores the relationship between publics, publicness and urban space. Its central argument rests on three assumptions about the nature of urban publicness: first, that publics are plural, being the collective expression of individuals’ many fleeting fidelities; second, that the boundary between public and private is porous and contextually determined and, crucially, there is a politics to how this boundary is defined, transgressed and traversed; and third, that publicness has no normative social or spatial idiom but it is shaped by publics’ encounters with others. Taking publicness as a contextually constructed process the thesis argues for a processual approach that attends closely to how publics come into being, in what spatial and political contexts, with the aid of what resources, and for what ends.

Using a case study approach I examine how three spaces in Sydney, Australia unsettle common understandings of the nature and processes of publicness and its association with space. In analysing the Westfield-Liverpool mall I deploy Foucault’s concept of heterotopia to argue that the shopping mall is a site of simultaneity: a privatized place where consumer culture coexists with various kinds of publicness. In exploring the Auburn Mosque I enlist post-secular theory to illustrate the intermingling of religion and a mode of publicness that is shaped by the ethical dimensions of religious life and the cultural expectations of place. In analysing Martin Place—a public square in Sydney’s CBD—I work with and against Barnett’s ghostly public to show how propinquity in public space can be both important and irrelevant to publicness.

Drawing from these cases I suggest the need to expand our concept of the spatial and social terrain of publicness to account for simultaneity of space and the plurality of publicness and the production of publicness as a process. Such an understanding maintains that space is neither public nor private but rather always potentially open to the processes of public making. However I insist that place still plays an important role in these processes. The texture of place shapes publicness by resonating with some publics and forms of publicness and not others, by affording opportunities for some types of address but also placing contextually -realised parameters on its nature and reach.
List of Figures

1.1 Time Magazine Cover, December 26, 2011, 178 (25)  
4.1 Research Methods and Case Studies  
5.1 Liverpool in relation to Sydney CBD and the wider metropolitan area  
5.2 Westfield Liverpool in relation to the mall and Northumberland St. before the redevelopment.  
5.3 Westfield Liverpool in relation to the mall and Northumberland St. after the redevelopment  
5.4 Section of Northumberland St purchased from Liverpool City Council  
5.5 Corner of Elizabeth and Bathurst Street.  
6.1 Auburn in relation to Sydney CBD and the wider metropolitan area  
6.2 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque and Auburn LGA  
6.3 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque (street view)  
6.4 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque (internal mezzanine level)  
6.5 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque (internal ground level)  
7.1 People cross on the corner of Elizabeth St and Martin Place  
7.2 Martin Place and Sydney CBD  
7.3 Office workers and tourists’ sit in the morning sun  
7.4 Armani Store, 4-10 Martin Place  
7.5 People watch the live production of Channel Seven’s Sunrise program  
7.6 Anzac Day Ceremony, Martin Place Cenotaph, 1930s  
7.7 Map of Declared and Restricted Areas, APEC Police Powers Act 2007  
7.8 Prohibited Items List, APEC Police Powers Act 2007  
7.9 Police Powers in Declared and Restricted Areas, APEC Police Powers Act 2007  
7.10 Stop Bush Coalition and NSW Police’s Proposed March Routes  
7.11 Timetable of negotiations between Stop Bush Coalition and NSW Police  
7.12 Police ‘roadblock’ barring access to Martin Place from Town Hall  
8.1 Sarah Mason photographed during the Occupy LA protest
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviations</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGM</td>
<td>Auburn Gallipoli Mosque</td>
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<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>BID</td>
<td>Business Improvement District</td>
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<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
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<td>FG</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
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<td>GPO</td>
<td>General Post Office</td>
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<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPR</td>
<td>National Public Radio (a non-profit public radio network in the USA)</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<td>PCYC</td>
<td>Police Citizens Youths Club</td>
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<td>RPG</td>
<td>Retail Property Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>RPI</td>
<td>Retail Property Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For a grandfather I never knew and to a daughter too young to know why.
Chapter One

A Fairey Tale
Figure 1.1. Time Magazine Cover, December 26, 2011, 178 (25).
Source: http://www.time.com/time/magazine/0,9263,760111226,00.html
Chapter One

1.1 A Fairey Tale

This thesis explores the relationship between publics, publicness and space. I write at an interesting time for work on publicness. In 2011 *Time* magazine’s person of the year was ‘The Protester’. An image produced by the artist Shepard Fairey adorned the cover, an artistically enhanced set of anonymous eyes peering forcefully between beanie and bandana (see Figure 1.1). In this issue, novelist Kurt Anderson collected and connected the disparate threads of public discontent in places like Tunisia and Egypt, New York and Athens, Moscow and Mexico. He argued that, after a period of public apathy and inertia, ‘the protestor once again became a maker of history’ (Andersen, 2011: para. 21). While Anderson’s assertion about the hiatus of the history-making capacity of protesters is arguable, and while protests represent but one facet of public life, the events at the heart of *Time*’s decision to make ‘the protestor’ its person of the year are pertinent here. For as disparate in location and different in politics as these publics were, the ways they gathered in space and addressed others suggests something else is occurring in contemporary public life: something apart from dystopian analyses’ proclamation about the decline and eventual death of public space and publicness. These demonstrations illustrated that although the instruments and intensity of publicness have changed, propinquity in place still retains an enduring political power.

In this thesis I explore the extent to which changes in the instruments of publicness (mediated and material) and in the inclinations of publics (relational and institutional) have made a qualitative difference to the relationship between publics, publicness and urban space. I do so by examining how three very different urban spaces—a shopping mall, mosque and public square—facilitate publicness in ways that at times unsettle common understandings of the nature and processes of public life. By emphasizing that publicness is a contextually constructed process, I hope to provoke a new discussion about, and instrument for engaging with, the politics of public space (Low & Smith, 2005).
Ever since Peisistratus centralised the organs of Athenian government in the agora, the notion of an open and engaging public realm has been considered to be an essential institution of liberal democracy. The time when our polities were modest enough to gather in a central space and decide on how, and by whom, we are to be governed has long since passed. Yet the idea of interacting in place, with others, still resonates with much of how we think about political and social life, a sentiment reflected in the intense debates on the urban public realm in recent decades.

In 1962, Arendt (1958 [1998]) published The Human Condition and was quickly followed by Habermas’s (1962 [1992]) The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. Both argued that social rather than political life had triumphed at the expense of the health and utility of public life. Jane Jacob’s (Jacobs, 1962 [2002]) account of the destruction of urban community in The Death and Life of Great American Cities spatialised many of their concerns. In the 1970s, with the publication of The Fall of Public Man, Richard Sennett (1974 [2002]) added his voice to those troubled by the dynamics of the contemporary public realm. Together these works identified a change in the parameters and processes of public life as the institutional, economic, social and spatial fabric of post-war prosperity were increasingly called into question.

In the early 1990s, as waves of neoliberal market reforms washed through our cities and societies, privatisation became the focus of two searing critiques of contemporary public space—Davis’s (1990) City of Quartz and Sorkin’s (1992) edited work Variations on a Theme Park. These authors predicted the death of public space under the influence of neoliberal urbanism. Similarly, Zukin’s (1995) The Cultures of Cities, documented the impact that private control of public space, under the guise of civility and security, was having on public culture. Coupled with work like Putnam’s Bowling Alone (1995), collectively these authors exposed the alienating, commercialised and sometimes draconian aspects of contemporary public life.

For the most part, these dystopian predictions about the death of public space proved to be premature and as we entered a new century the critique continued, although the tenor of the debate and the instruments of inquiry were incrementally altered. Don Mitchell (2003), inspired by Lefebvre’s (1996) Right to the City, wrote a passionate
account of urban publicness in the wake of September 11, exploring the tension between public order and the right to public space. Five years later, he and Lynn Staeheli (2008) examined the influence that property relations have on the use of public space in The People’s Property, while in The Politics of Public Space Low and Smith (2005) explored the link between urban publicness, privatisation and global political economy. Together these works wrestled with the emerging economic, institutional, and legal production of public space in the newly neoliberal city. More recently, work on the urban public has emphasized the discursive, processual and contextual qualities of the relationship between publics, publicness and space (see Barnett, 2008; Iveson, 2007, 2009; Mahony, Newman, & Barnett, 2010; Staeheli, Mitchell, & Nagel, 2009). Whilst these approaches reflect distinct empirical engagements and theoretical dispositions, there has been a discernable shift away from topographic approaches to public space and toward processual approaches to publicness—a shift away from place and toward process.

This research draws on the movement in current scholarship on processual understandings of publicness. These processual understandings emerged from critiques of normative analysis with its focus on traditional public space and conventional expressions of publicness. Instead, processual approaches begin with the premise that space is always potentially open to, and free to be enlisted in, the practices of publicness. The focus of such an approach, then, is on the conditions under which collectivities coalesce and address and the role space plays in this process. I explore and activate this approach via three case studies that represent distinct and diverse examples of publicness in place. These case studies—based on a mall, mosque and a traditional public space called Martin Place, all in Sydney, Australia—unsettle common understandings of the nature and processes of urban publicness.

This exploration is based on three tenets about the nature and processes of urban publicness: first, drawing on Young (1990) and Fraser (1990), publics are plural and temporal, being the collective expression of individuals’ many fleeting fidelities; second, the boundary between publicness and privateness is porous and contextually
determined and, crucially, there is a politics to how these boundaries are defined, transgressed and traversed; and third, that publicness has no normative social or spatial idiom but is a contextually dependent process shaped by publics’ encounters with others.

Theoretically the work draws on the use of several key concepts to expand the processual approach and engage with how publicness is expressed across the cases. Deploying Foucault’s concept of heterotopia I argue that the shopping mall is a site of simultaneity, a place of consumer culture but also a place that engenders a mode of publicness that complicates the separation of consumption from social life. In my second case, I enlist post-secular theory to illustrate the intermingling of religion and publicness in a mosque, a place that facilitates a publicness shaped by the ethical dimensions of religious life and the cultural expectations of place, a place that collects and connects publics. In my final case, I work with and against Barnett’s ghostly public I show how propinquity in place can be both important and irrelevant to publicness. Using Iveson’s notion of political labours as an instrument of inquiry, I show how absence from Martin Place does not necessarily make it irrelevant to some forms of publicness. Together these insights extend the boundaries, question the causalities and ask us to reconsider the how and where of publicness.

1.2 Overview

I now outline the structure of the thesis and the core arguments of each chapter. My intention is to engage with the relationships between publics, publicness and space in a manner that enables new thinking and suggests new approaches to the politics of public space. What follows is an artifact of my engagement with these relationships across three case studies. The thesis is structured accordingly; it mixes theory with concepts and case studies. The arguments about the processes of contemporary publicness accumulate from one chapter to the next as insights from one case inform and educate those that follow.
In Chapter 2 I explore the meaning of publicness and the operations of publics. I do so by considering the etymology of publicness—how meanings attributed to publicness first emerged and subsequently evolved. I argue that how we define publicness is a relational and sedimentary product: relational because what we understand as publicness is determined by how we understand privateness and sedimentary because our current understanding of publicness is a product of successive layers of meaning deposited over time. These layers of meaning are constantly reconfigured but charting their past enables us to better understand the present meanings of publicness. I use the work of Arendt (1958 [1998]), Habermas (1962 [1992]) and Sennett (1974 [2002]) for this task. I begin with the supposed egalitarian roots of publicness in the Athenian city-state, move to its republican and representative expression in the Roman republic, and then examine its history during early capitalism when the bourgeois sought to separate the public from the state by repositioning it in civil society. Whilst acknowledging that distinguishing between public and private in the current context is a task fraught with complications and inconsistencies, I take my cue from Young (1990) and Warner (2005) and argue that maintaining a distinction between publicness and privateness still serves useful analytical concerns, even when this distinction is only ever contextually determined, because it enables the work to explore the politics behind deeming some activities, collectivities and spaces public.

I then consider two conceptual frameworks associated with publicness. I distinguish between what I characterise as the liberal public models of Arendt (1958 [1998]) and Habermas (1962 [1992]) and the plural models of Young (1990) and Fraser (1990). I begin with the liberal model and its emphasis on the normative, rational and universal in public life. I then consider literatures that are critical of the liberal view on the basis of its historical accuracy and the equity of rationality and the common good. I settle on the plural models of Young (1990) and Fraser (1990) as alternatives to the liberal model, and argue that the idea of plural publics is better equipped to contend with the complexity and diversity of contemporary public life. From this I take two key concepts about the nature of public life into the remainder of the work: first, an understanding of publicness as relative and contextually dependent, built upon a porous boundary between itself and privateness; and second, a plural model of public life based on the
notion that urban publicness is the product of many publics interacting in and with a diverse and differentiated terrain.

In Chapter 3 I review the urban public realm literature beginning with the archetypes of public space: those spaces traditionally associated with publicness—the agora, forum, coffee house and town square. I argue that these spaces remain powerful tropes for contemporary work on the urban public realm, manifest in the dystopian accounts of contemporary public life that shaped debate on public space and publicness. In this literature public spaces are used as normative models against which the authenticity and efficacy of contemporary public spaces and publicness are compared (Davis, 1990; Sorkin, 1992). Drawing on a series of arguments garnered from more recent research, I illustrate how this dystopian movement was premature in its predictions of the death of public space and unnecessarily nostalgic about the nature of public life in our distant past. I conclude by considering how the rise of what Crang (2000) dubbed the ‘electronic agora’ challenges the primacy of co-present, embodied exchange as the most effective and authentic form of publicness. I argue that the advent of this aspatial public has changed rather than superseded co-present publicness in the city. Ultimately I argue for a processual approach to the analysis of publicness, an approach that appreciates the role place plays in shaping publicness but also recognises the capacity for publics to influence and alter their context. My contention is that publicness has no normative spatial or social idiom but rather that publicness is molded by the practices of publics in place. The emphasis in this approach is on the processes of publicness as it is enacted in place rather than on those spaces and practices that conventionally have been associated with publicness.

Chapter 4 presents my methodological approach to investigating the relationships between publicness, publics and space. I outline a research agenda designed to anticipate the diverse ways publicness is enacted in, across and through a variety of spaces. Inspired by Setha Low’s (2000) On the Plaza, the chapter sets out an approach with an ethnographic sensibility. I justify the case studies that are used in the thesis by arguing that they provide distinct and diverse renditions of publicness in place. I document the development of the project as situated in a wider political and personal
context, which influenced the spaces chosen, and the approaches taken in each case. In this chapter I also detail how each component of the research—interviews, focus groups, document analysis and observation—enabled my encounters with these places, publics and forms of publicness and helped inform the conceptual discussions that follow.

Chapter 5 presents the first of three case studies. It centres on the Westfield-Liverpool shopping mall in Sydney’s southwest. For many, the shopping mall is symptomatic of a contemporary public life that is less open, engaging and egalitarian than the past. Whilst not deaf to the criticisms of quasi-public space, this chapter shifts the analytical focus away from normative notions of how public space should be, and where publicness should happen, to consider how publicness is enacted in place. The chapter explores literatures critical of the neo-liberalisation of the urban public and the rise of the quasi-public landscapes of the contemporary city. I question the basis of these critiques by considering the extent to which they rely on nostalgic imaginings of past public places. Using Foucault’s concept of heterotopia as a guide I uncover a space of complexity, diversity and simultaneity, a space that is used by different publics for diverse purposes—purposes that straddle social and commercial life. My argument is that this space facilitates a form of publicness influenced but not overwhelmed by consumerism. I argue that this necessitates a re-imagining of what we consider the terrain of publicness to take into account the heterogeneous qualities of quasi-public spaces.

Chapter 6 develops this theme further by considering the role religious space plays in facilitating some forms of publicness. The case presented in this chapter is based on case study of Auburn Gallipoli Mosque—a suburban mosque in Sydney’s southwest. I begin by considering the historical basis for the separation of publicness and religion in the West. I argue that this divorce is an artifact of the political philosophy of liberalism which itself is a product of the particular histories and circumstances of seventeenth-century Europe. Using post-secular theory as a guide, I question this distinction by considering how a religious and thus notionally private space may foster and facilitate forms of publicness. I ultimately argue that this religious space bonds a diverse public
together, connects it to others, and promotes religious practice exacted at the scale of the subject that disrupts liberal understandings of the relationship between publicness and space. I ask again, this time in the context of the postsecular city, for us to reconsider the terrain of publicness. My point is that in a context where, for many, religion continues to shape social life, notions of the urban that are deaf to religious place and practice are insufficient models for contemporary publicness.

Whereas Chapters 5 and 6 seek to expand the terrain of publicness to encompass places and practices hitherto not considered public, Chapter 7 explores the relationship between a traditional public space—Martin Place in Sydney’s CBD—and two moments of publicness. The chapter begins theoretically with Barnett’s notion of the ghostly public, a notion of publicness that downplays the role of place in publicness (Barnett, 2008). Excited by the possibilities of this notion, but ultimately unfulfilled by its extremities, I temper this approach by arguing that there is a texture to place that influences the nature of some forms of publicness. I rest on Iveson’s (2007) notion of political labours as a means of engaging with the transient nature of contemporary publicness and the role of place within this process. These concepts are explored through two publics which sought to use Martin Place as a platform for address. The first, The Sydney Festival—a public arts event—was able to enact its public in Martin Place. The second, Stop Bush—a protest movement—was not. However, I show that while Stop Bush protesters were barred from using Martin Place they drew on the symbolic and amplific capacities of Martin Place to address a wider public. By comparing the relative success of these two publics I show how Martin Place was an important resource used by both to address a wider audience and thus enact, and articulate, a particular form of publicness. Rather than assess the efficacy and equity of urban publicness based on measures of presence or absence in specific places, I suggest that we should attend to the processes of address and how these intersect with the resources of place. Ultimately, I argue that publicness is an inherently political and strategic process that uses space as one of its resources of articulation.
Finally, the conclusion weaves together these concepts and case studies to suggest that we expand the spatial and social terrain of publicness to account for the simultaneity of space and the plurality of publicness. I insist that place still plays an important role in the articulation of publicness, that publicness is a process influenced by the context of its articulation, and that the texture of place shapes publicness. Thus, conceptually and empirically I argue that we should attend closely to how publics come into being, in what contexts, with the aid of what resources, and for what ends. We need to ask why some forms of publicness resonate with some spatial forms and not others. What is it about the material, mediated, relational and institutional resources associated with some places that engender particular forms of publicness? I argue that a processual approach can answer these questions, being an approach lithe enough to deal with the multiple relations and resources that produce publicness while also being cohesive enough to make some sense of the interplay of these dimensions.
Chapter Two

Publics
Chapter Two

2.1 Publics

In this chapter I explore the meaning of publicness and the operations of publics. I begin by charting how meanings associated with publicness have developed and evolved over time. In doing this I show how publicness is defined by its association with privateness. Ultimately, I contend that the boundary between publicness and privateness is porous and that this boundary is shaped in context rather than being predetermined and perpetually fixed. This relational understanding has clear implications for work on urban publicness. It expands the terrain of public life and demands that spatial analysis considers how publicness is expressed within particular spatial and social contexts. I then reflect on two models of public life—the liberal public of Arendt and Habermas and the plural model of Fraser and Young. Conscious of the liberal public’s shortcomings, I choose the plural model as the conceptual framework best equipped to engage with urban publicness. Again, this colours the analysis that follows by demanding a consideration of the operations and interactions of diverse publics in place.

In Section 2.2, I explore the notion of publicness, considering how its meaning has evolved over time. I argue that publicness is a social condition open to changes in the social and material context of its articulation. Importantly, I contend that defining the boundary between publicness and privateness is an inherently political task aimed at achieving particular ends. In Section 2.3, I consider two models of public life: first, the liberal public of Arendt and Habermas; and second, the plural publics of Fraser and Young. From this exploration I take two key concepts about the nature of publicness that informs the remainder of the thesis: first, I adopt an understanding of publicness as a relative and contextually dependent social condition that relies on a fluid and porous boundary between itself and privateness; and second, I settle on Young and Fraser’s plural model of public life based on the notion that publicness is the product of diverse publics operating and intermingling in an equally diverse terrain of contemporary public life. These concepts provide a basis for the processual approach that I activate in the remainder of the thesis.
2.2 What is Publicness?

In this section I trace how key authors on public life have defined publicness from its origins in the Greek *agora* to the present day. In the process I show that publicness is an evolving social condition open to changes in society and the material context of its articulation. In documenting this history I consider the politics behind clearly defining and delineating between publicness and privateness. I argue that this is not a benign task but rather an inherently political exercise, because to bestow public status on an object, subject or action is to lend it a degree of legitimacy and thus political and social power. Aware of this process, I settle on an understanding of publicness that is contextually and relationally derived but which nonetheless delineates between the two. I maintain a distinction between publicness and privateness because it allows the work to consider what struggles over publicness reveal about the politics of place.

2.2.1 Coming to Terms with Publicness

Work on urban publicness is both troubled and enriched by the ambiguity associated with its vernacular—it is tricky to contain. It is often positioned as visible, open, collective, political, masculine, rational, and superior. In contrast, the private has often been portrayed as hidden, closed, individual, domestic, feminine, commercial and emotive (Arendt, 1958 [1998]; Habermas, 1962 [1992]; Hannay, 2005; Sennett, 1974 [2002]; Warner, 2005). As Staeheli et al. have argued there is ‘slipperiness as to how the terms are used’ (Staeheli et al., 2009: 634). This ‘slipperiness’ gives voice to the interaction of particular subjects, objects and ways of being. What is public can mean many things simultaneously. It can denote a group of people, a way of being, a place, and a process of communication. As Barnett states; ‘Public refers not just to a subject of action, and not just an object of action, but it also refers to a particular medium through which action should be conducted’ (Barnett, 2008: 3).

So the relationship between publicness and privateness comes with a necessary tension because neither is defined in isolation but is coupled with the other. At times a change in the characteristics of one colonises the territory of the other, forcing us to
reconsider the boundary and relationship between these social condition, and to reassess the characteristics of each of them (Fraser, 1990; Kirby, 2007; Sheller & Urry, 2003, 2004; Warner, 2005). The characteristics of publicness and privateness are the product of particular ideas and understandings of space, culture and history. As Warner suggests,

Almost every major cultural change—from Christianity to printing to psychoanalysis—has left a new sedimentary layer in the meaning of the public and the private. In modern contexts, the terms have been used in many different and overlapping senses, combining legacies from classical thought and law with modern forms of social organisation (Warner, 2005: 28).

This ‘sedimentary’ understanding of publicness and privateness logically leads us to consider its origins in Western thought and the subsequent changes that have deposited meaning and altered our understanding. Below I trace the historical tension between public and private as it developed in the West from its Greek and Roman origins, through to the newly mercantile and industrialised Europe of the 19th century, and onward to its contemporary iteration. I do so because of the implications these historical understandings have for contemporary analysis of urban publicness. How we understand publicness influences how and where we expect it to emerge and be expressed in spatially.

One of the key themes of Arendt’s (1958 [1998]) The Human Condition is the changing nature of the relationship between the public and the private. Arendt traces the development of publicness and privateness, beginning with the establishment of the Athenian city-state. According to Arendt, the Greeks considered the public as the social realm par excellence. Thus the public was the realm of freedom where the interaction of equals in the presence of others took place, whereas the private was the realm ‘of the strictest inequality [where] …freedom did not exist’ (Arendt, 1958 [1998]: 32). The Greeks did not attribute the private with any meaning in its own right but rather it signified a privation—an absence of the favourable characteristics attributed to the public: “Privacy was like the other, the dark hidden side of the public realm” (Arendt 1958: 64 see also Warner 2005). For Arendt, the nature of the relationship
between public and private changed first with the rise and decline of the Roman Empire, and then altered again when Christianity and feudalism replaced it.

Arendt argues that Roman understandings of the public reflect the nature of the Roman state and the changing expectations of Roman political life. The Latin *publicus* was associated with concepts of openness and common interest. However, unlike the Greeks, the Romans did not consider the public as the interaction of equals, and nor did openness and common interest extend to their politics. In contrast to Greek understandings, the *res publicas* was conducted by the elite on behalf of the masses. The public was thus associated not with open and equal participation but rather came to be associated with those events—trials, debates, spectacles—that remained open to the people (Hannay, 2005). Arendt traces the changing nature of the relationship between public and private by arguing that the Romans had an understanding of the role and importance of the private as a necessary and sacred realm which coexisted with the public (Arendt, 1958 [1998]). However, as Rome shifted from monarchy to republic to empire, the *res publicas* became associated less with the virtues of Roman public life and more with the corruption of imperial elites. Consequently, Sennett (1974 [2002]) argues, Romans increasingly retreated into the certainties, introspection and individuality of private life.

For Arendt (1958 [1998]) and Sennett (1974 [2002]) after the fall of Rome the public became associated with the obligatory, the religious and the ceremonial. This was transferred to Western culture via Roman law under feudalism where the public was limited to those practices which legitimised aristocratic rule (see also Bowring, 2011; C. J. Calhoun, 1997). Alternatively the private expanded in both scope and significance to absorb and negate the public. For instance Arendt argues that the medieval concept of the common is not the recognition of a common politics but rather only that individuals have common interests (Arendt, 1958 [1998]). Sennett (1974 [2002]) develops this further by arguing that in the nineteenth century the public came to be associated with that which is open and observable, while the private came to mean privileged and important.
In his now famous *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas argues that in the fourteenth century the relationship between public and private evolved in response to the emergence of early finance and trade capitalism. According to Habermas, in this period the public no longer came to be associated with the feudal court. Instead, the development of the press and the emergence of a mercantile class broke the public away from the state and sovereign and aligned its interests with an emerging middle class (Habermas, 1962 [1992]). Consequently the private, through the development of civil law, came to represent the rights of individuals to pursue their own affairs free from the interventions or imposition of the state. There are echoes of this sentiment today, particularly in the United States of America, where privateness is associated with liberty and freedom from state intervention (Dewey, 1927 [1991]; Tocqueville, 1838 [2003]). This concept of the public as liberated from the state and church remains a bedrock of liberal theory today (Rawls, 1993).

Moving on from Habermas, Sennett (1974 [2002]) argues that changes in the eighteenth century brought about by the industrial revolution introduced new and complex sets of labour relations, new forms of social organisation and urban form that again changed the relationship between publicness and privateness. This period heralded an unprecedented growth in domesticity related to the reconfiguration of domestic life with the uncoupling of the formerly domestic of the domestic functions of production, exchange and consumption from the home. Critically, these domestic activities were assigned different localities in the urban form and reified as either public or private pursuits. The private realm was reconstituted as the locale of consumption and reproduction, whilst the public came to be associated with the production, association and politics of the factory, club and government (Bowring, 2011; C. J. Calhoun, 1997; Carr, Francis, Rivlin, & Stone, 1992). The outcome, according to Sennett (Sennett, 1974 [2002]), was that the public came to encompass a certain cosmopolitan sociability located outside of the private sphere of friends and family where ‘the claims of civility—epitomized by cosmopolitan, public behavior—were balanced against the claims of nature—epitomized by the family’ (Sennett, 1974 [2002]: 18).
All three authors—Arendt, Habermas and Sennett—argue that the relationship between public and private deteriorated in the nineteenth century when the prestige of the public realm declined and increasingly the private realm came to represent a refuge from a morally inferior and hazardous public (Sennett, 1974 [2002]). For Arendt this led to the ‘rise of the social’ in public life; for Habermas it meant the emergence of irrationality; and, for Sennett it meant an atomisation of everyday life and a crippling of emotional connection. All are at best pessimistic about the nature of the relationship between public and private and its implications for contemporary public and political life.\(^1\) I return to this pessimism later in this chapter but for now it is enough to note that the meaning of publicness and privateness has evolved in response to changing social, technological and crucially political conditions. Additionally, it is important to note that for each of these authors publicness is a social condition associated with some spatial form, albeit a social condition that is open to change. In the following section I consider how any formulation of publicness is an inherently political exercise.

### 2.2.2 Maintaining a Distinction

Aware of the historical evolution of publicness, some have challenged how it is defined and thus questioned where the boundary lies between public and private life. The rise of identity politics—feminism, civil rights, queer politics—and their campaigns on issues such as domestic violence, race and sexuality has expanded and reconfigured our understanding of what is public and private. The private and personal in many instances has become public and political (Fraser, 1997; Walzer, 2002; West 1995; Young, 1990). The complexity of the relationship between the two is captured by Warner who argues:

> Despite the self evident clarity of the distinction, different senses of public or private typically intermingle in this way. A private conversation can take place in a public

\(^1\) However, Habermas has tempered his initially dystopian conclusions. See “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere” in Calhoun, C (ed). 1997. *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.
forum; a kitchen can become a public gathering place; a private bedroom can be public and commercial space, as in a hotel; a radio can bring public discussion into a bathroom and so on (Warner, 2005: 27).

This complexity and ambiguity has led some to call for the two to be collapsed as they no longer reflect the complex and interrelated nature of contemporary political or social life (Horwitz, 1982). For these authors, public and private are blurred to the extent that they are neither empirically nor epistemologically distinguishable. Many question the hierarchical pre-eminence of public over private that is an assumption of Habermas and Arendt’s analyses (Fraser, 1990; Weintraub & Kumar, 1997; Young, 1990). Instead they call for a focus on the interaction between two equally important spheres. The focus is then on how the boundary between them is determined in context. But despite emphasising a relational and non-hierarchical understanding of public and private, others argue that delineating between publicness and privateness whilst being conscious of their relational and contextual construction serves important conceptual and empirical ends. They argue that revealing the processes and negotiations behind how publicness is defined reveals something about the politics of place.

For instance, Warner suggests that ‘attempts to frame public and private as a sharp distinction or antinomy have invariably come to grief, while attempts to collapse or do without them have proven equally unsatisfying’ (Warner, 2005: 29). Likewise, Young argues that

there are good theoretical and practical reasons to maintain a distinction between public and private, [however] this distinction should not be considered as a hierarchical opposition corresponding to oppositions between reason and feeling, masculine and feminine, universal and particular (Young, 1990: 119).

In line with Warner and Young, I argue that delineating between publicness and privateness in a given context provides a useful tool for thinking through the politics of place. Given that publicness (and thus privateness) is a historically constructed social condition the boundary between publicness and privateness should be conceived as porous, co-constitutive, non-hierarchical and politically derived. For the purposes of
this thesis publicness and privateness are taken as social conditions in flux, open to changes in the socio-cultural, economic and technological terrain of place, conscious of their construction as products of intellectual histories and political imaginings. What is regarded as public in a shopping mall is different to what is deemed as private in a mosque or traditional public square. Equally those practices considered private in a mosque are different from those in a mall or traditional public space. Crucially, these practices are recorded in different registers specific to their contexts. Publicness thus has a contextual character and so the boundary between itself and privateness is not pre-determined or settled but worked through in place. This understanding of publicness lends itself to work that is less concerned with categorical schemas and focuses instead on how practices of publicness transgress, alter and confuse the boundary it shares with privateness.

2.3 How Do Publics Work and for Whom?

Defining publicness is an inherently political exercise that conveys legitimacy and helps set the terms of public and political life. Equally, how we conceive of publics, how we characterise their operations and purpose and whom we include in their collectivity comes with its own set of power relations. In this section I present two models of public life with a mind to understanding how these may inform work on urban publicness. I begin with the liberal model of Habermas and Arendt and their formulation of a universal, rational public. I then consider critiques of the liberal model and furthermore the pluralist alternatives of Young and Fraser. My purpose here is to settle on a model of public life that educates the empirical exploration that follows.

2.3.1 The Liberal Public

The notion of the public has long been associated with the project of liberalism. Despite this long history the liberal public is best thought of as a product of a particular conception and set of practices rather than a taken-for-granted project of modernity.
The liberal public is based on a set of assumptions about the nature of the subject, rationality and the distinction between public and private. In the liberal tradition, the public subject is often positioned as universal, rational and singular. Subsequently, the liberal tradition’s emphasis on the rationality of the subject places great importance on the efficacy of rational and critical debate in public life. Consequently under liberalism the public and private are clear, normative and empirical categories. The public is often positioned in territory separate from both the state and the market where rational discussion in the interests of the collective trumps personal or sectarian interests. This notion is predicated on a clear boundary between public and private. These assumptions about the individual and the boundaries between publicness and privateness leads liberal theorists to certain conclusions about how publics work, who constitutes the public and who benefits from its activity.

In the following, I explore two treatments that draw on the liberal tradition— Hannah Arendt’s *The Human Condition* (1958 [1998]) and Jürgen Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*² (1962 [1992]). Arendt’s and Habermas’s models differ in some key areas. Arendt focuses on Athenian notions of deliberative democracy where the state represents the people’s wish to govern themselves, whereas Habermas focuses on the development of a bourgeois public that carved out a place for itself free from the state and sovereign. Critically however, each shares an enthusiasm for a past model of public life against which they compare contemporary publicness and both emphasise the political and ontological role of public debate.

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*Arendt*

In his introduction to Arendt’s posthumously published *The Promise of Politics* Jerome Kohn (2005) reminds the reader that Arendt is a ‘difficult thinker’. She is an author who has enjoyed periods of intellectual popularity due in part to the attention she pays to the workings of democracy, but she has also been accused of elitism because

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² These two theorists by no means represent the totality of liberal renderings of the public, however arguably they are the most influential. For instance, John Rawls (1993, 1999) and Anthony Giddens (1994, 1998, 2000) also deal with the notions of the public.
of the conclusions she draws about the efficacy of popular democracy. Her political philosophy belies easy categorisation and her philosophy is not without controversy or critique (Bowring, 2011). Despite this, for many Hannah Arendt’s concept of political community which she developed in *The Human Condition* (1958 [1998]) represents the first liberal reading of the public.

Arendt traces the development of the public and its relationship with Western thought from its origins in Greece through to its evolution in both Roman and contemporary democratic practice. In the process Arendt maps what she regards as the decline of public culture due to what she calls ‘the rise of the social’. ³ For Arendt the unique social and economic structures of the Athenian city-state enabled the development of the public as a realm free of the necessities of life and thus committed completely to the political. So the public first emerged in Greek thought in association with the rise of the Athenian city-state and the foundation of the *polis*. The Greeks, according to Arendt, considered the public as the social realm *par excellence*, a realm of freedom and interaction among political equals. In contrast the private was ‘the other, the dark hidden side of the public realm’ concerned with the reproduction, consumption, death, and the subjectivity and emotion of individual thought (see also Hill & Arendt, 1979). Ontologically Arendt assumes that humans are inherently public by nature and human reality is relationally derived through public speech, which she groups under *Vita Contemplativa* and public action which is included as part of her *Vita Activa*. For Arendt ideas, objects and relations are brought into the ‘world of appearances’ in the presence of others (Arendt, 1958 [1998]). The public is therefore, of critical importance to the subject as the medium through which an objective and accurate reality is formed:

> To men [sic] the reality of the world is guaranteed by the presence of others ... and whatever lacks this appearance comes and passes like a dream, intimately and exclusively our own but without reality. We establish the reality of the world when we collectively create a space of appearance within which it appears to us all as a public

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³ A term she uses to describe the intrusion of personal life into the public in modern society under market capitalism.
object, and is seen and examined by us from our diverse perspectives (Arendt in Parekh, 1981: 97).

This ontology leads Arendt to conclude that a lack of diversity in public life leads humans to construct incomplete realities and under-developed intellects, allowing for the development and perpetuation of oppression and exploitation, for “Like all human capacities the capacity to think needs nourishment and support which can only be provided by the presence of men [sic] taking diverse points of view” (Parekh, 1981: 98). Arendt’s ontology permeates her politics and what she sees as the proper role of public life.

Like her counterpart Habermas, Arendt argues that political community is best understood as a process of humans conducting their common affairs by public discussion and debate. Through this process the community reaches a procedural consensus that is embodied in authoritative laws—so order and justice are secured by citizens undertaking to obey the laws they have decided to give themselves (Arendt 2005). In Arendt’s vision, reconciliation of diverse interests is achieved by citizens debating and discussing their opinions, making an effort to look at the world from others’ points of view and arriving at a tentative consensus (Parekh 1981). Arendt’s model shares a characteristic common to all liberal conceptions of publicness and that is the notion of a rational public self able to cast aside subjective interests in the cause of the common good.

Arendt compares contemporary public life against her agonal model and finds it wanting. She is pessimistic about the direction of politics and the role of the public in contemporary society, arguing that the ideal public which existed in the Greek agora has deteriorated under the influence of Rome, Christianity and the market economy. For Arendt the expansion of the private in contemporary society, the infiltration of the economy and emotion into public discourse in what she calls ‘the rise of the social’, is indicative of a broader decline in the quality of contemporary public life. For Arendt, the decline of the public realm in modern liberal democracy has had the effect of privatising the polis, diverting individuals’ energies and ambitions into emotive, economic, and ultimately non-political pursuits:
with the emergence of mass society, the realm of the social has finally, after several centuries of development, reached the point where it embraces and controls all members of a given community equally and with equal strength (Arendt, 1958 [1998]: 41).

Arendt argues that the egalitarian influence of the ‘rise of the social’ has led to conformity and mediocrity in public life. In a theme she develops later in The Origins of Totalitarianism (1967) Arendt argues that the rise of the social and the subsequent devaluing of public life lends itself to ‘the despotism of an individual or [the totalitarianist impulses of] majority rule’ (Arendt 1958 [1998]: 43). Arendt’s suspicion of majority rule has led some to regard her as a republican rather than a democratic thinker. Despite this, Arendt concludes that the changing nature of public life in contemporary society has altered the democratic process from a deliberative and participatory model in the former to a ‘representative’ and fundamentally undemocratic structure in the latter. At its worst it has provided the basis for the excesses of totalitarianism.

In The Human Condition (Arendt, 1958 [1998]) Arendt presents a concept of a singular public modelled on a particular place and spatial form—the Athenian agora. Her work points to an idealised past and uses this as the basis for analysing contemporary public life. For Arendt individuals create, understand and govern the world through rational discourse in the company of equals. Arendt shares with Habermas a focus on the power of rationality. It is to Habermas’s model of the bourgeois public sphere that I now turn.

Habermas

Along with Arendt’s work, Habermas’s The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (1962 [1992]) represents one of the most important theoretical works on the liberal public. Writing only years after the publication of The Human Condition,

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4 For example Clive Barnett (2008) categorises the work of Hannah Arendt as constituting a forum model of publicness, while Habermas (2002) argues elsewhere that her work reflects a form of civic republicanism.
Habermas analyses the origin and development of a bourgeois public sphere as it emerged in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this work Habermas retraces the history of the bourgeois public back to the advent of early finance and industrial capitalism in the thirteenth century and its spread from the city-states of Italy to the rest of Europe (Habermas 1962 [1992]). For Habermas the opportunities afforded by early industrial capitalism created a new mercantile class that became economically independent from the state and sovereign. According to Habermas, increasingly these individuals questioned the intervention and legitimacy of the traditional state. In response they sought to create a public apart from both the private realm of the *domos* and the hereto-public realm of the state, a sphere of private people coming together as a public; [whereby] they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor (Habermas 1962 [1989]: 27).

For Habermas two elements were crucial in the creation and constitution of the bourgeois public: first, the development of an independent press, and second, the civic associations that gathered in the salons and coffee houses of Europe (La Vopa, 1992). The development of the press helped constitute the bourgeois public by granting a culturally autonomous medium separate from the state, in the same way that the salon and coffee house provided a place of public autonomy apart from the privateness of home and the sovereignty of traditional public space (C. J. Calhoun, 1997).

Like Arendt, Habermas argues that the defining characteristic of the bourgeois public was ‘people’s public use of reason’ where, guided by notions of objective truth and common interest, private individuals formed a public by engaging in a process defined and informed by rational and critical debate. Habermas argues that the nature of this communication negated the social status of those involved and focused the attention of individuals on the validity of the arguments used rather than the identity of the speaker or the private interests of the listener (Calhoun, C. 1997). This notion of the
transcendental and transformative capacity of communication is developed further in Habermas’ later two-volume work *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Habermas, 1984).

However, for Habermas the bourgeois public has not been a realisation for modernity. In an argument resembling Arendt’s ‘rise of the social’, he argues that the decline of a critical public life was precipitated by the disintegration of the boundaries between the state and society. Relying on a fixed notion of the delineation of public and private, the ‘social structural transformation’ of the public sphere has seen the dual process of an increasingly interventionist state intruding into the private and the intrusion of private organisations into the public, the most pertinent example being the rise of the welfare state, which Habermas argues has served to depoliticise the public by making the allocation of needs a bureaucratic rather than democratic consideration. For Habermas, a public life based on rational critical debate has given way to a culture of consumer individualism and political apathy. Habermas concludes that this has had dire consequences for liberal democracy where the concept of an objective common interest has been replaced with ‘a confused pluralism of competing and equally legitimate forms of life’ (Habermas 1997: 445). Habermas argues that the result of a shifting of the boundaries between public and private has been the commercialisation, pacification and atomisation of public life and discourse.

Both Arendt and Habermas’ liberal publics are based on certain assumptions about the nature of the public subject and the boundary between public and private. Both Habermas and Arendt hold up the vision of a past public as an ideal model of public life. These models favour rationality and consensus as the vernacular of public life. They both see publicness as superior to privateness and politics as superior and distinct from personality. In both imaginations, the distinction between public and private is intelligible and necessarily clear. However, both argue that this boundary has been breached in contemporary society with detrimental effects on the nature and

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1 For Habermas communicative action represents a medium through which enlightenment principles of truth, rationality and critique maintain political and social significance in a ‘posttraditional society’ (Habermas 1984).
quality of contemporary public life. This liberal model of the public is not without its critics however, and it is to these voices of dissent that I now turn.

2.3.2 Questioning the Liberal Public

Beginning with the publication of Negt’s and Kluge’s (1972 [1993]) *Public Sphere and Experience*, the liberal public has been under question for some time. Critiques reflect shifting notions of what constitutes the public brought about by the rise of identity politics, the blurring of conceptual boundaries between public and private associated with the intellectual movement of post-structuralism and changing understandings of subjectivity and group affinity. In what follows these critiques of the liberal public are presented as three key arguments. The first questions the historical validity of the liberal public. The second critiques the liberal public’s positioning of public discourse as a normative value. And the third presents arguments which question the liberal public’s notions of consensus and the common good as normative and necessary products of public life.

The first critique of the liberal public is based on historically grounded work which questions the nature and characteristics of the public as imagined by liberal theorists. Principally this work draws on gender, class and race to argue that, rather than being universal and normative, both the bourgeois public and the Greek *polis* were bodies based on the exclusion of large sections of European and Athenian society. For example, Habermas’s bourgeois public has been criticised for ignoring the importance and contribution of that diverse gender- and class-based publics had for those outside the bourgeois public (C. J. Calhoun, 1997; Fraser, 1990; Negt & Kluge, 1972 [1993]). In her influential paper *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, Fraser argues that Habermas’s bourgeois public was not only ‘simply an unrealised utopian ideal … [but] also a masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule’ (Fraser, 1990: 62). Equally, critics of Arendt argued that her idealisation of the Greek *polis* (and to a lesser extent the founding of the republic of the United States America) fails to adequately appreciate the extent to which both were constituted by exclusivity (Benhabib 1992, 2000, Parekh 1981). As Arendt readily admits, the Greek public sphere’s emancipation from the ‘realm of necessity’, was contingent not only on
the exclusion of the majority of Greeks who were not citizens but also on the existence of a vast slave population. Equally the American Constitution was formulated by representatives of the new republic, none of whom were African American, ‘Indian’ or female (Benhabib, 2003; Bowring, 2011; Parekh, 1981).

These critiques are supported by work which has identified how alternative publics have worked alongside the so-called universal public sphere. Ryan’s (1997) study into the conduct of women’s groups in North America illustrates that female charity organisations, clubs and societies not only developed and made coherent specific gender concerns but also performed important pragmatic roles in welfare, education, protest and petitioning (see also Baker, 1997; Eley, 1997; La Vopa, 1992; Schudson, 1997). The work of Negt and Kluge in Public Sphere and Experience (1972 [1993]) illustrates how the formation of class-based publics contributed to the development of a welfare state open to all eligible citizens. This work calls into question the liberal public appropriateness as a normative model of public life which arguably overplays the universality of the liberal public and is therefore overly critical of contemporary public life. Consequently Benhabib has accused liberalism of being trapped in what she dubs a ‘nostalgic trope’:

where once there was a public sphere of action and deliberation, participation and collective decision making, today these no longer is one; or, if a public sphere still exists, it is so distorted, weakened and corrupted as to be a pale recollection of what once was. Whether one chooses the Athenian polis as a paradigm, or looks at the experience of republican city-states in the Italian Renaissance; whether one locates the authentic public in the coming together of private persons of the Enlightenment to use their ‘private reason to discuss public matters’, or whether one idealises the New England town meetings, there is always a curious “what was then and what no longer is” quality to these theories (Benhabib 2000: 203-204).

For Benhabib and others, the supposed universality of the liberal public is an incorrect record of history and it represents a political strategy aimed at marginalising alternate voices. By defining publics as universal, singular and rational, alternate publics and
forms of publicness are ignored and delegitimated in a favour of normative ideals that never existed.

The second key criticism of the liberal public is based on a critique of the notion of public communication as a normative and objective value in public life. Negt and Kluge ([1972] 1993), Mouffe (2000, 2005), Young (1996) and Walzer (2002) have all argued that the transcendent quality of public discourse, central in both Arendt and Habermas’s liberal publics, is based on a particular process of social interaction which serves as an instrument of exclusion and segregation rather than an artifact of inclusion, objectivity and universality. These critiques have been informed again by class, gender, racial and queer perspectives. Essentially they contend that the modes of communication often associated with the liberal public—rationality, modesty, objectivity—rather than being universal, are affective and exclude those modes of public engagement most often associated with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds.

For example, Negt and Kluge argue that working class forms of communication are excluded from bourgeois publics which operate according to a specific ‘economy of speech’ which ‘presupposes special training, both linguistic and mimetic’ (Negt & Kluge, 1972 [1993]: 45). In contrast they argue that proletarian publics communicate in a style which is self-reflexive and emotive, and offers listeners moments of participation, comment and cooperation which are deemed inappropriate in bourgeois publics such as television, town hall meetings and schools. For Negt and Kluge, both the context and method of public discourse serve to exclude proletarian understandings of public discourse and so illustrates the political structures inherent in the supposedly objective process of communication under liberalism.

Nancy Fraser’s (1990) work mirrors this critique by drawing on feminist and subordinate group understandings of public discourse. Fraser illustrates the ways in which the liberal public’s mode of communication serves as an exclusionary process aimed at certain political ends which both silence and devalue minority groups and their modes of engagement. Like Negt and Kluge, Fraser argues that communication in the liberal public is
governed by protocols and style and decorum that were themselves correlates and markers of status and inequality. These functioned informally to marginalize women and members of the plebeian classes and to prevent them from participating as peers (Fraser, 1990: 63).

Fraser goes on to cite research which suggests that during inter-gender meetings, men tend to interrupt women and speak more than women, and that women’s interventions are often ignored or not responded to during public debate. In addition she cites research on the public discourse of subordinate groups which suggests that they are often overlooked, ignored or misinterpreted in their engagement with liberal publics. She concludes that the objective ‘bracketing’ of identity essential to the liberal public is not objective at all, but rather serves to advantage dominant groups’ modes of public discourse and is thus the articulation of a certain politics shaped by relations of power (Fraser 1990).

These identity and class-based critiques of liberal public discourse can be combined with more recent work which has sought to reinstate the importance of affective and passionate engagement as legitimate modes of public discourse. Typically these critiques have drawn on the concept of the subject as discursively constituted to suggest that the objectivity of the liberal public and subject is socially and therefore politically constructed. Mouffe, for instance, argues that the concept of objective and reasonable argument must be rethought in favour of ‘a new conception of argumentation that takes into account the nature of hegemonic articulatory practices’ (Mouffe 2002: 148). From this basis she argues that, rather than eliminating passion and affective forms of public communication, these modes of public discourse should be mobilised for democratic purposes, opening the liberal public to diverse subjectivities and group affinities. Similarly, in Passion and Politics Walzer argues against the notion of public communication as ‘a matter of calm deliberation’ (Walzer, 2002). He contends that liberalism’s focus on dispassionate discussion fails to recognise the value of emotive argument:

passionate intensity has its legitimate place in the social world, not only when we are ‘getting money’ but also when we are choosing allies and engaging opponents. This
extension of rational legitimacy to the political passions seems to me a useful revision of liberal theory, which has been too preoccupied in recent years with the construction of dispassionate deliberative procedures (Walzer, 2002: 628).

Educated by political discourse on the right, which he argues served to polarise ‘the public’ by using emotive rhetoric, Walzer calls for an extension of the liberal model of public discourse to engage with political passion as a legitimate form of public discourse. These critiques all share an interest in expanding the idiom of public life to include dialects of emotion, personality and passion.

The third and final critique of the liberal public I address here arises from work which has questioned Arendt’s and Habermas’s appeals to the enlightenment notions of the common good and the public interest as valid political outcomes. Authors such as Mouffe (2005) and Garnham (1997) have argued that, given the complexity of contemporary public life, enlightenment notions such as the common good or public interest are at best naïve and at worst ideological categories used to clothe the interests of the powerful and articulate. They argue that this aspect of the liberal public model fails to take account of competing or antagonistic interests that are not satiated by liberalism’s call for consensus. In the same sense critics have challenged the idea that citizens can remain objective when debating issues critical to their existence (Fraser, 1990; Iveson, 2000). This has led authors such as Mouffe (2005) to argue that:

the belief in the possibility of a universal rational consensus has put democratic thinking on the wrong track. Instead of trying to design institutions which, through supposedly ‘impartial’ procedures, would reconcile all conflicting interests and values, the task for democratic theorists and politicians should be to envisage the creation a vibrant ‘agonistic’ public sphere of contestation where different hegemonic political projects can be confronted (Mouffe, 2005: 3).

This runs counter to the Arendtian vision of a political community based on citizens undertaking to obey the laws they have decided to give themselves. It also rubs against the Habermasian concept of the ‘ideal speech situation’ where individuals cast aside their own interests and personas and submit to the force of the better argument. For
authors like Mouffe this denies the unfinished nature of the political and the necessary and ongoing antagonism of public life. The liberal public has been criticised for its focus on universality, rationality and the common good at the expense of diversity, affectation and minority interests. In the following section I explore the responses of Fraser and Young to these criticisms and their attempts to conceive of a model of public life based on the recognition and operations of just subaltern counterpublics.

2.3.3 Subaltern Counterpublics and the Politics of Difference

In contrast to the liberal public of Arendt and Habermas much recent work on the public has stressed the plural rather than the universal in public life. Building on critiques of the liberal public this model is based on three propositions about the nature of contemporary public life. The first is an understanding of the relationship between public and private which is porous, relational and contextual rather than clearly defined. The second stresses the complexity, duplication and plurality of subjectivity and group affiliation. And the third argues for the value of affective and emotive as tones worthy of public life. Again, as with the liberal public, these assumptions colour the nature of the conclusions drawn by these theorists, how they see these publics at work, who is included and who benefits from their activities. In what follows the work of Nancy Fraser (1990) and Iris Marion Young (1990) are examined as plural alternatives to the liberal publics of Habermas and Arendt.

*Fraser*

Fraser’s short but influential essay *Rethinking the Public Sphere* (1990) represents one of the first works on plural understandings of public life. Fraser’s model builds on critiques of the liberal public, its history, rationality and tendency to work in favour of dominant groups. Given this, Fraser seeks a new model of publicness able to engage with the diversity and complexity of contemporary public life. She argues that Habermas’s theory of the bourgeois public bemoans the state of contemporary life yet
leaves critical theory without ‘a conception of the public sphere, that is sufficiently
distinct from the bourgeois conception to serve the needs of critical theory today’
(Fraser 1990: 58). In its place, Fraser argues for a pragmatic understanding of publicity
which is conscious of inequity but also dedicated to cultural diversity. She contends
that in diverse and complex societies ‘arrangements that accommodate contestation
among a plurality of competing publics better promote the ideal of participatory parity
than does a single, comprehensive overarching public’ (Fraser 1990: 66). She proposes
therefore a post-bourgeois concept of publicness that recognises the role of what she
calls subaltern counterpublics. Fraser cites the historical existence of alternative
groups of publicness, arguing that ‘members of subordinated social groups—women,
workers, people of color, and gays and lesbians—have repeatedly found it
advantageous to constitute alternate publics’ (Fraser 1990: 67).

These subaltern counterpublics are defined as parallel discursive spaces which expand
the terrain of public life by providing members of subordinate social groups space to
organise, articulate and project their concerns into dominant publics. Fraser argues
that this process enables subaltern counterpublics the opportunity to make their
identity-specific concerns public concerns. To illustrate this point she uses the
organisation, articulation and projection of women’s rights groups’ concerns about
domestic violence as an example. She argues that what was previously conceived of as
an identity-specific concern was, via a sustained and organised struggle, adopted as a
‘mainstream public issue’ (Fraser 1990). In using this example Fraser shows the impact
that subaltern publics have on public life and crucially, the porous border between
publicness and privateness. In revealing how the boundary between public and private
is created and maintained, Fraser unveils the political structures that are deployed in
arguments that actively construct what is public and private in particular contexts.

Fraser’s public is plural but with a dedication to the potential for publics to talk back to
dominate public structures and in doing so; talk across lines of cultural diversity’ (1990:
69). She concludes by calling for an exploration and consideration of the notion of
weak publics that enable affinity and opinion formation without decision-making
power and strong publics which facilitate both opinion formation and decision-making power:

A post-bourgeois conception would enable us to think about strong and weak publics, as well as about various hybrid forms. In addition, it would allow us to theorize the range of possible relations among such publics, thereby expanding our capacity to envision democratic possibilities beyond the limits of actually existing democracy (Fraser 1990: 76-77).

For Fraser, weak publics are collections of subordinate individuals who through their collectivity, speak with and/or against strong publics where both discourse and decision-making takes place. Fraser recognises the power relations at play in public life and fashions a model of publicness designed to recognise diversity while looking for equitable outcomes. For Fraser, the concept of a universal public is both historically inaccurate and intellectually flawed. Her work is born of a critique of the liberal public and introduces notions of power into analysis of public life. She argues for a concept of public life which is open to both diverse publics, and to considerations of what their relative power, weak or strong, might mean for democratic practice. For Fraser, publicness must be expanded to include subaltern and counterpublics but not without considering how each is shaped by questions of social justice, equity and distribution. Hers is an explicitly political understanding of the formation of publics and publicness. Fraser’s work suggests that alternate spatial and social forms must be part of considerations of contemporary publicness. She compels us to consider alternate sites of publicness that exist in spite of and alongside dominant imaginations of contemporary public life. Similarly, Young recognises the importance of plurality in public life and explores the interrelationship between subjectivity and collective membership. And she endeavours to construct a model of public life animated by a concern for creating a society that recognises justice and respects difference. Importantly Young, more so than Fraser, is explicit about the role urban space plays in fostering contemporary public life.
As the name suggests, *Justice and Politics of Difference* is Iris Marion Young’s (1990) attempt to construct a model of public life able to accommodate issues of social justice while maintaining a respect for difference. Young’s is an eclectic study, inspired by aspects of the critical theory of Arendt and Habermas but equally animated by anti-essentialist understandings of subjectivity, group affinity and justice. Young’s work covers a vast scope of inquiry—including labour relations and cultural expression—however one of her key concerns is on the role of publics in contemporary political life.

Young’s understanding of publics is based on the assumptions she makes about the nature of the subject and subjects’ fealty and connection to many publics. For Young, the subject is discursively produced and contextually constituted while group affinity is both plural and temporal. For Young these affinities are diverse and fundamental components of publics that cannot be cast aside in the interests of rational debate. She argues that the essentialist understandings of group affinity that the liberal public relies upon legitimise the oppression of some while reinstating the advantage of others:

Oppression has often been perpetrated by a conceptualization of group difference in terms of unalterable essential natures that determine what group members deserve or are capable of, and that exclude groups so entirely different from one another that they have no similarities or overlapping attributes. To assert that it is possible to have social group difference without oppression, it is necessary to conceptualise groups in a much more relational and fluid fashion (Young 1990: 47).

Young shows how definitions of group difference and how the boundaries of collectivity are determined, is an inherently political exercise. Like Fraser, Young argues that the concept of universal liberal public suppresses difference by rendering it either non-existent or inappropriate, and thus serves the interests of dominant publics. She argues that this is achieved by ideological means, in particular via the moral paradigm

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6 For example Young (1990) shares Habermas’ contempt for welfare capitalist society which she argues has depoliticized the public by leaving issues of redistribution and power as functions of the state.
of impartiality as the idiom of public life. For Young, impartiality creates a false
dichotomy between the universal and particular, the public and the private, reason
and passion. In doing so it ‘masks the ways in which the particular perspectives of
dominant groups claim universality, and help justify hierarchical decision making
structures’ (Young 1990: 97). For Young, liberalism’s focus on a universal public ignores
the complex social reality of contemporary public life. In a crucial turn to the spatiality
of publicness she argues that:

theorizing which defines the political in terms of a public tends to assume a unitary
public sphere structured in face-to-face relations. It is important to observe that public
life in our society, to the degree that it exists at all, fails to meet these conditions.
Public discussion led by insurgent movements most often occurs not in some single
assembly but in a heterogeneous proliferation of groups associations, and forum, with
diverse perspectives and orientations. A single public discussion, moreover, facilitated
by print and electronic media, may take place over months or even years, and involve
persons separated by vast spaces who never meet one another. What makes a
discussion public is neither unity nor proximity, but the openness with which it takes
place (Young, 1990: 88).

Young points out that in contemporary society the liberal public does not operate in
the manner of the idealised coffee house or agora. She points out that relations of
contemporary forms of publics are complex assemblies of temporal and spatial form, a
point I deal with explicitly and extensively in Chapter 3. In place of the universal public
Young argues that ‘the meaning of “public” should be transformed to exhibit the
positivity of group differences, passion and play’ (Young 1990: 97). In contrast to
liberal understandings she argues for a fluid, non-hierarchical understanding of public
and private:

Those seeking the democratization of politics in our society, in my view, should
reconceptualise the meaning of public and private and their relation, to break
decisively with the tradition of Enlightenment republicanism. While there are good
theoretical and practical reasons to maintain a distinction between public and private,
this distinction should not be considered as a hierarchical opposition corresponding to
oppositions between reason and feeling, masculine and feminine, universal and particular (Young 1990: 119).

Fraser rejects binary and hierarchical thinking that contrasts public and private in favour of a concept of publics and publicness that recognises their interaction, their diverse spatialities, the social construction of boundaries, and the diverse identities of their individual and multiple group affinities. In addition to calling for a fluid understanding of the relationship between public and private, Young calls for a politics of difference, arguing ‘that sometimes recognizing particular rights for groups is the only way to promote their full participation’ (Young 1990: 11). She suggests that public life consists of a plurality of publics and diverse groups should be provided with settings that facilitate interaction. In Young’s model, publics ‘do not stand in relations of inclusion or exclusion, but overlap and intermingle without becoming homogenous’ (Young 1990: 239). Rather than undermining democratic structures she contends that such a model is essential to a working liberal democracy:

the critical activity of raising issues and deciding how institutional and social relations should be organised, crucially depends on the existence of spaces and forums to which everyone has access. In such public spaces, people encounter other people, meanings, expressions and issues which they may not understand or with which they do not identify (Young 1990: 240).

Like Fraser, Young’s vision of a plurality of public life is tempered in her later work Inclusion and Democracy (2002) where she considers the dangers of sectarian pluralism. She argues that publics should have some obligation to interact with other publics and some sense of collectivity:

Unless multiple spheres are able to communicate with and influence one another, however, they are only parochial separatist enclaves with little role to play in a process of solving problems that cross groups, or problems that concern relations among groups. Inclusiveness in democratic processes, then, suggests that there must be a single public sphere, a process of interaction and exchange through which diverse sub-publics argue, influence one another, and influence policies and actions of state and economic institutions. The public is open in the sense that its diverse elements are
porous to one another, as well as in the sense of its stage are being exposed to the view of anyone (Young 2000: 172).

Perhaps more so than any of the other models of public life discussed to this point, Young’s plural public model is crucially a spatial vision based on the efficacy of urban life. For Young difference and diversity are essential to what makes urban spaces interesting and draws people out in public to them. For Young,

city life is a being together of strangers, diverse and overlapping neighbours, social justice cannot issue from the institution of an Enlightenment public. On the contrary, social justice in the city requires a realisation of a politics of difference. This politics lays down institutional and ideological means for recognizing and affirming diverse social groups by giving political representation to these groups, and celebrating their distinctive characteristics and cultures (Young 1990: 240).

Young’s vision of public life, then, is of a discursive and spatial ‘being together of strangers’ (Young 1990: 240). This, she argues, is the most effective means of building a vibrant public life. Young argues for a vision of public life which replaces liberal idealism with a politics of difference that not only recognises but values diversity. Young argues that this model of public life is better suited to maintaining and valuing diversity and delivering socially just outcomes.

Both Fraser’s and Young’s models of public life are based on their criticism of liberalism. Both are concerned with creating a model of public life which is open to difference but also concerned with justice. Both question liberalism’s focus on a universal public, arguing that this conception must be expanded to include subaltern and counterpublics which have through history been sources of both identity and strength for diverse interest groups. Finally, their models of public life recognise the relationship between diverse and dominant publics. And pertinently for Young the plural model is rooted in the opportunities, uncertainties and spatialities afforded by urban public life.
2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the meaning of publicness and how it is imagined to operate. I began by considering how publicness has been characterised and how this has evolved over time via the work of Arendt, Habermas and Sennett. Each of these authors traces how traditional understandings of publicness evolved in response to changing political, social and importantly spatial circumstances. However, work critical of the tendency in liberal theory to value publicness over private concerns has questioned the distinction between these two spheres and furthermore the efficacy of keeping them apart. Interested by calls not to prejudge the relative importance of public and private, but ultimately unconvinced of the need to abandon the distinction between these spheres, I side with Warner and Young by insisting that maintaining some distinction between publicness and privateness serves useful conceptual and analytical purposes. From this I adopt two theoretical positions which are applied to the case studies that follow. First, I hold that publicness is a relational, contextually determined social condition, a product of the porous boundary it shares with privateness. Its meaning is derived not from the idealised past but is best understood as the product of political processes of the present. Second, I insist that maintaining a distinction between publicness and privateness enables the work to contend with what the particularities and expectations of publicness in a given context reveal about the politics of place. Critically, our focus must be on how this is determined in different settings and at different times.

I then considered two models of public life, the liberal public models of Habermas and Arendt and the plural models of Fraser and Young. After outlining Arendt’s and Habermas’s liberal public I moved to criticisms of this approach and consequently the plural alternatives of Fraser and Young. I settled on the plural models of Fraser and Young as conceptual understandings of publicness best suited to activating and enabling a processual approach to publicness. From this exploration I took the view that contemporary publicness is the creation of many publics bringing diverse idioms of engagement to bear on urban life. Again, there are political and empirical consequences to adopting such an approach. A pluralist understanding demands that we consider the interaction and interrelationships that exist between dominant,
counter and subaltern publics in place. In Chapter 3 I focus intently on the spatial implications of these conceptual understandings, in effect tracing how many of these ideas have shaped spatial analysis.
Chapter Three

Spaces for Publicness
Chapter Three

3.1 Spaces for Publicness

In this chapter I connect concepts associated with publics and publicness with spatial form. I consider the extent to which spaces like the *agora*, *forum* and town square have served as reference points for analysis of urban publics. My contention is that idealised renditions of these key spaces and the types of publicness they are said to embody were critical to the dystopian accounts of the future of public space that were so influential in the 1990s. However, recent work has moved away from readings of urban publicness based on the characteristics of place and focused instead on how the processes of publicness intersects and interacts with space. Aware of this shift, I argue for a processual approach to publicness, an approach that appreciates the role place plays in shaping publicness but also recognises the capacity for publics to influence their context. I argue that publicness has no normative spatial or social idiom but rather publicness is moulded by the practices of publics in place. In effect, this chapter reviews the literature on urban publicness and by doing so places this study amongst those analyses that are increasingly influenced by processual approaches.

In Section 3.2, I explore those spaces that have historically been associated with publicness. In particular I look at how authors such as Arendt (1958 [1998]), Sennett (1974 [2002]) and Habermas (1962 [1992]) have positioned publicness in key material spaces like the *agora*, *forum* and coffee house. I argue that the *agora* and *forum* engendered notions of exposure, access and display as central to publicness, in the same way that Habermas’s coffee houses speak to a sense of rationality and protection as essential to public life. However, I also demonstrate that these spaces were far from the universal democratic spaces that these idealised renditions suggest, and in doing so I question the extent to which publicness is confined and solely defined by spatial form. So, this section severs the connection between *particular* spaces and *proper* forms of publicness. This leads me to an approach to publicness that is less concerned with traditional public spaces and normative notions of publicness and focuses instead on how the process of publicness interacts and intersects with a diverse public terrain.
In Section 3.3 I trace how ideas about iconic public spaces such as the *agora*, *forum* and town square and the publicness they are said to have enabled have been transferred to contemporary analysis of urban public life. I begin with the dystopian literature concerned with the ‘end of public space’, characterised by the early works of Sorkin (1992) and Davis (1990). I demonstrate via critiques of this literature that although they were important in charting the new spatial dynamics of the neoliberal city, their pronouncements about the death of public space were premature. I argue that idealised notions of traditional public space and its capacity to produce publicness animated this literature to the extent that it remained blind to how publicness may be expressed differently elsewhere. I then consider the role mediated publics have played in questioning some of the key assumptions about the importance of propinquity to publicness, suggesting that the nature and characteristics of place are only one component in the process of publicness. Again, I conclude from this exploration that a processual approach is better able to engage with urban publicness as it interacts and intersects with the diverse terrain of contemporary public life.

3.2 Where is Public Space?

There has been a long association between publicness and certain spaces. Whether it is the coffee house, the *agora*, or the town square, some spaces have become emblematic sites of publicness, often becoming repeated themes in a wider story about the nature and origins of liberal democracy (Arendt, 1958 [1998]; Dewey, 1927 [1991]; Habermas, 1962 [1992]; Tocqueville, 1838 [2003]). The role of certain spaces within this story has helped shape understandings of the relationship between publicness and space. In this section I explore this relationship in two ways. First, I explore how several key spatial forms are associated with publicness, revisiting some of those mentioned in the previous chapter and charting where they have situated their public(s). Second, I show how these accounts have served to shape contemporary debate and analysis on publicness and space.
3.2.1 Publics, Space, History

As the previous chapter suggests, historically much of the literature places publicness within several key spaces in the city. One of the literature’s most enduring and evocative is the agora, a space often associated with the origins of liberal democracy itself. The agora in particular, and the Athenian polis more broadly, remain powerful tropes for much work on publicness and space. The extent of their influence can be seen in the ways they serve as models for contemporary public life; as Iveson suggests, ‘cities are frequently imagined as contemporary iterations of the Athenian assembly’ (Iveson 2009: 241).

In The City in History, Mumford (1961 [1989]) argues that the agora was the natural extension of the public life of the village, a place where the democratic ethos of village life and its culture of self-reliance, austerity and intimacy, was translated to the polis (see also Bookchin, 1995). Mumford saw the Greek polis as the peculiar outcome of the culture, economy and geography of ancient Greece—where place and the social conspired to produce a particular way of public life (Mumford, 1961 [1989]). The organisation of the Athenian urban structure around a central public space is for Farinella (in Painter & Philo, 1995) a founding moment in the conceptualisation of a new set of social relations. Athens’ urban form influenced how Athenians perceived themselves and thus how the political sphere operated within the city. Athenians were expected to be directly involved in legislative and judicial processes as well as subordinate to their collectively created, yet individually consequential law. The agora, a secular market and meeting place outside of the acropolis, was the medium through which this process was expressed. For the few in the Greek population considered citizens, debate about public issues pertinent to their rights and responsibilities were expressed in this space (Carr et al., 1992; Detienne, 2006).

For many this co-presence—the face-to-face exchange that the space of the agora enabled—is a key element in its function as a truly public space. The concept of a modest and immediate propinquity remains a seductive ideal for much contemporary work on publicness and space (Iveson, 2009; Jacobs, 1962 [2002]; Mitchell, 2003; Rodgers, Barnett, & Cochrane, 2009). However, propinquity is also often cited as the
cause of the *agora*’s demise, as the pressures of a growing population and an increasingly complex socio-economic order pressed hard against the common idiom and existence of the *polis*:

As the population of the city increased, and as the complexities of economic and political life increased with it, the limitations of democracy as an exclusive system of government were likewise revealed. Pure democracy requires the intimacy of face-to-face meeting, possible only in small numbers ... as the population of the Hellenic city grew, not merely was there a growing proportion of non-voters to voters, but even the small body of privileged citizens became too big and lost direct contact with each other (Mumford, 1961 [1989]: 155).

Mumford goes on to argue that ‘Probably the greatest political failure of the Greek cities was their inability to pass from direct democracy to representative government’ (1961 [1989]: 156). For Mumford and others, the space that superseded the *agora* is the Roman *forum* (Arendt, 1958 [1998]; Hannay, 2005; Sennett, 1974 [2002]). For Mumford, the *forum* was ‘a combination of the agora and acropolis’ (Mumford 1966: 223)—a space that combined the political aspirations of the *agora* with the religious and ceremonial functions of the *acropolis*. This was a space, initially at least, for representative democracy, for a larger and more complex social and urban form. It was a public space with democratic origins that finally came to represent the empire and its emperor rather than any notion of the public. It was a space, according to Sennett, where co-presence and exchange eventually gave way to a banal and ritualistic public life (Sennett, 1974 [2002]).

However, whereas both the *agora* and *forum* are spatial articulations of the state and *the public*—the materiality of deliberative and representative democracy—there remains a third key space associated with publics and publicness. This third site is often described as occupying the space *between* the state and society, a space founded for, and representative of, a particular form of public—the club, the faction, and the association.

The most famous of these spaces is the seventeenth and eighteenth century literary societies, salons and coffee houses of Habermas’s *bourgeois public sphere*. As his later
works’ suggest, Habermas’s main focus is on the social and communicative operations of the *bourgeois public sphere* but there is geography to Habermas’s social theory. First, Habermas distinguishes between the coffee houses of Britain, the salons of France and the table and literary societies of Germany. Second, he situates these publics within the context of the court and town, with the court representing the power of the aristocracy and the town representing a wider public outside of the bourgeois and intelligentsia. Habermas argues that these spaces shared the social characteristics of equality, common concern and inclusivity—important themes in his theory of communicative action. In addition to the common *how* of Habermas’ *bourgeois public sphere* there is a common *where* to these publics.

Materially these spaces are confined, bounded; they represent a spatial form somewhere between the open publicity of the state’s public spaces and the privateness of domestic life. In these spaces a new mercantile, intellectual and middle class debated and discussed literature, art, the economy and politics free from pressures of state and society. They were able to do so because, like the *agora* and *forum*, the coffee house and salon enabled co-presence and exchange, but importantly also exclusion and secrecy:

social equality was possible at first only as an equality outside the state. The coming together of private people into a public was therefore anticipated in secret, as a public sphere still existing largely behind closed doors ... Reason, which through public use of the rational faculty was to be realised in the rational communication of a public consisting of cultivated human beings, itself needed to be protected from becoming public because, it was a threat to any and all relations of domination. As long as publicity had its seat in the secret chanceries of the prince, reason could not reveal itself directly. Its sphere of publicity had still to rely on secrecy; its public, even as a public, remained internal (Habermas, 1962 [1992]: 35).

The salon, coffee house and literary society enabled co-presence but shielded participants from the court and from a potentially hostile public; thus publicness remained open but ‘behind closed doors’. For Low and Smith (2005) it is these ‘public

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7 See his two volume work *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Habermas, 1984)
spaces’, rather than the *agora* or *forum*, that represent the beginnings of truly public space:

Public space, in fact, only comes into its own with the differentiation of a nominally representative state on one side and civil society and the market on the other ... Prior to the emergence of the representative bourgeois state, any public sphere was far more partial, fragmented, and local; and with such a partial public sphere the publicness of space in the broad geographical sense can be considered formal, at best, rather than real (Low & Smith, 2005: 4).

The *agora*, *forum* and coffee house each have unique spatial characteristics that have helped shape how we think about the where and how of publicness. The *agora*, often considered the cradle of democratic practice, is associated with the idea of a modest co-presence and exchange. Its cousin, the *forum*, added display and representation as important components of public life. Both positioned themselves at the centre of urban life and thus gesture toward notions of exposure and access as a key to public life. Habermas’s third spaces, the coffee house, salon and literary society, differ from this ideal of openness. They offer a mode of public life based on exchange and rationality that is spatially protected from a potentially hostile state and society in spaces away from the centrality of the state, the personality of the home, and the exposure of the town.

These spaces, or at least what we imagine them to be, remain potent models of public space and publicness. They colour much of our analysis of contemporary and historic public spaces. For instance, the medieval market square is presented as an organic market that established a way of being public that exceeded its commercial purpose, much like the *agora*. The renaissance Piazza’s of Europe was an opportunity to portray the spoils of empire and a rejuvenated civic and religious pride, read the *forum*. The *agora* is often presented as the social, organic public form, facilitating an ideal type of public life contrasted against the planned imperialism of the *forum* and the elitism of Habermas’s coffee house. For instance, Sennett begins his the *Fall of Public Man* (1974 [2002]) by arguing that the death of Augustus and the decline in the *res publica* is a corollary for the paucity of contemporary public life, while in De Tocqueville’s
portrayal the New England Town square is in many respects presented as the new world’s iteration of the agora, a return to the authenticity and intimacy of a better time (Sennett, 1974 [2002]; Tocqueville, 1838 [2003]). Importantly, I argue that there are traces of these concepts—the agora’s propinquity, the forum’s display, and the coffee house’s rationality—in the creation and analysis of contemporary public space. In the dystopian analysis, the shopping mall is positioned as the new town square, the traditional civic spaces of our cities are in some way thought of as iterations of the forum, what is acceptable as sociality in public life is said to be a product of rational liberal debate. But it is important to question the extent to which these characterisations are accurate or useful for analysing the relationship between publicness and space.

3.2.2 Nostalgia not History

Although presented as ideals, each of these spaces—the agora, forum and coffee house—and the publicness they are said to have induced, have been criticised for presenting only a partial view of publicness. For Arendt (Arendt, 1958 [1998]) and others the rise of the Athenian city-state and the agora represents the high water mark of public life. However, as Mumford points out, democracy in Athens was partial, fitful, [and] never fully effective [because] … even where democracy finally prevailed, as it did in Athens, it retained the old principles of segregation and monopoly. Athenian democracy excluded the foreigner and the slave: no small part of the population (Mumford, 1961 [1989]: 135).

Importantly, many argue that these social inequities influence the materiality of publicness. Athenians, foreigners and slaves may well have had equal access to the agora but this did not afford them the opportunity to participate equally in its public:

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1 To be fair Arendt makes a clear distinction between the polis and the physical spaces of the city. However she does argue that efforts to commercialise and depoliticise the agora were indicative of a diminishing public life (Iveson 2007).
citizenship was a right denied to slaves, women and foreigners. None of them had standing in the public spaces of Greek cities, even as their labor (and their money) may have been welcomed in the *agora*. They were formally excluded from the political activities of the public space (Mitchell, 2003: 132).

The point here is that a space designed in principle to support publicness could not determine the nature of social exchange in place. As Low and Smith (2005) illustrate, the social inequality of Greek society permeated its publicness: ‘the publicness of the *agora* was also circumscribed and stratified as an expression of prevailing social relations and inequalities’ (Low and Smith 2005: 4). Similar critiques can be made of the *forum* and coffee house. According to Sennett (1974 [2002]), in the *forum* spectacle finally trumped engagement, whilst in the coffee houses class excluded variations of gender, sex and ethnicity whilst simultaneously ignoring how diverse publics represented themselves elsewhere (Negt & Kluge, 1972 [1993]; Ryan, 1997; Schudson, 1997). Despite this, much of what is written about contemporary publicness has relied on these spaces as models against which the authenticity of the contemporary urban public is compared. Their influence is reflected in the early work of authors such as Sorkin (1992) and Davis (1990) and their dystopian visions of the future of public space. I now turn to these visions.

### 3.3 Decline, Debate, Dissipate

As traditional public spaces were dismantled and undermined by neoliberal urban policy, a series of authors began to examine the implications this would have for the future of public space. Their initial conclusions were less than encouraging, with many concerned that the new spatial and economic policies of neoliberalism were leading to a less open, egalitarian and democratic future. These accounts stressed the decline in the traditional public spaces of the city and the rise of newly privatised ‘public’ spaces that facilitated what they regarded as a sanitised, homogenised and commercialised version of publicness. However, more recently these dystopian claims have been brought into question by those troubled by its nostalgic and normative vision of publics past and present. Crucially, these critiques question the notion that there was
something implicitly public about the spatial forms of the *agora*, *forum* and coffee house.

Here I survey the literature of urban publicness by tracing the development of the dystopian thesis and its critique. I finish with work that concerns itself with the processes of publicness in a mediated but not quite dystopian present. By outlining the dystopian thesis and its critique I point toward the need for an alternative analytical framework to engage with contemporary publicness. Based on this survey, I argue that a processual approach to publicness is more able, analytically, to contend with contemporary public life. Critically I argue that a topographic focus, one where the subject of analysis is limited to spaces traditionally associated with publicness, fails to capture or comprehend the dynamic totality of urban publicness as it engages with, intersects and interacts with space.

3.3.1 **Public Space in Decline**

In the early 1990s, Mike Davis’s *City of Quartz* (1990) and Michael Sorkin’s edited work *Variations on a Theme Park* (1992) raised concerns about the future of public space. Although different in orientation⁹, they both argue that a new regime of neoliberal governance, accompanied by a parallel growth in quasi-public space, was changing traditional understandings of, and ways of being, public. These works began a trend in accounts of the urban public that are dystopian in disposition. This pessimism about the future of public space remained in many accounts of the urban public for the next decade (see Davis, 2002; Kohn, 2001; Zukin, 1991, 1995).

Within this movement there emerged several key urban processes that were identified as contributing to the demise of public space: first, the trend toward neoliberal urban politics and urban entrepreneurialism; second, the privatisation of previously public

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⁹ Davis’s *City of Quartz* is arguably more ambitious in scope. This work, via an excavation of contemporary Los Angeles, suggested that it was an example of the future direction of urban form within which public space played a diminishing and dramatically altered role. Sorkin’s edited collection *Variation on a Theme Park*, although no less significant, limits itself to ‘the new American city and the end of public space’.
space and the growth of quasi-public spaces as an alternative; third a trend toward an increasingly surveilled and securitised urban form; and finally, the emergence of a produced publicity in place of an authentic and organic one. According to these analyses, public space was being privatised, gentrified, securitised and disneyfied with deleterious effects on urban politics and publicness. I explore below how these processes were argued to affect the relationship between urban space and publicness.

Dystopian accounts of public space were part of a much wider trend in urban studies that focused on the emergence of a new regime of urban governance based on the political and economic model of neoliberalism (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 1989, 2001; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Weber, 2002). Neoliberalism called into question the role of the state in the economy and in the provision of services, while promoting the free market as the most efficient and equitable means of distributing wealth and welfare. Keynes was out, Hayek and Friedman were in (Friedrich, 1955; Harvey, 2007; Manne, 2009). Public space as a state-produced and governed urban form was centrally affected by this new ideology with many of the functions hitherto performed in public squares, streets and parks now usurped by the shopping mall, festival marketplace and Business Improvement Districts (BIDS).

At the scale of the city one of the products of neoliberalism was the emergence of what Harvey (1989) would call ‘urban entrepreneurialism’, a process whereby cities sought to attract and retain investment through urban policy and promotion. Within this regime, the redevelopment, reinvention and rebranding of public space became a method for cities to secure investment and promote consumption. Often this involved the redevelopment of existing and historic public spaces such as Boston’s Back Bay and New York’s Bryant Park (Domosh, 1992; Zukin, 1995). Public space, as a major signifier of a city’s character, was asked to play a critical role in the creation of a particular image of place. It remains a popular strategy today (See Chapter 7 and Atkinson, 2003; J. Clarke, 2004; Epstein & Iveson, 2009).

Whilst reinventing and reconstituting existing public space, the literature identifies the simultaneous growth and popularity of quasi-public spaces as an area of equal
concern. Many feared that the shopping mall, casino and gated community were replacing the main street, town square and park as the centre(s) of urban public life. This was occurring in a context in which the state was retreating from the provision of public goods only to be replaced by commercial yet ultimately less public alternatives (Davis, 1990, 2006; Goss, 1996; Lewis, 1990; Sorkin, 1992; Sorkin & Copjec, 1999). The critique of the reinvention of existing public spaces and the growth of these new quasi-public forms was extensive, focusing on both the material changes to the urban form and the perceived social consequences. One of the identified social consequences was the emergence of a new martial intensity to the governance of public and quasi-public space.

Public space was increasingly surveilled and securitised. Neil Smith (1998), describing Rudy Giuliani’s tenure as Mayor of New York, dubbed this new policy setting as ‘revanchism’—a blend of ‘revenge and reaction’ against liberal urban policy—where city administrators, police and private security sought to remove ‘undesirables’ from public spaces in order to increase their marketability—minus attempts to address the conditions that produce such persons (see also Atkinson 2003). Davis’s (1990) account of Fortress Los Angeles describes a similar process. He argued that not only had private security increased, but that it had become a symbol of personal safety, exclusion and insulation. Security companies with decreased accountability, limited policing powers and unregulated staffing policies, police many gated communities, shopping malls and BIDS to this day (Sorkin 1992, Davis 1990, Goss 1993). The privatisation of policing in public spaces was accompanied by the emergence of digital guardians who watched the public domain via CCTV. Although couched in a discourse of public interest, for many the introduction of this technology unfairly targets minority groups and threatens privacy and anonymity (Fyfe, 1996, 2004; Koskela, 2002; Smithsimon, 2003). And the governance of urban public space has shifted from one focused on public policing, community participation and a commitment to addressing issues of urban poverty and crime, to one focused on the ordering of the urban public realm undertaken by a privatised police force, utilising digital surveillance, with a mind to what investors might be thinking.
The convergence of these three elements—urban entrepreneurialism, privatisation, and securitisation—produced a particular way of being public in the city. It was argued that within this context a commercialised, sanitised and ultimately exclusionary alternative was replacing an egalitarian, engaging and democratic public life. Many argued that in an effort to attract global capital, cities have become obsessed with theatrical simulations of the authentic city, placing a sanitised and highly orchestrated public in the place of a democratic one (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Bryman, 1999; Zukin, 1991, 1995). In the process, those charged with regulating and managing public space sought to exclude images of dirt, crime, the poor and the homeless from the vision of mobile capital. Dubbed the ‘disneyification of space’ by Sorkin (1992), it was said these theatrical spaces resulted in contrived relations between citizens sheltered from the unmediated social interaction common to traditional public space. This socio-spatial analysis was supported by work in other fields that tapped into a general feeling of apprehension about the nature, role and future of public life (see Galbraith, 1958 [1998]; Putnam, 1995).

Based on the assumption that an engaging, exposed and authentic public life was essential to a fully functioning democracy, many argue that contemporary changes in public space were detrimental to the operation of, and opportunities offered by, liberal democracy. Hansen, for instance, argues that curtailing the diverse possibilities of public space and publicness narrows our engagement with the other and limits our understanding of what constitutes the public:

If modern public space meant exposure, critical debate interclass interaction and authenticity, its existence has been challenged by ... the ideology of privatism ... Traditional housing with open streets and parks, is being replaced by condominiums and other forms of gated and private communities and the marketplace has been almost completely replaced by the mall at least in the collective imaginary (Hansen 2002: 4).

There was broad agreement that this trend in urban public space had a negative impact on the politics of public space and its role within liberal democracy. Various authors grappled with the implications of this. Some framed the problem as one
rooted in the liberal traditions of citizenship, speech and property rights, arguing that this new regime of urban publicness threatened common understandings of the politics of public space, which to this point had served liberal democracy well (Davis 1990, Sorkin 1992, Mitchell 2003, Voyce 2003).

Others placed their critique within a broader cultural commentary. Often this drew on work elsewhere that suggested modernity, or more precisely post-modernity, was increasingly characterised not by a democratic and rights-based ethos but rather by consumerism and the individual’s ability to pay (Baudrillard, 1998; Bauman, 1993, 2007; Shields, 1992). Cohen (2002) for example bounds her critique of contemporary public space within the confines of what she calls the consumers’ republic. She contends that the growth of what she calls ‘privatopias’ was a response to wider social polarisation in the urban form. In the consumers’ republic she argues that discrimination is based not on race or gender but rather on the individual’s ability to pay. Although essentially a cultural critique, Cohen’s conclusions remains largely the same as those who approach the subject from a rights perspective—by defining place by economic exclusion the architects of modern public space had undermined the common good. Again, this spatial critique is supported by a body of work in the social sciences that has identified and warned against the rise of consumer culture and its impact on democratic institutions and the public (see Baudrillard, 1998; Bauman, 1998; Featherstone, 2007).

Crucial work was done during this period that effectively surveyed the public landscapes of the neoliberal city. However, its pessimistic and dystopian predictions about the future of public space were based on particular understandings of the nature of public space and publicness—past and present. These dystopian predictions were predicated on the notion that certain spaces are quintessentially public and therefore their eradication and reconfiguration results in a concomitant loss in the expressions of urban publicness. This represents a reading off from certain spatial configurations, the nature, characteristics and prevalence of publicness. However, influenced by post-structural understandings of place and a revisionist history of
publics and public space, some authors began to question this dystopian view. It is to these questions that I now turn.

3.3.2 Questioning the Decline

As neoliberal urban policy began to wash through the public landscape a number of authors began to question whether predictions of the death of public space were prescient or premature. Drawing on conceptual critiques of the liberal public sphere, and influenced by post-structuralist understandings of place, work on urban public space has questioned the decline in public space thesis and hinted at a processual understanding of publicness and its relationship with spatial form (Fraser, 1990; Ku, 2000; Mah, 2000; McCarthy, 1989; Negt & Kluge, 1972 [1993]; Young, 1990). Four central arguments were made against dystopian views of contemporary public space and publicness.

The first is that the dystopian account rests on an idealised version of past publicness. Basson’s (2006) polemically titled ‘Oh Comrade, What Times Those Were!’ History, Capital Punishment and the Urban Square is a fine example of this critique. Drawing inspiration from Foucault’s (1977 [1991]) account of Damien’s public torture in the opening of Discipline and Punish, Basson argues that public space has been the repository of oppressive forms of state power as much as it has been the locale of open, egalitarian democratic practice. Using historical accounts of the ‘once-public spectacle’ of execution and torture, he argues that much of the dystopian discourse on the state of the contemporary public realm engages ‘in a game of historical exclusion that removes from recognition what is inconvenient or disturbing’ (Basson, 2006: 1149). He warns against this myopic history of publicness being used ‘as a model to gauge the current state of any given subject, only to conclude that the present is lacking something or [is] in decline when it fails to measure up against the ideals of that contrived figure of the past’ (Basson, 2006: 1149).
Similarly Kirby (2007), recalling the post-civil war lynching of African Americans, argues that public space in the United States has been used in its recent history as a platform for public terror in the service of undemocratic and non-progressive causes. This pragmatic view is supported by work that suggests privatisation is not a novel phenomenon but rather that public space has historically gone through periods of disruption and renewal based on wider political and economic influences. Atkinson (2003) points out that in the British context the acts of rural enclosure starting in the 13th century put common land under private ownership. Further to this he points out that dating back as far as Roman times public land has been sold to private interests, as was the case with the agrarian law of 59 BC. Fundamentally, these authors argue that a less nostalgic understanding of the history of the urban public realm allows for a more complex if not more compassionate assessment of contemporary publicity and undercuts any determinate association between traditional public space and idealised forms of public life (see D’Arcus, 2004; Domosh, 1990; Roberts, 2001).

Along with critiques of the historical accuracy of the dystopian accounts of public space, a second source of criticism has arisen from authors who have analysed the nature of governance in new urban space. Allen’s (2006) work on Potsdamer Platz, drawing again on Foucault, argues that many new urban spaces work on a logic of self-governance and inclusion as a means of controlling urban subjects. Thus the layout and design of the space itself encourage some forms of publicness whilst discouraging others. Moreover he argues that this ‘closing off’ occurs ‘not through electronic surveillance technologies or some rule-bound logic imposed from above, but through the experience of the space itself, through its ambient qualities’ (Allen, 2006: 442 emphasis in original). Allen’s description of the seductive qualities of quasi-public space contrasts with dystopian accounts of urban governance which have previously (over)-emphasised the role of coercion, surveillance and private security (see Davis, 1990; Fyfe, 2004; Sorkin, 1992; Sorkin & Copjec, 1999)).

A third critique of the dystopian account is a more fundamental one based on wider debates about the efficacy of normative values such as inclusion and equality thought to be somehow hard-wired into traditional public spaces (and which are therefore lost
if those spaces are privatised) (Bauman, 2006; Foucault, 1976 [1994], 1998; Habermas, 1998a, 1998b; Kelly, 1998). Iveson’s (2005) account of McIver’s baths provides an example of the spatial application of this broader critique. Writing on the exclusion of males from public baths in the Sydney suburb of Coogee, he argues that exclusion affords the opportunity for the formation of particular publics and public modalities which may not be possible if such spaces were open to all. He concludes by arguing that ‘in principle, some kinds of exclusion might be justified on the grounds that they facilitate the exploration of forms of co-presence and public sociability which are not possible in other public spaces’ (Iveson, 2005: 224). Much of the normative work on public space has focused on the detrimental effects of exclusion with little consideration given to whether, in some contexts, exclusion creates rather than destroys some forms of publicness.

Further to this, authors such as Merrifield (2000) and Fainstein (2001), animated by an aversion to normative values and utopian visions of public space, argue instead that in fact what makes public space vibrant is its unevenness and unpredictability (Domosh, 1992). In *Dialectics of Dystopia* Merrifield contends that the conflict and inequalities expressed in public space that ‘leftists’ are obsessed with countering is in many cases the very essence of what makes the city alive;

> Spaces like New York’s Time Square and the Lower East side and London’s Kings Cross are kept alive and energized by conflict. Conflict defines their nature and their culture ... Culture means danger, often it means injustice but always it means life ... human yearning and human fascination (Merrifield, 2000: 487).

Similarly, Fainstein argues that the authentic city referred to in the dystopian thesis imposes similar normative standards on public space and in the process it mirrors neoliberalism’s fascination with an idealised version of urban publicness. Using McDonald’s as an example, Fainstein argues that the degree of authenticity represented in this space is arguably as valid as those of a working class neighborhoods’ regardless of whether we approve of the décor, menu or labour practices (Fainstein, 2001). These works call into question some of the assumed ideals that underpin the dystopian accounts of public space and publicness, particularly the
focus on what constitutes authentic public space and the association between certain spaces the production of specific types of publicness (see Mandanipour, 2004; Podmore, 2001; S. Watson, 2006).

Finally, working alongside these redefinitions of the history, governmentality and ideals of publicness, a series of authors have questioned the clear delineation between public and private that is a fundamental to much of the dystopian critique of contemporary public space. Sheller’s and Urry’s (2004) work on the interaction between sociality and technology in what they describe as mobile publics is indicative of this trend. Focusing on the interaction between technological change, communication and transportation they argue for a redefinition of public and private which is ‘suggestive of the softer, more blurred boundaries of social interaction ... Rather than a clean break between the micro and the macro, the private and the public, or the local and the global’ (2004: 47). Using the ‘messy gel of sociality’ as an analogy, Sheller and Urry argue that due to mobile communication, social interaction is increasingly blurring the boundary between public and private in ways which are suggestive of the inadequacy of this conceptual separation. In a similar vein, Kirby’s (2007) recent work on the attitudes of residents in a private residential estate in Phoenix, USA calls into question the comfortable dichotomy between public and private space. His work indicates that residents in so-called privatised publics often have quite complex social and political modalities in contrast to much of the literature that characterises these spaces as mono-cultural and dystopic. Further to this, studies undertaken by Arefi and Myers (2003) and Drummond (2000) have illustrated the cultural specificity of the public–private dichotomy. Both studies, based on publicness in India and Vietnam respectively, explore the way that normative notions and characterisations of public and private are not only constructed rather than predetermined, but are also products of particular (Western) historical and cultural contexts.

In summary, then, the key critiques of the dystopian thesis are based on four central arguments: first, that the normative vision of public space often contains a historical bias which idealises past publics; second, that analyses of the governance of
contemporary public space often over-emphasise the role of coercion at the expense of recognising more subtle forms of control; third, that universal ideals such as inclusion may be called into question; and, finally, that the public and private dichotomy is a fluid rather than fixed conceptual boundary.

Conscious of these critiques, a number of authors are increasingly focusing on what is characterised here as a processual approach to public life (D'Arcus, 2003; Iveson, 2007; Mahony et al., 2010; Sheller & Urry, 2004; Staeheli et al., 2009). The work of these authors begins from the premise that urban public life is the product of publics enacting publicness in place rather publicness being a product of certain spatial forms. For instance, Iveson contrasts what he calls a topographical approach which casts publicness as the product of ‘a particular kind of space in the city, such that one could colour public spaces on map’ (Iveson, 2007: 3) with what he terms a procedural approach where public space is ‘any space which is put to use at a given time for collective action and debate’ (Iveson, 2007: 3). Whilst I draw heavily on Iveson’s typology and his concept of the procedural approach although I use processual as it is a more accurate description of the tenor of my work as I focus on how publicness is unpredictably practised and produced in context. And so in this conceptualisation place shapes, and is shaped, by publics and publicness. As Staeheli et al. (2009) suggest, publicness is conditioned rather than determined by its context. This is not to say that space is irrelevant to publicness, but rather to suggest that publics use the resources of place—mediated, material, relational, institutional—to enact publicness. This genesis expands the terrain of public life beyond preconditioned normative ideals, leaving publicness free to emerge in ‘any space which is put to use at a given time for collective action and debate’ (Iveson, 2007: 3).

A processual approach lends to the analysis of urban publicness an analytical and conceptual flexibility by focusing not on normative spatial and social models of life but instead on the range of spaces and practices that may have a public character. This gives the research the capacity to contend with the contradictions and co-dependencies of place. Thus, analyses can remain open to expressions of publicness that fall outside of normative social or spatial idioms. Importantly, it enables work on
urban publicness to explore how the politics of place helps determine the boundary between publicness and privateness free of preconditioned notions of where this boundary lies. Thus it is better suited to considering what the negotiations, conflicts and struggles over these boundaries might tell us about relations of power between publics in place (Burk, 2003; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2007). Politically, a processual approach enables research to negotiate the terrain between what Mahony et al. (2010) characterise as ‘the simple alternatives of decline or proliferation’; the territory between the pessimism of dystopia and a misplaced optimism about the capacity for publicness to be anywhere at any time. In Chapters 5, 6 and 7 I draw on three theoretical traditions—Foucault’s concept of heterotopia, post-secular theory, and Barnett’s ghostly public—as distinctive entry points to a processual approach. These three theoretical traditions are analytical instruments used in these chapters to explore the elements, dynamics and processes behind the production of publicness in a shopping mall, mosque and traditional public space. But before I do this, I consider in the following section how relations between the mediated and material city further complicate normative understandings of the production of publicness and compel the remainder of the thesis to adopt a processual approach to publicness.

3.3.3 Publicness without Space

In Section 3.2 I identified the role historic public spaces like the agora have played in shaping contemporary debates about the relationship between publics, publicness and space. From this basis, an implicit assumption of much of the work on the urban public is that co-present, embodied exchange is the most effective and authentic means of human engagement, and therefore privatising the spaces associated with this form of publicness has been thought to diminish public life. However, as mentioned above, a number of authors have recently focused on process as an analytical tool for exploring contemporary public life. Part of this recalculation has been the advent and ongoing contribution that ‘electronic agora’ has made to the practices and processes of public life (Crang, 2000). Fundamentally, social media and communications technologies have challenged the primacy of embodied engagement as the basis of public life, with major
implications for the spatialities of publicness and the notion of their connection to formal public spaces. In response, many authors are considering the interaction of individuals and publics with mediated forms of address and how this in turn is influencing, and being influenced by, material form (Barnett, 2004; D'Arcus, 2003; Iveson, 2009; Koopmans, 2004; Mahony et al., 2010; Rodgers et al., 2009). I suggest here that contrary to the notion that changes in the public landscape of the city are inevitably diminishing the quality and importance of publicness, the relationships between material and mediated structures are posing new opportunities and relationships which suggest a less certain but also less dystopian future. This in turn points toward a processual understanding of publicness.

Beginning with the introduction of radio and television, and now increasingly dominated by considerations of the internet and social media, ‘electronic agoras’ are said to be reshaping the relationships between people, publicness and space (Crang, 2000). There has been a range of responses to this new public landscape. Optimistic accounts stress that media technologies are enabling novel and diverse publics to interact and influence the public city in ways previously unimagined (Barnett, 2004; D'Arcus, 2003; Koopmans, 2004; Mahony et al., 2010; Rodgers et al., 2009). They argue that in the process, these electronic publics can help overcome the inequities and inconsistencies of embodied publicness. However, there are those that remain sceptical of this view, arguing that much of the democratisation and engagement promised by the new media remains unrealised, ineffectual and disengaged from the public city (C. Calhoun, 1998; Crang, 2000; Mitchell, 2003). Although social media is able to organise publics with unprecedented speed and efficiency, some argue that this is largely impotent if removed from the embodied presence of individuals and publics in space, as Mitchell states:

All the web communications in the world would not have nearly shut down the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organisation or destroyed the Genoa talks. But people in the streets did (Mitchell, 2003: 147).

Mitchell reaffirms the importance that people in place play in public life. His reminder, when combined with other work, suggests that the ‘electronic agora’ is having tangible
impacts on the interaction between people, publics and the material experience of the city. For instance through their work on communication and transport technology, Sheller and Urry (2004) argue that traditional approaches to being public and private are changing as technology influences how people practice publicness:

As practices of social coordination and connectivity shift in contemporary urban spaces ... [and] because of the hybridization of technologies and infrastructure of communication and transportation, public life is being reconfigured and respatialised (Sheller & Urry, 2004: 39).

Furthermore, there are those who argue that the juxtaposition of the embodied and mediated publics is a false and unnecessary distinction. They point out that all forms of publicness are mediated in some form. For these authors the valourisation of face-to-face relations in space over mediated address is disingenuous and ignores the complex interrelationship between society, its technologies and space (Barnett, 2008; Mahony et al., 2010). As Iveson suggests:

even where public address does involve co-presence, it is mediated nonetheless. For one thing, many instances of co-present public address in city spaces are designed to reach a wider public through subsequent mediation (Iveson, 2009).

Instead many argue that the challenge is to identify and engage with how immaterial and material publics interact and influence each other (D'Arcus, 2003; de Freitas, 2010; Mahony et al., 2010; Rodgers et al., 2009). For instance, Iveson (2009) argues that the street is no less or more important than the screen but rather, that each is a resource affording publics and individuals different opportunities for address and exchange:

The city and its streets have no privileged place with respect to the geographies of public address. This does not mean that we should not be concerned with efforts to impose undemocratic restrictions on access to the streets. Rather, it suggests that streets, pages, airwaves and screens offer different kinds of possibilities and constraints for different forms of public address. The task of critical analysis is therefore to understand how these possibilities and constraints are shaped, navigated and contested through the political practices of different groups who mobilize and combine different kinds of public address. This requires our analytical frameworks to
be mobile, rather than declaring some kind of public space as either privileged or irrelevant (Iveson 2009: 243).

The advent and influence of social media and communications technology into the social and spatial practices of public life poses new challenges and opportunities for work on urban publics. The new relationships fostered by the interaction between the material and the mediated city calls into question some of the key assumptions of public life, in particular the role and importance of propinquity in place. The role of new technology in the production of publicness suggests that, far from heralding a dystopian future, the relationship between publics, publicness and space remains a vibrant, albeit different, process.

The advent and growing importance of the mediated city again calls into question the primacy of particular spaces and idealised notions of publicness of normative analysis. It compels analysis that looks beyond any preferencing of the mediated over the material, or vice versa, and instead focuses on the role each plays in the production of publicness. The interplay between the material and the mediated city requires an approach that can trace how publics are enabled and inspired electronically to congregate physically. The ‘electronic agora’ demands an analytical approach with conceptual flexibility and thus favours a processual approach which is able to contend with interrelationships and interdependencies between mediated address, material place and propinquity. It is crucial that these demands are met given the influence that the mediated structures of the city are having on the nature and processes of urban publicness, an issue I explore in detail in Chapter 7.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I considered the extent to which idealised understandings of iconic public spaces like the agora, forum, coffee house and town square have shaped analysis of urban publicness. I argued that characteristics associated with these specific spaces were particularly influential to the normative underpinnings of dystopian analysis because much of this work is premised on the idea that these traditional
public spaces and their contemporary equivalents were the sole locales for urban publicness. However, I suggested that nostalgic conceptions of these iconic public spaces infected dystopian takes on contemporary public life with a myopia that concealed from view how publicness has always been fostered differently elsewhere. Finally, I considered how the advent and influence of social media has further complicated the relationship between particular spatial forms and urban public life. All of these elements and arguments have impelled me toward a processual approach to publicness, an approach that provides a means of contending with the complexity of contemporary public life.

Despite powerful tropes that shape our understanding of contemporary public space, the spatiality of publicness is equally as diverse as the publics that enact it. In the mediated and less than dystopian present, publicness can potentially occur anywhere. However, the agency and independence afforded to publics and publicness is tempered by a recognition of the role place plays in shaping the context of public address. Presently, publicness is increasingly the product of the interaction between the mediated and the material. This poses new challenges for publics but also affords new opportunities for publicness. This conceptual disposition demands an empirical approach that in the words of Mahoney et al. (2010) ‘attends closely to the events, practices and processes through which publics come into view, sustain themselves over time and extend themselves over space’ (2010: 9). In the next chapter I outline a methodological approach able to activate and operationalise this conceptual understanding.
Chapter Four

Approaching Publicness
Chapter Four

4.1 Approaching Publicness

In this chapter I consider a methodological approach for exploring the relationships between publicness, publics and space. Building on the arguments developed in Chapters 2 and 3 for a processual approach to understanding urban publicness, I argue for a research agenda open to the diverse ways that publicness is enacted through and across a variety of spaces. My aim is to broaden the conceptual and empirical terrain of publicness so as to extend what we recognise as its spatial terrain and identify as its social articulation. Researching publics and publicness in this way can open up ways of thinking about the relationships between publics, publicness and space.

This chapter has three main sections. In Section 4.2, I draw on feminist and post-structural epistemology arguing that research produces knowledge that is partial, personal and unsettled. From this basis I reject the notion of any universal theory of public life instead adopting a research agenda that seeks to engage with how diverse publics are enacted in specific contexts during particular moments. In effect this marries the theoretical framework of publicness outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 with the methodology outlined here, and is fleshed out in the empirical chapters that follow. I argue that a research process with these seemingly modest goals is in-tune with the concept of publicness as a temporally enacted, spatially nomadic and socially diverse process.

In Section 4.3, I provide a rationale for using case studies as a methodological approach well suited to exploring diverse publics and modes of publicness in an expansive terrain of public life. A case study approach enables the work to explore the particular qualities of publics and their modes of publicness. I go on to provide a justification for the three case study sites that are the focus of this research—a shopping mall, traditional public space and mosque—arguing that each case provides a distinct rendition of publicness in place that questions some of the core understandings of the relationship between publics, publicness and space. These cases, and the questions they pose, compel us to reconsider the nature and processes
of urban publicness. In this section I also reflect on the selection of each case study by showing how each one is a product of the political and social context of the research and my intellectual and political reactions to this during this period of work.

In Section 4.4 I concern myself with the practice and processes of research. I outline an approach inspired by Low's (2000) *On the Plaza*, an approach that uses a mixture of interviews, focus groups, observation, and document analysis to interrogate the relationships between publics, publicness and space. I explain how each method is used within a research process that is ethnographic in orientation—aimed at engaging with the particular circumstances and contexts of publicness. I explain how this suite of methodologies contributes to the three diverse inflections of publicness presented in the chapters that follow.

To paraphrase Haraway (1988), my ambition for this work is that it ‘sees well not sees all’. Having rejected the notion of a universal public in Chapters 2 and 3, the task for this work is to explore diverse places, where different forms of publicness are enacted. Each of the following cases highlights different dimensions of the relationships between publics, publicness and space. Likewise each of the methods brings into view different sides of the particular publics, places and publicnesses explored in the three cases presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4.2 *Putting Archimedes in Place*

This section traces the development of a post-positivist research agenda and what it offers research on publicness, publics and space. I begin by drawing on feminist and post-structural critiques of the objective and impartial observer. In its place I develop an approach to publics and publicness based on the assumption that knowledge can only ever be a partial social product, influenced by the role of the researcher in the process of research. I argue that this approach is more in tune with the theoretical underpinnings of the work set out in Chapters 2 and 3, and the empirical findings of the research outlined in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.
4.2.1 Questioning Archimedes

There is no Archimedean point from which to remove oneself from the mutual conditioning of social relations and human knowledge (Rosaldo, 1995: 171).

The notion of an objective, impartial researcher observing the subject from an Archimedean vantage point somewhere beyond the field has been undermined by successive waves of social theory (see Arendt, 2007; Breur & Wolf-Michael, 2003; Demeritt & Dyer, 2002; Haraway, 1988; S. Herbert, 2000; Rorty, 1981). Instead, a view of knowledge as a social product specific to, and influenced by the circumstances of its creation, influenced by the researcher who herself is part of this context, has emerged. Critics of positivist research have emphasised the role of the researcher in producing knowledge about a transitory field.

For instance, feminist critiques have questioned the ontological foundations of positivism and its reliance on the notion of an external and static reality waiting to be discovered by an objective and perceptive inquirer. Demeritt suggests this position is unrealistic and unnecessary because research is not a self-evident process of passive observation and subsequent mimic representation of pre-existing objects; instead research is active and involves a form of interpersonal communication, either with oneself and one’s preoccupations or with one’s object of study...the researcher and her preconceptions are necessarily present in and have effects upon the resulting representations (Demeritt & Dyer, 2002: 234).

Instead authors such as McDowell (1992, 2002), Haraway (1988) and Rose (1997) stress that knowledge is a social product constituted by the actions of the researcher in the process of research. McDowell (1992, 2002) along with Haraway (1998) argues that the objective and aloof researcher consuming the fruits of the field is a masculine trope used to obscure relations of power and inequity (Bailey, White, & Pain, 1999; Cloke et al., 2004b). Similarly post-structural critiques, focused on the deconstructions of texts, have identified the role language plays in creating, shaping and constituting

\[\text{Archimedes reportedly argued that given a fulcrum and long enough lever he could move the earth. It has become a metaphor for a point apart from a given context from which an objective picture of reality can be constructed (see Arendt, 2007).}\]
the field (Burman & MacLure, 2005; Demeritt & Dyer, 2002; Rorty, 1981). For example, Said’s *Orientalism* (1978 [2003]) illustrates the role discourse plays in constituting and (re)creating relations between an idealised West and pejorative East, in the same way Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization* (1961 [2001]) and *Discipline Punish* (1977 [1991]) show the power discourse has in creating worlds and shaping behaviour. Furthermore, building on insights garnered from discursive critique, many authors such as Butler (1995) and Mouffe (1985; 1993, 2005) have questioned the use of a discourse of objectivity and impartiality in the products of social inquiry11 (see also Bailey et al., 1999; Dear, 1988). They argue that these ideals have been used to prioritise research agendas that are most closely associated with the natural sciences. Drawing on Foucault, Butler (1995) contends that this process seeks to obscure how power is embedded and transmitted in discourses of impartiality arguing that:

recourse to a position, hypothetical, counterfactual, or imaginary, that places itself beyond the play of power, and which seeks to establish the meta-political basis for a negotiation of power-relations, is perhaps the most insidious ruse of power (Butler, 1995: 157).

These authors argue that what Bailey (1999:169) characterises as the ‘post-Enlightenment separation of rhetorical (creative) and scientific (rational) thinking’ under the guise of an impartial epistemology, is in fact a product of particular historical circumstances aimed at distinct political purposes.

Collectively, these critiques point toward a research agenda open to multiple narratives built on the shifting subjectivities of the inquirer and her relationship with a restless, influenced and influential field, coupled with an appreciation of the role language plays in constituting and (re)producing the field. Arguably, these insights open up opportunities for a more engaged research agenda, but also necessitate a changed theoretical horizon. Below I consider the theoretical implications of these critiques, arguing for a research agenda with modest theoretical ambitions based on an ethnographic and context driven approach to social inquiry. This is a research

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11 This critique extends beyond a positivist research agenda to a general critique of the nature of political discourse (see Mouffe, 1992, 1993, 2005; Mouffe & Critchley, 1996 and Chapters 2 and 3).
agenda well aligned with the task of teasing out what particular publics and modes of publicness in place might say about the nature of urban publicness.

4.2.2 *After Archimedes*

Distinctive features of the new cultural politics of difference are to trash the monolithic and homogeneous in the name of diversity, multiplicity and heterogeneity; to reject the abstract, general and universal in light of the concrete, specific and particular; and to historicize, contextualize and pluralize by highlighting the contingent, provisional, variable, tentative, shifting and changing (West 1995: 65).

Generated by social theory and what West describes here as the ‘new cultural politics of difference’, many began to question the wisdom of the grand narrative as a research product and the ability of research to remain detached from, and objective about, the field. Indeed, more than twenty years ago authors such as Rorty (1981), Haraway (1988) and Foucault (1995) began to emphasise the social, personal and discursive production of knowledge (see also Cloke et al., 2004b; Cope, 2002; Flyvbjerg, 2001, 2004; Rose, 1997). As West suggests, instead of foundational universality, many went in search of difference, plurality and change.

In search of difference rather than universality, many have altered the theoretical horizon of social inquiry. To stretch the metaphor further, suspicious of grand narrative and totalising theory, many have lowered their gaze from the horizon to focus instead on the local and particular for theoretical nourishment. A series of responses have followed, from the bottom up approach of *grounded theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to Foucault’s decentred *genealogy* (1995), Haraway’s subject-centred *situated knowledges* (1988) and Flyvbjerg’s context-dependent (2001) *phronesis*. Each has a mistrust of grand theory and a commitment to the role of local context in generating theory—albeit partial and relatively ‘weak’ theory—in response to the extremes of universalism and the perils of relativism.
For instance, unsettled by the influence and implications of grand theory, Foucault (1995) argues for the construction of theoretical knowledge independent of wider regimes of thought, an organic theoretical foundation built from resources found at the local level in multiple, decentralised contexts:

I believe that what this essentially local character of criticism indicates in reality is an autonomous, non-centralised kind of theoretical production, one that is to say whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought (Foucault, 1995: 40).

For Foucault, wedding social inquiry to theoretical totality has ‘proved a hindrance to research’. In its place he proposes the use of genealogical approach based on ‘a painstaking rediscovery of struggles together with the rude memory of their conflicts’ (1995: 42). Thus local struggles and their memory, which include the lessons and strategies garnered during these conflicts, are used as a means of engaging with and generating theory. A similar suspicion of grand theory leads Haraway (1988) to situated knowledges. Like Foucault, Haraway’s approach is born of a suspicion of totalising theory and what she calls scientific objectivity:

I, and others, started out wanting a strong tool for deconstructing the truth claims of a hostile science by showing the radical historical specificity, and so contestability, of every layer of the onion of scientific and technological constructions (Haraway, 1988: 578).

With this purpose in mind she goes on to construct what she dubs ‘feminist objectivity’ in place of the scientific gaze from nowhere. For Haraway all research is an embodied process based on the limited vision of the subject in context. She promotes situated knowledges as an alternative to what she regards as the extremes of relativism and universalism, arguing that relativism is

a way of being nowhere while claiming to be everywhere equally. The equality of the positioning is a denial of responsibility and critical inquiry. Relativism is the perfect mirror twin of totalization in the ideologies of objectivity; both deny the stakes in
location, embodiment, and partial perspective; both make it impossible to see well (Haraway, 1988: 584).

For Haraway the alternative to relativism is not scientific objectivity or grand theory but ‘partial, locatable, [and] critical knowledges’. Similarly, in *Making Social Science Matter* Flyvbjerg (2001) considers the influence natural science has had on social inquiry and outlines why this approach is inconsistent with the principles and strengths of social science. For Flyvbjerg the valourisation of concepts such as objectivity, impartiality and universalism are products of comparisons between natural and social sciences. He argues that these comparisons are unfair, and that both methods have relative strengths\(^\text{12}\) but that social science has been undervalued and its weaknesses over-emphasised in the face of relative successes of naturalism:

The oft-seen image of the impotent social science versus potent natural sciences derives from their being compared in terms of their epistemic qualities. Yet such a comparison is misleading for the two types of science have their respective strengths and weaknesses along fundamentally difference dimensions. In their role as phronesis, the social sciences are strongest where the natural sciences are weakest (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 61).

For Flyvbjerg social science is at its best when attending to the particular issues and ethics of place. Using Aristotle’s *Phronesis*\(^\text{13}\) as a guide, he rejects normative values favouring instead a ‘situation ethics’ that is tied closely to individual cases. Again, for

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\(^\text{12}\) In this we see a hint of Rorty’s pragmatism which seeks not to undermine the explanatory capacities of natural science but to simply state that they should be used for different analytical purposes;

The idea that explanation and understanding are opposed ways of doing social science is misguided ... ‘Explanation’ is merely the sort of understanding one looks for when one wants to predict and control. It does not contrast with something else called ‘understanding’ as the abstract contrasts with the concrete, or the artificial with the natural, or the ‘repressive’ with the ‘liberating’. To say that something is better ‘understood’ in one vocabulary than another is always an ellipsis for the claim that a description in the preferred vocabulary is most useful for a certain purpose (Rorty, 1981: 575).

Haraway fails to make a similar concession, dismissing all positivist research as ‘hostile science’.

\(^\text{13}\) In *Making Social Science Matter* Flyvbjerg characterises *Phronesis* as ‘that intellectual activity most relevant to praxis. It focuses on what is variable, on that which cannot be encapsulated by universal rules, or specific cases. *Phronesis* requires an interaction between the general and the concrete; it requires consideration, judgment and choice’ (2001: 57).
Flyvbjerg this is a means of rejecting the extremes of universalism and relativism by replacing them within ‘contextualism’. He argues that by focusing on the ethical and moral issues in place, ‘phronetic researchers’ seek to ensure that such an attitude is not based on idiosyncratic morality or personal preferences, but instead on a common view among a specific reference group to which the researchers refer. For phronetic researchers, the socially constructed and historically conditioned context—and not the rational and universal grounding ... constitutes the most effective bulwark against relativism and nihilism (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 130).

Methodologically these approaches emphasise the importance of context in the generation of theoretical knowledge. They replace normative theory with situated ethics. For each, context is a bulwark against an equally nomadic universalism of everywhere and the homeless relativism of nowhere. Theory must have a home. The partiality of knowledge emphasised in Haraway’s work, but also in the social constructionism of Foucault and Flyvbjerg, is an admission of the limited vision of the individual in place. Rather than being a hindrance, however, partiality presupposes the ability to connect with other forms of knowledge, and thus the ability to form alliances with practices and ideas that may have previously been cast out of a universal picture (see also Rose, 1997).

Such an approach, based on a partial view in place, is ideal for an exploration of urban publicness. This approach challenges us to consider how place shapes publicness but also how diverse publics can enact publicness within finite spatial contexts—contexts that present opportunities for publicness and publics but also, quite often, some limitations. In such an approach, the theoretical horizon is lower but it is potentially more politically potent because it challenges us to think of alternatives, to recognise opportunities, and to think through strategies that may overcome and/or exist in-spite of the constraints of context. How do individuals and publics negotiate, think about and enact publicness in place? And what does this say about urban publicness?

By lowering our gaze I argue that we open our vision to the opportunities publics have to articulate publicness in and through an ever-changing public landscape. The
theoretical ambition of the research process described above gels with a vision of publicness constituted by the actions of diverse publics in place set out in Chapters 2 and 3. Context is crucial to the generation of knowledge and equally important to the process of publicness. It shapes the nature of publicness in place and, in turn, is itself influenced by the actions of publics in place. In this work I begin with the context of place and the particular moments of publicness enacted there, devoid of a normative vision of what publicness should be. I do so aware that these cases are vignettes, modest pictures of publicness in place. Thus, methodologically this project necessitates an engaged and ethnographic approach centred on the ability of case studies to generate thought and provide connection to other places of publicness. The role of case studies in this project is the subject of the next section.

4.3 Pictures of Publicness

In this section I argue that each case study analysed in this research represents a critical example of the operations of publics and publicness in place. The first case, based on a shopping mall in Sydney’s west, presents a new perspective on the archetypal public space of the newly privatised age. The second case, based on a traditional public space in Sydney’s CBD, confronts taken-for-granted understandings of public address and propinquity in ‘Global Sydney’. The third and final case, based on mosque in Sydney’s south-west, questions traditional understandings of the terrain of public life and what is considered to be the correct idiom of publicness. I argue that these examples, and indeed a case study approach more generally, are highly appropriate for repositioning, reconsidering and re-imagining the relationships between publics, publicness and space.

4.3.1 Making a Case for Case Studies

Case studies have been used extensively in the social sciences, particularly in anthropology and ethnography (Crang & Cook, 2007; Geertz, 1975 [2000]-a; Stark &
Torrance, 2005; Western, 1997). In geography, case studies are associated with qualitative research: Ley’s (1974) study of Washington, DC’s black inner city communities being a classic of the genre. The prevalence of case studies as a methodological technique can in part be attributed to the rise of qualitative research. A decade ago Crang (2002) argued that qualitative research and its associated methodologies were beginning to constitute a ‘new orthodoxy’ in human geography. Despite Crang affording qualitative methods orthodox status, qualitative analysis generally, and case studies in particular, have been criticised for their lack of rigour and universality. However as Flyvbjerg argues, case studies possess their own internal rigour created by the emersion of the researcher in the minutiae of the everyday practices of the case. Flyvbjerg points out that case studies are free of the judgments of the researcher, and that the minute moral decisions case studies involve are one of the strengths of the approach, a feature that makes them uniquely suited to capturing the messy complexity of life as it unfolds in practice (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

In response to the charges of universality, Flyvbjerg argues that case studies can provide theoretical insights that extend beyond the confines of that case, provided that the process involves ‘the strategic selection of critical cases’. Critical cases are those that are in some way extreme, critical or paradigmatic, dependent on the political and analytical aims of the research. What is crucial for Flyvbjerg is strategic sampling, the choice of critical cases by an experienced researcher based on the information that enables her to confront, confirm, and contradict common understandings and practices. Each of the cases presented in this work in some way confronts some common notions about the nature of public life and its relationship with space.

Case studies have two key strengths that make them ideally suited to the task of considering the relationships between publics, publicness and space. The first is their ability to deploy multiple methods to a single case and thus to unearth a number of perspectives on a common issue (Stark & Torrance, 2005). This sits comfortably with a heterogeneous spatial and social conception of publics and publicness (see Chapters 2 and 3). The second strength is their ability to elicit ‘thick’ descriptions of events,
places, and people that produce strong narratives. These vignettes have the ability to close in on ‘the complexities and contradictions of real life’ (Geertz, 1975 [2000]-b). In cases studies narrative is key—others’ narratives;

[the strength of] case study methods is that they put the real lives of real people right at the centre of explanation. Their stories dictate the form of the narrative, their constructions of social relevance offer the context. Putting case studies at the centre of one’s analysis allows the exceptional and the peculiar to shine through, but not eclipse, whatever passes for normality (Bennett & Shurmer-Smith, 2002: 201).

The strength of case studies is their ability to reveal messiness, contextual complexity, and nuance. These case studies enable the researcher to capture the processes through which publicness and publics are produced. Complexity and contradiction are not a slight on the method’s integrity but rather ‘a sign that the study has uncovered a particularly rich problematic’ (Flyvbjerg 2001: 85). Again this speaks to plural notions of publics and publicness. By using multiple methods in the context of a case study, this work uncovers narratives in close proximity to the complexity of public life, and provides some sense of how diverse and multiple publics enact and understand publicness in place.

4.3.2 Changing Orientations, Three Pictures of Publicness

To recap, this research is based on three separate cases studies. The first is based on a suburban shopping mall in Sydney’s south-west—Westfield-Liverpool. The second is a suburban mosque located in Sydney’s outer suburbs—Auburn Gallipoli Mosque. The third is a traditional civic mall in the heart of Sydney’s CBD—Martin Place. Each represents and offers insights into a critical dimension of the relationships between publics, publicness and space. Each charts the enactment of publicness in a different spatial context. Each illustrates how different dimensions of urban life influence the process of publicness—be it consumerism, religious practice or the entrepreneurial/securitised city. Combined, they trace the diverse ways publicness is enacted across a variety of spaces and generate insights into how publicness is
articulated elsewhere. These case studies were chosen strategically, informed by the unfolding developments of the project and connected to the wider socio-political context of the study. Below I outline how these sites were selected and the contribution each makes to a picture of publicness for Sydney.

I began this work in 2004, three years after September 11. Bush’s war on terror was in full swing and the tenor of the politics and policy of this period was being dutifully adopted by then conservative Prime Minister John Howard. Australia was also in the midst of what Megalogenis (2008) dubbed its ‘longest decade’, a twenty-year period of unheralded economic growth that coincided with over ten years of conservative rule. Initially I enrolled in a master’s degree by research. Two years later I upgraded to a PhD, intrigued by my initial findings and convinced that exploring diverse critical cases could help develop these initial ideas. Beyond my personal circumstances two socio-political forces—neoliberal prosperity and the neoconservative ‘war on terror’—combined with the theoretical development of the project to shape the selection of the case studies used here.

I was initially troubled by the processes of neoliberal privatisation and the influence this may be having on publicness in the Australian city. Reading the dystopian predictions of the future of public space by Davis (1990) and Sorkin (1992) I wondered how similar processes might be playing out in the Australian context. Australia was at the end of long period of market deregulation that saw the public sector retreat from the provision of facilities and infrastructure only to be replaced haphazardly by private enterprise (Gleeson, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Habermas & Foucault, 1994). Westfield-Liverpool represented the sort of quasi-public space that Sorkin and Davis had argued was undermining public life in the contemporary city. Westfield-Liverpool represented the kind of private investment that had replaced much of the public infrastructure in Australian cities. It represented a critical example of the relationship between neoliberal privatisation and publicness in the new town square.

However, as I explore in Chapter 5, the initial research contradicted and confronted these early presumptions. In the mall I found a privatopia, much like those described by Davis and Sorkin but something else as well. The case revealed the heterotopic
The capacity of space (Foucault, 1986). The shopping mall was simultaneously a place of private consumption and public convergence, a space where individuals actively engaged in practices of publicness that at times subverted the mall’s commercial purposes. My analysis of Westfield-Liverpool charts the enactment of publicness alongside, under, and despite a consumer culture thought to drown out the public commons; with clear implications for how we might more understand how publicness interacts with consumerism.

As the project developed, theoretically and practically, (from a master’s to a PhD), I sought further cases that would develop the initial ideas taken from my analysis of Westfield-Liverpool. To put it simply, amid concerns about the new town square I wondered how the old town square was faring. The second case study I investigated was an example of the old town square, a ‘traditional public space’ in Sydney’s CBD—Martin Place. Chapter 7 explores this case by looking at the relationship between an entrepreneurial Sydney and an iconic public space at its centre. By tracing the development and enactment of two events planned for the space I consider the capacity for a single space to shape two very different moments of publicness. I show how publicness is constituted and created in place in ‘Global Sydney’. The case reveals the symbolic power of place and the subtle interaction between spatial politics and wider circulations of publicness. Martin Place is indicative of how the traditional public square is appropriated for entrepreneurial ends and how publics respond to this dynamic. This example questions common understandings about the power of authorities to control public address. In the process it explores the symbolic and substantive powers of an iconic place and the extent to which propinquity remains a reliable accurate measure of the equity and efficacy of public life.

Martin Place and Westfield-Liverpool altered the theoretical and political aspirations of the project. I became aware of spaces, places and moments not commonly associated with publicness that were arguably integral to public life and to ways of being public that confused common understandings and associations between publicness and

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14 In this section I present the sequence in which I investigated each of the case studies. However, in the empirical chapters that follow the Martin Place case study is presented in the chapter after the one dealing with Auburn Gallipoli Mosque.
particular spatial contexts. So I considered spaces and practices that might press up against these common understandings and associations. This was the decade of September 11 and the Bali Bombings, and the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. Islamophobia was on the rise elsewhere and at home (Dunn, 2004; Dunn, Klocker, & Salabay, 2011; Humphrey, 2001). I became conscious of the spaces threatened by the altered politics these events engendered. Auburn Gallipoli Mosque, an important religious space for Sydney’s Muslim community, struck me as a site of potential publicness, but one often positioned as the anathema of Australia’s imputed public values. I wanted to question these assumptions and consider what forms of publicness might arise in such a space. Taking my cue from post-secularisation theory, in Chapter 7 I explore the relationship between the sacred and secular, the interaction between publicness and religious life. My analysis of Auburn Gallipoli Mosque traces how religious sensibilities influence and interact with particular notions of publicness. Auburn Gallipoli Mosque is a space constituted by the enactment of publicness through its own public ethic but one that is open and welcoming to others, with clear implications for how we conceptualise the creation, definition and articulation of publics in place.

These case studies are the product of the theoretical development of the project and the political climate of the time. Each represents a different moment of the research process. Each in part is an expression of how my thinking on publicness changed and how this was influenced and impacted by the context of the research. Each is the result of strategic sampling, in some way an extreme, critical or paradigmatic case of publicness (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Westfield-Liverpool is a critical example of how publicness exists alongside, under, and despite a dominant consumer culture in a privatised public space. The events surrounding the APEC Summit of 2007 and the Sydney Festival and their connection to Martin Place are extreme examples that in contrast show the struggle over what it means to be public in ‘Global Sydney’. Auburn Gallipoli Mosque is a paradigmatic example of the enactment of publicness in spaces and places hitherto not associated with the public city. These examples confront, contradict and confirm common presumptions about the nature and processes of publics and publicness and their connection to place. They build on the
epistemological framework developed in the previous section by focusing on how three very different contexts shape the actions of plural publics and their diverse enactments of publicness in place. By focusing intently on each they seek to reject both the universal view of a singular public and the nihilist relativism of an everywhere publicness.

4.4 Engaging with Publics and Publicness

In the course of this work I spoke with, watched and read about publics and publicness. In the process I uncovered moments of commonality and contradiction between how publics spoke about publicness and how I observed it being enacted in place. I considered how different public agendas were enacted, altered and subverted in the practice of being public and how diverse spaces were employed in this process. In the next two sections I outline the methods used to engage with publics and publicness. In the first, I outline my overarching methodological approach by drawing on Low’s (2000) On the Plaza and the writings of other urban ethnographers such as Crang and Cook (2007), Herbert (2000), and Watson and Till (2010). Using Low’s work as an inspiration, I argue that an ethnographic orientation provides the empirical and theoretical flexibility required for the task of exploring the relationships between publics, publicness and space processually and contextually. In the second, I consider how each of the individual methods used to talk with, watch and read about publics and publicness—interviews and focus groups, participant observation, and document analysis—combined to create a picture of publicness in place. I outline the particularities of each method and provide a rationale for why each provided a key source of information that helped explore the relationships between publics, publicness and space.
4.4.1  Approaching Publicness

Ethnography explores the tissue of everyday life to reveal the processes and meanings which undergird social action, and which enable order to be reproduced and sometimes challenged (S. Herbert, 2000: 551).

Ethnography, with its focus on the production of everyday practice, is suited to the task of exploring how publics and publicness interact with space. To paraphrase Herbert, in this study ethnography is used as a means of exploring publics and acts of publicness as part of the ‘tissue of everyday life’. My initial interest in an ethnographic approach was sparked by Setha Low’s (2000) book On the Plaza. Low’s work is based on an extensive study of two plazas in the Costa Rican capital of San Jose. She was initially concerned with how public space was represented across many of the social sciences—including anthropology, architecture, urban design and planning. In her words her aim was to construct a research project that integrated ‘architectural, archaeological, historical, ethnographic, and phenomenological materials to construct a multilayered analysis and nuanced account’ (Low, 2000: 35). With this aim in mind Low endeavoured to integrate the ‘socio-cultural processes and social relations’ of place into her work. She constructed a methodological approach that combined participant observation, photography, interviews and archival research. This collection of methodologies was used to explore, across two case studies

the cultural underpinnings of plaza design and [provided] distinct texts that could be read in relation to each other, uncovering areas of appropriation, conflict and contestation over time (Low, 2000: 44).

There is a sense of immediacy and authenticity to Low’s analysis of Parque Central and Plaza de la Cultura that attracts me still. Her insistence that publicness is a combination of context and cultural practice—a stance entirely aligned with a processual approach to publicness—is compelling. Her insistence on the importance of a multifaceted ethnography helps shape much of the methodological approach of this study.
Beyond this initial attraction, ethnography struck me as a methodological disposition well suited to engaging with publics and publicness. First, it is an inductive approach that relies on the field to shape theory in keeping with the theoretical leanings outlined in Section 4.2.2. As Cloke et al. (2004a: 169) suggest, ethnography is a ‘methodology intended to ground social orders, worldviews and ways of life to gradually become apparent’. Second, it explores the difference between discourse and action—the distance between how individuals discuss their practices and how they enact these practices in place. For, as Herbert suggests,

the tissue of social life is not always directly observable. The meanings of objects and events are often revealed through practices, reactions, cursory comments and facial expressions ... ethnographers expect the meanings of social life to emerge indirectly through actions as well as words (S. Herbert, 2000: 553).

Finally ethnography is ‘shamelessly eclectic’, with an attitude to research that combines sustained observation with many different research methodologies (Low, 2000). This eclecticism is applied here to the practice of engaging with publics and publicness. My work draws on a mixture of key informant interviews, focus groups, participant observation and textual analysis to explore the relationships between publics, publicness and space. The study has a core approach based on a suite of common methodological tools (see Figure 4.1). I turn now to these individual methods.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>METHODS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS/PERIOD OF OBSERVATION/DOCUMENTS ANALYSED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Westfield-Liverpool</strong></td>
<td>Key informant interviews 6</td>
<td>Government reports &amp; planning documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus group interviews 5</td>
<td>Print &amp; electronic media-Factiva Database</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant observation 7 days @ 2 hours/day</td>
<td>Annual Reports-Westfield Property Group, AMP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Government reports &amp; planning documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Print &amp; electronic media-Factiva Database</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Government legislation-APEC Police Powers Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Martin Place</strong></td>
<td>Key informant interviews 5</td>
<td>Government reports &amp; planning documents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus group interviews N/A</td>
<td>Print &amp; electronic media-Factiva Database</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant observation 7 days @ 2 hours/day</td>
<td>Government legislation-APEC Police Powers Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Auburn Gallipoli Mosque</strong></td>
<td>Key informant interviews 3</td>
<td>Government reports &amp; planning documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus group interviews 1</td>
<td>Print &amp; electronic media-Factiva Database</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant observation 2 days @ 1 hour/day</td>
<td>Government legislation-APEC Police Powers Bill</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Government reports &amp; planning documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Print &amp; electronic media-Factiva Database</td>
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Figure 4.1-Research Methods and Case Studies.
4.4.2 Talking with Publics

The research involved speaking with individuals and groups about publicness and place. These discussions focused on how the practice was shaped by certain structures (governance, economic, cultural) and combined with the particularities of place (material, social, temporal). Each case combined a mixture of key informant interviews and focus groups with the exception of Martin Place where the nature of the events made the recruitment of focus group interviewees unfeasible (see Figure 4.1 and Chapter 7). Across the three sites, I spoke with the notional managers of these spaces and the individuals and publics that enacted publicness in them.

Interviews

The rationale for using key informant interviews was to gain some insight into how particular spaces were thought to operate by those charged with managing these spaces and also by those who use the spaces’ use as a site for publicness. I wanted to compare these public agendas with how publics understood how these spaces operated, and with my observations of the practice of publicness in place. In total I completed 14 key informant interviews across the three cases. Interviewees were recruited using publicly available information and thereafter—where possible—by snowball sampling. The interviews were semi-structured, ranging in length from 45 to 90 minutes (see interview schedule in appendices).

All bar one of the interviewees agreed to have their interview recorded and the recordings were transcribed in full. Draft transcriptions were forwarded to interviewees, and they were given the opportunity to delete any part of the transcript they did not want used in the research. Apart from minor editing, concerning such things as the correct names of people and places, interviewees left these transcripts untouched without exception.

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15 This interviewee was a sales executive with Westfield Property Group who agreed to speak with me only off the record.
The use of full transcripts was a deliberate attempt to place individual comments as a part of broader interview context (Cloke et al., 2004c; Fairclough, 2003). This enabled me to identify concurrent themes, conflicts and contradictions. Analysis was conducted manually using open coding. Although the coding was largely unstructured, the use of extended quotations helped address the tension between ‘creativity’ and ‘evaluation’ in the qualitative process (McDowell, 2002).

**Focus Groups**

The rationale for using focus groups was to gain some insight into how publics reflect on the practice of publicness in place. Focus groups have been described as an ideal method for examining ‘complex socio-spatial practices’ (Bosco & Herman, 2010). Publicness is a performative practice, and is mimicked to some extent by the social construction and shared meanings facilitated by focus group discussion (Bedford & Jacquelin, 2001; Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; Cameron, 2005; Pratt, 2000). Focus groups also facilitate (re)negotiating and contesting social meanings among familiars, with participants often not cognisant of their role in the creation and articulation of social meaning (Bennett, 2002; Bloor et al., 2001; Warr, 2005). In the chapters that follow I compare how publics discuss the production of publicness in place with my own observations. One of the aims of this study is to traverse the distance between my descriptions of publicness, and how publics describe their practices. Focus groups help researchers collect information on collective understandings of practices of publicness and publics in place.

In total I conducted six focus groups, five based on Westfield-Liverpool and one on Auburn Gallipoli Mosque. The five focus group discussion conducted for the case study at Westfield-Liverpool targeted different user groups who interacted with the space in different ways. The initial aim was to target local seniors, youth and parents but I was not able to recruit enough parents for the research (see Chapter 5). The focus group

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16 However, as Litoselliti (2003) suggests, one must be aware of the artificial dynamics focus groups engender as you enter the ‘vague difficult terrain’ of group motivation and revelation (see also Warr, 2005)
conducted at Auburn Gallipoli Mosque was conducted with members of the local Muslim community, most of whom frequented the mosque, but some of whom attended other mosques in the area\textsuperscript{17}. These individuals were sought for the insights they had on the use of the mosque as a public space and also how it compared with similar spaces used by other Muslim communities (see Chapter 6).

Participants were recruited from pre-existing groups, initially by approaching key individuals within each community—gatekeepers such as the secretary of Liverpool Senior Citizens Network. Using gatekeepers to aid in recruiting focus group participants has been shown to be conducive to high rates of participation. This mode of recruitment is also in keeping with the ‘in-depth’ groups most often associated with social science as distinct from more market driven approaches used in marketing where strangers are often provided with incentives for participation (Cloke et al., 2004c). Focus groups were typically conducted in a setting chosen by the participants, a strategy shown to be conducive to heightened comfort and participation amongst interviewees (Bosco & Herman, 2010). Focus groups were semi-structured, ranging in length from 60 to 100 minutes (see Indicative Interview Schedules in appendices. Invariably my planned schedule for discussion was not adhered to as the conversations meandered into areas of additional interest with many of the groups wanting to continue the discussion well beyond the scheduled finishing time. Once they overcame their initial shyness participants did not want to stop talking. The number of participants in each focus group varied from 3 to 11 with marked differences in the dynamics of each group. At the commencement of each focus group I emphasised the opportunity members had to discuss areas of agreement and conflict. In an effort to unearth divergent views I asked whether anyone had a different view to what seemed like the dominant position. Participants on more than one occasion commented that

\textsuperscript{17}For the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque case study I conducted one focus group session. In organising this session, I relied on the community connections of the mosque’s secretary to recruit focus group participants. The mosque’s secretary was able to organise participants for one evening. Although this was less than the number of sessions I conducted for the Westfield-Liverpool case study, I was conscious that members of the mosque and local community may be hesitant to participate in a focus group which focused on their practices within the mosque that was organised by a researcher who did not have extensive community connections. In addition, I was also aware that participants were from diverse age and occupational backgrounds. Consequently I was hesitant to further impose on this community given that they were volunteering their time and I was conscious that these and other participants had many additional and competing responsibilities.
participating in the focus group made them rethink and reconsider publicness (Bedford & Jacquelin, 2001; Cloke et al., 2004c).

All focus groups were taped using a central microphone designed for group interaction. This device was supported by several small recorders that provided back up to this recording as well as a more immediate microphone to record conversations in larger groups. Again, these recordings were transcribed in full and sent to an individual nominated by the group for correction. Apart from some minor editing these transcripts remained untouched. The full transcripts were analysed using the open coding method used for the transcription of interviews. The transcription process with focus group interviews is more complex than for a traditional interview, with many instances of group members speaking simultaneously. Initially I found these ‘layers of talk’ frustrating\(^\text{18}\) (Warr, 2005). However, as the process developed I came to appreciate the subtle politics at work in the simultaneity of multiple voices and the ways this illustrated group consensus or attempts to silence disparate views. This underlined the processual rather than predetermined nature of publicness as interviewees debated and discussed the nature and characteristics of publicness in each space. In the final transcripts, where possible simultaneous responses are recorded with dominant voices presented first followed by subordinate contributions.

In addition to the textual analysis of the interview transcript, I also took notes of group members’ non-verbal communications such as eye contact, posture, nods of the head and laughter, conscious that much of what is communicated in groups is not verbal but visual (Bennett, 2002; Bosco & Herman, 2010). Where possible in the chapters that follow I have included direct quotations in context, including non-verbal notes. Litosellitit argues that comments in conversational contexts ‘allow for more intimate understanding of the contents of the talk, the flow of the discussion and the group dynamics, as they emerge linguistically or paralinguistically’ (2003: 86). To capture these dynamics, where possible, I have included ‘conversation chains’ that show how participants built on the contributions of others (Cameron, 2005).

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\(^\text{18}\) Particularly as each interview began with me asking if participants could wait their turn when speaking due to the limitations of the recording equipment.
4.4.3 Watching Publics

There is a spatial politics in aggressively pushing or politely standing back in a shop; in considerately making oneself as small as possible or comfortably spreading one’s legs in tourist class aeroplane seats; in covering one’s windows in voile or displaying one’s life to the world (Shurmer-Smith, 2002: 5).

The common method across all of these cases is the use of observation, the rationale being, as Shurmer-Smith suggests, that there are elements of social and indeed public life that non-verbal but equally convey a politics of publicness. (see also S. Herbert, 2000). In this research observation was used as a means of familiarising myself with the non-verbal politics of place, and the rhythms and practices of publicness being produced there. My purpose was to look at how publicness was practised, how it was produced processually in and through place. Observation also served the additional purpose of preparing me for the interviews and focus groups that followed. In each instance I brought insights garnered from my time in the field to discussions with key informants and groups about the nature of public life in that space.

The modes of observation used in Westfield-Liverpool and Martin Place were largely the same. Both cases involved a week-long observation period conducted daily, with two hour-long observations arranged at different times of each day (see Figure 4.1). For Westfield-Liverpool these corresponded with the mall’s opening hours. In the Martin Place case study my earliest observation session began at 5.00 am and finished at 7.00 am. My latest observation session began at 12.00 midnight and finished at 2.00 am. This schedule was developed in an effort to explore the different temporal rhythms of publicness in place. In the case of Martin Place, additional observation sessions took place during the two key events that are the focus of this case study. In an effort to capture the different public functions of Martin Place in ‘Global Sydney’, these two events—an open-air dance party that marked the beginning of the Sydney Festival and a protest march associated with APEC—were then compared with the everyday practices in the space outside of major events.

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19 Westfield-Liverpool’s opening hours were 9.00am-5.30pm Monday-Friday, 9.00am-10.00pm Thursday, 9.00am-5.00pm Saturday, and 10.00am-5.00pm Sundays.
These observations were recorded in a field diary that included common notations on the date, time and location of each separate observation. In addition to this written record I used photography to complement these field notes. Photographs focused on individual and collective use of the space. Each image taken was noted in the field diary to indicate the position that the image was taken from, the date and time it was taken, and the particular focus of the photograph (Cloke et al., 2004a; Crang & Cook, 2007). Some of these images appear in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Whereas my observations at Martin Place and Westfield-Liverpool can be characterised as participatory, my study of Auburn Gallipoli Mosque differs for two reasons. First, the number and duration of the observation periods were different. Two one-hour sessions were held, one following my interview with the mosque’s secretary when he invited me to watch the local community complete their evening prayers, and the second during one of the mosque’s annual open days. Obviously, this was less extensive than the observation periods conducted for the other cases.

Second, I was encouraged by members of Auburn Gallipoli Mosque’s community to complete additional observation periods to those described above but this struck me as unnecessarily intrusive and culturally insensitive. Given the importance of prayer (salat) to the Muslim faith, I thought it was inappropriate to observe and record a practice that, for believers, is a sacred and obligatory religious duty. I am not a Muslim and so my observation could never be properly considered participatory. The two short observations conducted for this work are more akin to what Kearns describes as ‘observer-as-participant’ whereby I am caught up in, rather than fully a part of, the practices I was viewing (Kearns, 2005). My disquiet about this practice is reminiscent of Zelinksy’s (2001) unease about the extent to which geography is a voyeuristic pursuit that appropriates the stories of others (see also England, 1994). The result is that the analysis that follows in Chapter 7 relies more heavily on the descriptions supplied by key informants and focus group participants of their use of the mosque.

Having different observation periods is a common methodological practice but it influenced the nature of the work in different ways. In Westfield-Liverpool my observations on its public were limited to the formal opening hours of the mall and so
there is relatively little said about how the space appears when it is free of publics. However, I recognise the importance of activities such as cleaning that occur outside of the opening hours but which help produce the publicness in place. In contrast, in Martin Place I experienced periods of crowded use and virtual abandonment, recording busy lunchtimes and event-based publics and the early hours of the morning when the space is only inhabited by the homeless who come to sleep in the lee of some of the building’s stairwells. In Auburn Gallipoli Mosque my observations were short and personally disconcerting. Although only a partial view of three atypical publics, these observations provided vital information on the nature of public life in these three spaces. They are presented in Chapters 5,6 and 7.

4.4.4 Reading about Publics

The final method used in this study was document analysis. The rationale for using this method was that it provides some insight into how each space is regulated through law and policy and how it is portrayed in various forms of media. The idea that discourse helps shape and generate our social and material reality is now common in social science (Dittmer, 2010; Fairclough, 2003; Lees, 2004; Waitt, 2005). The legal, policy and media documents analysed in this work help shape the nature of publicness in these places by helping to create the narratives told about the space and by defining the parameters of its governance.

The range of documents used related to the management and portrayal of publicness in place. In all instances I referred to the relevant local government materials to investigate how the space was legally defined and governed (See Figure 4.1). In addition to this, for each space I analysed print and electronic media coverage to build an understanding of how each space had been portrayed with a mind to how this may have influenced publics’ views of the spaces. In the case of Westfield-Liverpool I combined these documents with analysis of the space’s retail property developer and major investor’s annual reports along with industry publications. For Martin Place I combined local government documents with promotional material from the Sydney
Festival and the Stop Bush Coalition. I also considered the relevant legislation and regulation, in particular the APEC Police Powers Act 2007 (NSW) and local planning regulations associated with the use of the City of Sydney’s public domain. With regards to Auburn Gallipoli Mosque I combined media articles with local government regulations on religious spaces from the Auburn City Council and publications produced by the religious community and affiliated organisations such as the Affinity Intercultural Foundation. Media documents help shape public perceptions of each space and thus influence how publics engage with and interact in each space. Legal and policy documents reflect endeavours to define and control these spaces through legal and regulatory frameworks designed to manage the tenor of publicness in place. They are part of the context framing space and shaping how it might be implicated in enactments of publicness.

4.5 Conclusion

[If we get rid of traditional notions of ‘objectivity’ and ‘scientific method’ we shall be able to see the social sciences as continuous with literature—as interpreting other people to us, and thus enlarging and deepening our sense of community ... This is not all that the social sciences have done, but it is perhaps the most important thing. If we emphasize this side of their achievement, then we shall not object to their sharing a narrative and anecdotal style with the novelist and the journalist (Rorty, 1981: 581).

Rorty’s critique of objectivity, his marrying of social science, journalism and literature, and his commitment to social inquiry that enlarges our sense of community, aligns with my aspirations for this work. The aim of the research is to explore and expand understandings of the relationship between publics, publicness and urban space. This exploration is built on the premise that knowledge is a partial and unsettled product borne of context, created through the researcher’s personal engagement with the field. Conscious of this epistemology, the work explores publicness through three case studies that explore the particular conditions that shape the process of publicness in three spaces—a shopping mall, a mosque and a civic mall. Inspired by Low’s (2000) On the Plaza, the work is ethnographic in orientation and uses interviews, observations
and focus groups to explore and ultimately question the processes of publics and their publicnesses in place. This ethnographic disposition, with its focus on the particularities of publics in place, squares with a processual theoretical approach to publics, publicness and place outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. Through what I hope is a strong sense of narrative and an anecdotal style, I explore three distinctive productions of publicness in the next three chapters of this work. I begin with the story of a suburban shopping mall in Sydney’s south-west, a space which for many is symptomatic of an inauthentic and privatised present.
Chapter Five

‘It’s a public, I reckon’: Publicness and a shopping mall in Sydney
Chapter Five

5.1 ‘It’s a public, I reckon’: Publicness and a shopping mall in Sydney

In Chapters 2 and 3 I explored how historical and theoretical understandings of publicness shape contemporary considerations of urban publics. Ultimately, I argued for an understanding of contemporary public life that focuses on the process of publicness as an alternative to normative critique. I positioned this approach amidst a broader shift in work on urban publicness that has moved away from the topography of public space, and towards an emphasis on publicness as it is articulated in a variety of spaces. This chapter applies this approach to a space that for many is the archetype of the privatisation of public life—a suburban shopping mall.

For many, the shopping mall is symptomatic of a current public life that is less open, engaging and egalitarian than the past. This chapter shifts the analytical focus away from normative notions of how public space should be, and where publicness should happen, to consider how publicness is enacted in place. Thus the focus here is on the process of publicness. Using Foucault’s concept of heterotopic space, I uncover a more complex and less overtly deterministic publicness than has previously been identified in such spaces. From these findings, I argue for a notion of publicness that moves beyond the zero-sum game approach endemic in much work on contemporary public space, whereby the proliferation of quasi-public spaces like shopping malls inevitably diminishes urban publicness. While conscious of the impact these spaces are having on the nature of publicness, this re-conception enables geographical analysis to account for the qualitative change in publicness occurring in our cities.

This argument is developed over three sections. Section 5.2 begins with Victor Gruen’s vision of the shopping mall as the panacea for the ills of suburban life. Using Gruen as a guide, I trace the development of the mall from the 17th century galleria and arcade through to Gruen’s re-invention and the contemporary variant. I argue that the shopping mall represents the cooption of Gruen’s vision for corporate ends. Then, framed by a concern for the influence this has on publicness in the mall, I consider: the interconnections between the retail property industry (RPI), institutional investors,
retailers and local government; the way these create and sustain one of the most dominant of contemporary urban forms; and the measures that help control the mall in place, namely its architecture, its internal regulation and its branding. Understanding the mall’s past and current interdependencies shapes the publicness of the present and influences its possible future.

Having explored the mall’s antecedents and evolution, Section 5.3 gives an outline of contemporary critiques of the shopping mall. I begin with early scholarly work that sought to sketch the architectural, regulatory and economic dimensions of the mall. In this work the examination of the shopping mall was often part of a broader normative critique of the neoliberalisation of urban public life. Within this critique, the shopping mall was often positioned as the space that symbolised a more commercial, consumerist and controlled future. However, building on these early impressions, a number of authors have begun to analyse the processes that produce publics and publicness within these spaces. Mindful of the criticisms of normative models of publicness presented in Chapter 3, this chapter recruits Foucault’s (1986) concept of *heterotopia* as an alternative to normative analysis. I argue that the spatial pluralism this concept affords is useful for considering the variety of ways publicness is enacted in place. Foucault’s concept allows for the simultaneity of consumerism and publicness, the coexistence of publicness in notionally private space.

Section 5.4 outlines the context of this case study—Westfield-Liverpool—including the methodological approach used to engage with its publics and publicness. I show how those interrelations referred to in Section 5.2 are realised in place. And I draw on the words and observations garnered during the research process to present a picture of publicness in this suburban shopping mall. This is a space influenced by temporal shifts in its public rhythm; relations of safety and (in)security; and the interaction between politics, consumption and publicity. My argument is that the nature of these spaces creates a type of publicness, one influenced, but not overwhelmed, by consumerism. Based on this insight, I argue for a re-conception of the theoretical and empirical approach to publics, publicness and urban space. Drawing on Foucault’s concept of *heterotopia* enables us to account for the coexistence of spatial practices in place. This
conceptual understanding expands the terrain of public life, as place is always potentially open to the enactment of publicness. Empirically, this shifts the debate away from normative characterisations of place and practice and toward work that is attentive to those places and practices that resonate with certain publics and particular forms of publicness.

5.2 Making Space for a Consumers’ Public

In this section I place the shopping mall in its historical context and describe its creation and control. I begin with the story of architect Victor Gruen and his dream of the shopping mall as a panacea for the ills of suburban social life. I trace the development of the mall from the 17th century, to Gruen’s re-invention, through to its contemporary variant. I contend that, although initially a success, Gruen’s vision was ultimately coopted for corporate purposes. Second, I outline the economic and regulatory relations that create and control the contemporary mall. In doing so I explore the connections between the retail property industry (RPI), investors, retailers and local government. Finally, I focus on the way the mall is controlled through three key measures: its internal architecture, regulation and marketing. This provides a sense of the mall’s history and current dimensions and serves as background for the qualitative assessment of the publicness that Westfield-Liverpool enables.

5.2.1 Enclosing the Market: Gruen’s vision (un)realised

The shopping mall is not a novel idea. Enclosed markets date back to Britain’s Royal Opera Arcade, and the influential gallerias Umberto I in Naples and the Vittorio Emmanuelle II in Milan, each constructed in the 1820s. What many consider to be the precursors of the suburban shopping mall, the planned shopping districts of Market Square, Chicago and Kansas City’s Country Club Plaza, were built nearly a century ago. In Australia, wealthy retailer Anthony Hordern built an enclosed showroom in 1896, while Sydney’s Queen Victoria Building—still considered to be one of the most ornate
retail spaces in the world—opened in the early nineteenth century (Gardner & Sheppard, 1989). Beyond the galleria, shopping district and arcade, the next evolution in mall design was in response to the process of suburbanisation and the growing popularity of the automobile. Beginning with John Graham’s *Northgate* in Seattle, ‘car friendly’ single-storey strip malls appeared adjacent to highways and important intersections from the 1920s onwards. Graham’s use of two department stores at either end of a pedestrian mall to ‘anchor’ the retailers would become a standard feature of modern mall architecture (Crawford, 1992). However, despite these early incarnations the contemporary shopping mall owes much to the ideas of one architect—Victor Gruen.

Gruen’s vision of the mall as the centre of suburban social life has shaped much of what it means to be public in the contemporary city. As one commentator put it, ‘he may well have been one the most influential architects of the twentieth century’ (Gladwell, 2004: 122). At the beginning of the Second World War Gruen migrated from Austria to New York before settling in Los Angeles. During the fifties he founded the architectural and planning office Victor Gruen Associates. The firm planned and designed luxury housing estates and business complexes but it was his work on retail property that would prove his most enduring contribution to the city.

Ironically perhaps, Gruen believed suburbanisation and the automobile were destroying the social fabric of America (Kowinski, 1985; Wall, 2005). Gruen’s vision was for a space designed to ‘restore the lost sense of commitment and belonging; [and to] counteract the phenomenon of alienation, isolation and loneliness’ that he believed characterised suburban social life (Gruen in Goss, 1993: 23). Inspired by the European gallerias of his youth he saw the mall as an ‘antidote to suburban sprawl ... a centralizing influence, an organizing principle, as well as an adaptable mechanism for creating community centers where there was none’ (Kowinski 1985: 120). Putting this vision into practice, Southdale was built in 1965. It was the first fully enclosed mall that allowed consumers to shelter from the bleak Seattle weather. Shielded from the elements and with adequate provision of parking this mall, and ones like it, quickly supplanted retail outlets in the main street as the primary shopping destinations for
suburbanites. Success led first to mimicry then to appropriation. Developers quickly recognised the format, standardised the design and replicated it ad nauseum (Goss 1993). Specialised design consultants developed econometric and locational models based on extensive demographic, market, environmental and architectural analysis, all organised around the banal principle of dollars per square metre (Crawford 1992). Thus mall development became a ‘colour by numbers’ process rather than one engaged in any thoughtful consideration of community and publicity.

From Gruen’s initial design the shopping mall has developed into spaces that most often include food courts and cinema complexes, and in some cases, wave pools, artificial beaches and ski slopes (Gladwell, 2004; The Observer, 2005). These developments are part of the reinvention of the mall as total entertainment and consumption spaces, referred to as ‘lifestyle centres’ in some of the market literature (Davis, 2006; Treffinger, 2005). The retail property industry (RPI) is currently dominated by a number of multinational retail property groups (RPGs) who have standardised the design, location and construction of the contemporary shopping mall. The shopping mall itself has come to dominate retail and, arguably, public architecture in the contemporary urban environment. However, Gruen was cruelled by the realisation of his vision. Instead of ameliorating the effects of social isolation Gruen thought his vision had resulted in the refinement of an architectural form dedicated to consumption rather than sociality. He once described a mall built near his birthplace in Vienna as a ‘gigantic shopping machine’ (Gladwell, 2004). Gruen remained disillusioned with how his vision of suburban community had been coopted for commercial purposes until his death in a country house just outside of Vienna in 1980.

5.2.2 Creating the Enclosed Market

Gruen’s vision of the mall as a community centre able to combat the anomie of suburban life was a success, indeed it was so successful that it was copied and ultimately appropriated for corporate rather than community ends. Below I outline just how this vision of community life was altered by the measures used to create and
control the contemporary mall, measures that influence the type of publicness the space facilitates. I do so by exploring the key relationships that create the contemporary mall, namely those between the RPI, institutional investors, retailers and local government.

The RPI and Institutional Investors

One of the key factors in the success of the modern mall is the relationship between RPI and financial markets (Gladwell, 2004). This link was first established in an era when institutional investors such as fund managers and superannuates were growing in size and relative importance, and as international markets and national economies went through a period of deregulation (Crawford, 1992; Frieden & Sagalyn, 1989; Gardner & Sheppard, 1989). Many of these firms reacted to the 1970s oil shock and subsequent stock market crash by shifting investment away from stock and toward property (Harmes, 1998; O'Neill & McGurk, 2002). This coincided with the emergence of the RPI, which unlike other sectors, seemed impervious to market forces (Harvey, 1989). The steady returns accrued in this period led some fund managers to describe shopping malls as ‘the Cadillac of investments’ (Kowinski, 1985). So during the industry’s infancy, developers borrowed heavily from financial institutions and used the profits garnered from the ongoing operations of the mall to pay back debt (Goss, 1993). As the industry matured, developers began using their existing retail properties as collateral for financing further developments. Thus the growth of shopping malls is partly a reflection of their performance as assets, and the investment needs of financial markets.

The relationship between the RPI and institutional investors continues to be an important factor in the production of consumer spaces in place (D. B. Clarke, 1997; Lehew, Burgess, & Wesley, 2002; Marsden, Harrison, & Flynn, 1998). An understanding of this relationship enables us to understand the rationale for the location and types of spaces that are produced. The location and nature of these spaces are determined by the needs of institutional investors as much as they are by the needs and aspirations of
local communities. These market pressures favour those locations and architectural forms that are best able to deliver steady returns on capital investment, and this lends itself to a standardisation of design. New locations are assessed for their potential to accrue high dollars per square metre and the redevelopment of existing malls based on their capacity for ‘market penetration’. This in turn shapes the nature of publicness in the mall. As Goss notes, ‘the economic and political capacity of speculative capital combine to manufacture a total retail built environment and a total cultural experience’ (Goss, 1993: 21). Another aspect of this relationship is the financial assurance that long-term leases with large retailers provide institutional investors.

The RPI and Retailers

The relationship between the RPI and retailers is integral to attracting the capital required to finance the construction of malls. Typically, the process begins when retail property groups (RPGs) such as Westfield sign large retailers to long-term commitments prior to the property’s construction (Fels, Beare, & Szakiel, 2008). Based on the financial security of RPGs and long-term tenancy agreements, often of 25 years or more, with established retail chains, proposed developments are assigned a credit rating by one of the larger credit rating agencies. Signing a large grocery or quality retail chain is used as a means of attracting smaller specialty and chain retailers whose comparatively expensive rental payments provide the basis of profitability for retail properties (Frieden & Sagalyn, 1989). The combination of retailers creates a tenant mix whose composition is often determined prior to the development of a retail site by a team of market researchers, geo-demographers and leasing agents, who analyse urban localities for favourable development conditions (Frieden & Sagalyn, 1989; Goss, 1993; LeHew & Fairhurst, 2000). The relationships between retailers, financial capital and retail property developers have been described by Dannhaeuser (1994) as an ‘integrated supply channel’, encompassing producers, suppliers, retailers, the RPI and consumers. This forms the basis of the majority of retail property developments which, according to the private sector, creates a set of ‘checks and balances’ ensuring that centres with limited capital growth prospects do not proceed.
However, there is evidence that contradicts the notion of a self-regulating model that goes to the heart of the spatial implications of the relationship between the RPI and retailers. Empirical work in Britain and the United States suggests that both the market itself, and particular localities have undergone significant periods of retail saturation or ‘over malling’ (Goss, 1993; Kowinski, 1985; Morris, 1999). Beyond this, the leasing process favours larger retail chains that can leverage the tenancy of many retail stores in lease negotiations. The result for many is an increasingly homogenous retail sector located in suburbs of high dispensable income dominated by firms with an ongoing relationship with the RPI (Langston, Clarke, & Clarke, 1997; LeHew & Fairhurst, 2000; Lord, 2000). Critics argue that this process is creating a retail sector that is increasingly concentrated in the hands of fewer RPGs and retailers with the potential for adverse competitive, spatial and social outcomes. Again, this points towards a standardisation of one of the dominant contexts of contemporary public life.

The RPI and Local Government

Another key factor in creating the modern mall is the relationship between the RPI and local governance. Several studies have shown the effectiveness of the RPI in influencing local regulation and planning law which gels with work conducted on urban governance and ‘the entrepreneurial city’. Flagship developments such as Boston’s Back Bay and Glasgow’s inner city show the extent to which the RPI is able to influence local planning, regulation and governance (Bassett, 1996; Harvey, 1989, 2001; Paddison, 1993). In the case of shopping malls, the influence of the RPI on local government is enhanced by what has been described as a ‘whole-of-firm approach’ which involves a team of lawyers, accountants, sales forecasters, traffic analysts, architects, designers, public relations managers and engineers all oriented toward influencing local governance and its regulatory framework to suit proposed or established retail properties (Domosh, 1992; MacLeod, 2002).

A number of empirical works have illustrated how this process is applied internationally (see Domosh, 1992; Jackson, 1996; Johnson, 1987; MacLeod, 2002). In
the Australian context, Voyce’s case study of the development of Westfield-Hornsby and Hornsby Shire Council illustrates the relative power that large RPGs have in influencing the regulations and planning decisions of local government. Voyce cites an independent planning and development report which concluded that ‘the proposed developments were conceptually flawed and that the conceptual basis appeared to place private interest above the public interest’ (Voyce 2003: 255). Despite this, the plan was approved with only a minor delay and some planning concessions. Another Australian study conducted by Fels et al. (2003) identified the ability of the RPI to use local planning laws to favour existing retail properties. This study suggests that large retailers and RPGs use local planning regulations to lock out competitors by purchasing the majority of land zoned for retailing at the expense of smaller retailers and groups who lack the capital to compete for appropriately zoned land. Thus, RPGs have the capacity to alter local governance when developing a new retail site and to use local planning law against potential competitors. This ability to alter and exploit planning law, along with the broader trend of entrepreneurial governance, reflect an increasing alignment between the interests of the RPI and local government. This has specific implications for the nature of retail properties, their location and the conditions of their operation. Again, this points towards a monopolisation of this spatial form which is limited to a handful of RPGs and the associated retailers. This has clear implications for the types of spaces produced and thus the nature of publicness in these spaces.

The shopping mall has become an instrument of financial markets seeking a sound alternative to the volatility of the stock market. This encourages close ties between established and extensive retail chains whose presence provides investor confidence. RPGs are adept at manipulating local government regulations during the development stage and when in place, they display a talent for defending their position within a given locality. The continued interests of capital markets and the aptitude of RPGs in manipulating current regulatory frameworks produce a dominant and homogeneous architectural form. This spatial standardisation has caused many to be concerned that it would lead to a standardisation of social life. Via a processual approach I investigate the extent to which the standardisation of these spaces controls the publicness they facilitate. Whist I acknowledge that how the mall is created and controlled shapes its
publicness, in the investigation that follows I question the extent to which these measures completely determine the nature of publicness in the mall.

5.2.3 Controlling the Enclosed Market

Inside established malls there are four key measures that help control the mall in place: its architecture, internal regulations, lease agreements and mall branding. Again, these enable the RPI to attract investors and provide steady returns on capital investment over the life of any given mall. They are important to consider as they help create the public context of the mall. The architecture, the material space, shapes how people move, how long they stay and how they meet in the mall. The internal regulations are designed to control the ambience of the space and create an environment where some forms of public interaction resonate and others are restrained. Finally, the branding of the mall is another force of standardisation that influences the nature of the public experience in the mall by creating a predictable suite of services.

Architecture

Early critical accounts of the mall have illustrated that the very material form of the space is integrated with its function as a consumer space (Crawford, 1992; Goss, 1993; Kowinski, 1985). Malls are designed to prolong ‘mall time’ and thus increase customers’ exposure to goods and services, and thus their likelihood of making a purchase. They often marry architectural features such as T- or L-shaped floor plans, which break up distance, with internal ornamentations such as soft lighting and limited entrances to increase the time spent by consumers in the mall. These internal dynamics lead to what is irreverently referred to as the Gruen Transfer, a term named after Victor Gruen that is used to describe the moment when a consumer enters a mall and loses track of their primary intentions and instead purchases several alternative or additional items (Crawford, 1992; Goss, 1993). These architectural features influence
the nature of public interaction in place by shaping how people move through the space and thus subtly influence how and whom they meet. It also influences the amount of time spent in these spaces and in doing so impacts on the use of other forms of urban public space.

**Regulation and Management**

In addition to the architecture of place, much of the literature has focused on the role regulation plays in controlling malls. Many argue that part of the mall’s success has been its ability to manage the expectations of consumer security, relative to what for many is a hostile public domain (Wall, 2005). The perception of security in the shopping mall is maintained by an overt yet largely powerless private security presence (Goss 1993). One of the consequences of this level of regulation, surveillance and control is a public culture that allows a (very) limited range of political expression. A series of empirical studies has highlighted the narrow range of acceptable public behaviours that are tolerated within malls (Crawford, 1992; Davis, 1990; Goss, 1993, 1996). Typically, behavioural breaches occur when ‘undesirable’ political activity has taken place within the mall (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2006; Voyce, 2003, 2006). For instance, Voyce’s work on Westfield-Hornsby (2003) uncovered the practice of security guards issuing banning notices to those members of the public it wished to exclude from the mall. Penalty periods ranged from six months to two years and should a person return to the mall the police charge him or her with trespass on private property. Political and civil liberties organisations have argued that these regulations contradict the mall’s positioning as the new town square and illustrate the extent to which being public in these spaces is demonstrably different from publicness in other urban public spaces where political expression is, arguably, less regulated (Kohn, 2001; Voyce, 2003, 2006; Zukin, 1998).
Leases

Previously, I have described the relationship between RPGs and tenants as it relates capital’s capacity to create these spaces. In the following I touch on the use of lease agreements as instruments of attraction and control. The mall has been a success in part because of its ability to combine large retailers with specialty stores. Individual malls make a profit from a combination of individual tenant rents and a proportion of sales made in most stores (Kowinski, 1985; Massey, Allen, & Pryke, 1999). Within the industry it is argued that retailers and retail property managers benefit from high value and volumes of trade, and to some extent this is correct. However, while uniform in their purpose, the conditions of individual lease agreements are far from uniform in their application.

Where the terms of leasing agreements differ, and subsequently where they have drawn criticism, is the inequity in the proportional amount of rent retailers are expected to contribute and the methods by which this rent is collected. The two methods of rent collection are broadly defined as base and percentile agreements (Kirkup & Rafiq, 1994; LeHew & Fairhurst, 2000). Base rents are calculated as an even amount of promised rent separate from the sales performance of the store (Goss, 1993; Voyce, 2003). In Australia, these rent types have been associated with the large retailers such as Coles Myer, Woolworths or David Jones. The second type is percentile rent which is based on a fixed amount of promised rent plus a percentage of the retailer’s profit. Percentile agreements generally apply to small to medium sized retailers. Unlike base rents, these agreements require open book sales records that are increasingly database driven (Chiang, Lai, & Ling, 1986). It is widely accepted that it is from percentile rents that retail property managers accrue the bulk of their operating profits (Goss, 1993; Voyce, 2003; Wheaton, 2000). The coexistence of these two rental types provides a stable mix of revenue, which hedges developers’ capital costs from market fluctuations, such as downturns in consumer spending (Frieden & Sagalyn, 1989). The rationale for the inequity between anchor tenants and specialty stores is that small stores benefit from the ‘externalities’, such as increased foot traffic and mall.

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20 In the North American literature these are sometimes referred to as fixed or ratchet clause rents.
visits (Benjamin, Boyle, & Sirmans, 1990). This combination of rental types influences the types of tenants attracted to these spaces as retailers with multiple outlets are better able to leverage multiple leases in their negotiations with RPGs. This favours tenants whose products and services cater to the middle of the market at the expense of those customers and retailers who exist on the fringes of consumer culture such as second hand stores (LeHew & Fairhurst, 2000). This in turn influences the types of tenants that are predictably found in malls and thus the individuals and publics that are ultimately attracted to these places.

Marketing the Mall

One of the characteristics of contemporary lease agreements is that retailers are increasingly required to contribute to the costs of ongoing maintenance, promotion and services of a mall which leads me to the final component of control—mall branding. An increasingly ‘customer focused’ management strategy has led to the promotion of RPGs themselves. In what has become a crowded and competitive retail environment, RPGs increasingly prescribe uniform advertising and services such as information desks, concierges and mall-wide gift cards (Lehew et al., 2002). These measures are focused on getting consumers to identify with individual RPGs and in the words of one of Westfield’s Annual Report:

> to ensure that at every Westfield shopping centre there is a consistent standard of customer service, marketing, systems and management that ensures the delivery of an outstanding shopping centre experience (Westfield Property Group, 2004: 7).

Mall branding contributes to the standardisation of this spatial form driven by a competitive retail property market. It provides investors and customers with a predictable public experience and in turn creates predictable investment returns and influences the nature of the public experience in the mall.

Together these internal relationships and external connections produce one of the most dominant spatial forms of contemporary public life: a public form with clear
connections to institutional investors and large retailers controlled by property groups with the ability to influence and exploit local government practices. Moreover, it is a public form whose internal dynamics produce a predictable mix of architectural design, behaviour management and branding, based on an economic model that favours an equally predictable mix of tenants. The mall’s dominance, and its tendency to create a highly standardised landscape for the articulation of publicness, has clear implications for what it means to be public in the contemporary city. The impact these spaces have had on the nature of contemporary public life has been the focus of much critical research in the recent past with some assuming that the standardisation of spatial form has led to the standardisation of social practice. In the following, I attend to how researchers responded to the proliferation and dominance of these spaces, and how they engaged with the distance between the structures of the mall and strictures of social practice. I investigate the extent to which work on the spatial forms and features of malls has led to certain assumptions about the nature of their publicness and the extent to which these assumptions are accurate. In doing so I draw on early topographic accounts that focused on the structures of the place as a basis from commenting on the nature of contemporary urban publicness. However, I use this work to fill out the context of this spatial form and I suggest something different from these pessimistic analyses about the nature and processes of publicness in the mall.

5.3 Between Traditional Public Space and the New Town Square

In Chapter 3 I touched on dystopian critiques of contemporary public space. Emerging in the early 1990s, this critique argued that once common understandings of publicness were in decline due to regimes of neoliberal governance and the parallel growth in quasi-public spaces such as shopping malls, casinos and gated communities. It was argued that these new spatial forms posited a commercialised, sanitised and ultimately exclusionary form of publicness in the place of more egalitarian, engaging and democratic one. Within these debates the shopping mall took on an archetypical role as a symbol of the decline of traditional public space, and their proliferation was seen as a portent for a less public future. However, as outlined in Chapter 3, this early
characterisation of contemporary publicness has increasingly been questioned by those offering more nuanced accounts of ‘traditional public space’ and by those seeking to expand the terrain of publicness to consider diverse sites of public enactment, a line of inquiry that feeds off and into a processual approach to public life.

Writing on the mall has traversed similar political and academic terrain. This chapter charts this literature from early analyses that sketched the mall’s economic, regulatory and architectural form through to more recent work that has begun to ask after the nature of the publicness these spaces produce. It charts the move from more determinist and fatalist renditions of the mall to those engaged with how this space gathers publics and shapes publicness. Having established the dimensions of the academic literature on the mall, I explore Foucault’s concept of heterotopia as a way of holding critique of the mall’s structures and analysis of its publicness in tension. Foucault’s concept of heterotopia provides a means of remaining critical of some aspects of the mall’s public life whilst acknowledging its capacity to enable a particular form of publicness. It empowers the work to consider the processes in the mall that produce publicness amongst and beside consumer culture.

5.3.1 Writing the Mall: From the end of public space to a new form of publicness

The growth and dominance of the mall as an urban form has been the focus of scholarly attention since the 1980s. This literature evolved from early attempts to sketch its architectural, economic and regulatory structures, reflecting many of the themes developed on the political economy and regulatory practices shaping the mall described in Section 5.2, through to work that has begun to chart the nature of publicness enacted in place.

In 1985 journalist William Kowinski published his widely read *The Malling of America* (1985). Spurred on by the personal experience of the construction of a mall near his hometown of Greensburg-Pennsylvania, Kowinski wrote evocatively and entertainingly about the impact malls were having on the economic and social life of the United
States. In the process he uncovered their common architecture, regulation and economic base, and how these structures were shaped by the needs and desires of consumers and capital. Importantly, he also explored what attracted people to shopping malls and how they interacted in them when they got there, documenting a broader set of social practices than simply consumption. Writing as the form developed, Kowinski predicted that the mall as a model of economic and social life would be transplanted from suburbia and applied across the city in downtown marketplaces, gated communities and waterfront redevelopments.

Kowinski’s thoughtful investigation was followed by scholarly work, which in the early 1990s, began to sketch the dimensions of the mall in more detail. Margaret Crawford’s (1992) contribution to Variations on a Theme Park positioned the mall as an inauthentic and mechanistic urban structure designed to capitalise on the nexus between identity and consumer culture. In keeping with Variations’ tenor, Crawford thought the mall represented a new style of securitised and privatised urbanism that would come to dominate America’s post-war urban fabric and, in time, that this model of urban form would see ‘the world become a shopping mall’.

In the following year John Goss (1993) published The Magic of the Mall, an attempt in his words, to ‘obtain an understanding of how the retail built environment works, and how we might work against it’ (Goss, 1993: 18). Goss detailed—just I have done in Section 5.2— the dimensions of the mall, its architecture, leasing arrangements and regulations. In essence he argues that the mall is a spatial instrument used for the circulation of commodities and the creation of profit. Whilst acknowledging that individuals are never completely duped by the consumer culture or architectural design, he argues that the mall is nonetheless able to structure opportunities and constrain the movement and social interaction of individuals and publics. For Goss, the mall conceals its central purpose by creating a carnivalesque environment and so it:

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appears to be everything it is not. It contrives to be a public, civic space even though it is private and run for profit; it offers a place to commune and recreate, while it seeks retail dollars; and it borrows signs of other places and times to obscure its rootedness in contemporary capitalism (Goss 1993: 40).
Goss’s and Crawford’s works remain the most comprehensive scholarly treatments of the mall’s form, function and significance. They gave shape to many of the themes and much of the tone of research on the mall for a decade or more. Taking up their lead, many studies focused on the regulation of retail property and measured the space’s claims to being the new town square against its extensive use of surveillance and its close management of what it defines as social and political deviance (Jackson, 1996; Voyce, 2003, 2006). This assessment of the mall was bound up with a broader critique of the neoliberalisation of urban governance and the concomitant rise of consumer spaces (Harvey, 1989; MacLeod, 2002; Weber, 2002). For those focused on contemporary public life, the concern was that the rise of the quasi-public space was having a deleterious impact on the nature and expectations of publicness and social life in the city (Davis, 1990; Kohn, 2004; Sorkin, 1992; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2006; Zukin, 1995).

Having established the dimensions of the mall and its place within neoliberal urban policy, several studies began to engage with the processes and publics associated with malls. Vanderbeck and Johnson (2000) for instance, document the reasons behind young peoples’ use of malls. They argue that the mall fulfills young peoples’ desire for a space that enables autonomy and safety, concluding that their use ‘reflects relatively mainstream desires such as to be safe, to interact with other young people and to feel a sense of possibility and choice’ (Vanderbeck & Johnson, 2000: 5). While some studies focused on users’ experiences in the space, others considered the processes that created publics and publicness in the mall and how this was qualitatively different from other public forms. In USA’s Destiny Regulating Space and Creating Community in American Shopping Malls Staeheli and Mitchell (2006) focus on how the mall effectively redefines notions of publicity by creating regulations that draw on discourses of community rather than notions of ‘the public’, in ways that limit the political potency of quasi-public space. Importantly however, Staeheli and Mitchell argue that the mall engenders processes that work against rather than totally exclude some forms of publicness:
malls stand for civility and community, rather than publicity, tightly holding to private property rights as a basis for regulating the institutions, actions and people allowed in the mall, or the new town square. It is not the case that these regulations prohibit interactions with people or ideas different than ourselves, that would be too strong a conclusion and would deny the expressions of dissent and acts of resistance that do occur. Rather ideas of publicity are mutated into community, thereby blunting the possibilities for building an inclusive, but nevertheless civil, public sphere (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2006: 989).

Staeheli’s and Mitchell’s rendition of the mall speaks to a subtle difference between the types of publics created and the sorts of publicness enacted in shopping malls. Whereas early accounts of the mall had a tendency to draw on malls’ structural attributes and from this basis argued that these spaces diminished public life, Staeheli and Mitchell explore the distance between the structures and intentions of the space and the actions and articulations of individuals and publics. Their carefully calibrated response suggests we must engage with and interrogate these processes in ways that account for agency from, and resistances to, the structures of the mall. The tone of Staeheli and Mitchell’s work can be seen as part of a wider movement that began to engage with the new spatial and social realities of the post-war public city, a movement less focused on how these new spaces measured up to an imagined past and one more intent on considering the types of processes, publics and publicnesses these spatial forms engendered (see Chapter 3). Building on their analysis of the mall, Staeheli and Mitchell make a more general point about the nature and utility of public space by arguing that:

The kind of space in itself may not be as important as the quality of interactions afforded by different kinds of public spaces including: the kinds of people admitted, the ability of different voices to be heard, the range of speech and participation allowed, and the ways in which ideas and are expressed and received (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2006: 980).

This represents an evolution in academic engagement with the mall, an evolution that draws on critiques of normative visions of public life and dystopian predictions of public space. By adopting a processual rather than normative approach to publicness
we can begin to engage with types of publicness engendered in the new town square. The following case study adopts this disposition and uses Foucault’s notion of heterotopia as an alternative to normative critique of public space able to attend to the processes of publicness played out in the mall.

5.3.2 What of Other Shopping Malls?

Unlike his contemporary Habermas, Foucault’s work seldom refers to publicness and the public sphere directly. Nonetheless he has influenced many authors who have dealt with questions of publicity, who have often developed themes in Foucault’s work and applied them spatially (see Allen, 2006; Basson, 2006; Flyvbjerg, 1998). In a similar vein, this chapter draws on Foucault’s concept of heterotopic space as a means of engaging with the contemporary shopping mall and as a means of revealing the processes which produce publicness in the mall.

In Of Other Spaces, Foucault (1986) sets out by arguing that while the nineteenth century was the century of history, the current epoch will be concerned with space:

The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein (Foucault, 1986: 22).

Tracing the development of spatial thought back to the Middle Ages, Foucault argues that space was previously viewed as a hierarchical, idealised and homogenous container of social practice. Beginning with Galileo however, this view of space has become redundant and increasingly everyday space has been seen as the product of contextual relations that make it always potentially the site of heterogeneity, simultaneity and juxtaposition:

The space in which we live, which draw us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and knaws [sic] at us, is
also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineate sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another (Foucault, 1986: 23).

Foucault’s concept of heterotopic space provides a useful analytical tool for considering publicness and the shopping mall in two ways. First, rather than treating consumption and publicness as mutually exclusive, Foucault’s heterotopias allows us to consider the ways in which the two coexist and are juxtaposed in place. Second, Foucault argues that space is a product of the complex interaction of the material and social, rather than being simply a container of social practice. In the context of the shopping mall this allows us to consider how the mall shapes publicness but more importantly how users shape the material, economic and regulatory architecture of the mall to produce publicness. The remainder of this chapter analyses Westfield-Liverpool using Foucault’s heterotopic space as a guide. The results of this analysis point to the need for a re-conception of publicness that points towards a more optimistic and open future, drawn from the realisation that publicness is always a contextual process able to contend with and extend the boundaries and limitations of place.

5.4 Being Public in the Consumers’ Republic

For many the shopping mall is the spatial articulation of a broader socio-political trend which has positioned consumer culture at the centre of urban public life (Crane & Dee, 2001; Iveson, 2007; Thomas, 2003; S. Watson, 2006). Thus much of the literature on the mall has focused on the role of commodity seduction and a culture of (in)security in shaping the nature of the publicness in these spaces (Clough & Vanderbeck, 2006; Glaeser & Gottlieb, 2006; Goss, 2004, 2006). Whilst this is undeniably part of the explanation, this chapter analyses how key informants frame the space; the way users talk about the nature of enacting publicness in the shopping mall and the distance between these descriptions and my observations of the space. In the process I explore
users’ everyday experiences of the mall. Through these encounters, what is uncovered is arguably a more complex picture of publicness in place, one which is suggestive of both the agency of individuals and a diversity of public modalities which occur instead of, alongside, and through the process of consumption. Three central elements of participants’ experiences are drawn out: the temporal nature of publicness, the relationship between security and subjectivity, and the complex understandings users have of the mall as a public space that can accommodate politics, culture and consumption.

5.4.1 A Consumers’ Public in Place—Westfield-Liverpool

This case study is based on Westfield-Liverpool, a shopping mall located in the LGA of Liverpool in Sydney’s south-west (see Figure 5.1). As alluded to in Chapter 3 the Australian urban context has undergone a period of transformation in response to both wider economic and demographic change which has altered ‘some of the taken-for-granted aspects of the Australian urban character’ (Forster, 2006: 174). In turn south-western Sydney has been transformed by both the large numbers of migrants who continue to settle in the region and the growing numbers of wealthy ‘aspirationalas’ who have gravitated to a series of master-planned communities located on the area’s fringe (Gleeson, 2004; Kenna, 2007). The result has been an increasing cultural diversity across Western Sydney, coupled with a period of growing socio-economic polarisation between pockets of relative affluence and relative deprivation (2004, 2006a, 2006b). The past decade has been a period in which the public sector has continued to retreat from the provision of public facilities and infrastructure, only to be replaced by the private sector which has invested in ways which have exacerbated rather than alleviated the area’s inequities (Gleeson, 2004, 2006b). The (re)development of Westfield-Liverpool located in the LGA of Liverpool City Council is an example of such private investment and its reconstruction is a direct response to the wider economic and demographic change in the area. Westfield-Liverpool commands an important position in Liverpool’s CBD, effectively serving as a bookend
to the northern end of Macquarie Street and the adjacent public mall (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

Westfield-Liverpool embodies many of the relationships discussed in Section 5.2. The mall is jointly owned by Westfield Property Group and funds manager AMP. Westfield is the largest RPG in Australia and a significant player internationally with malls in the United States, Britain and Brazil (Group, 2012). AMP is one of the country’s largest institutional investors and one of its largest retail property owners, with a property portfolio that includes 32 shopping centres (AMP Capital, 2012). Westfield-Liverpool is home to many of the large retail chains that dominate the tenant mix in the Australian context—the likes of Coles Myer and Target. The redevelopment of Westfield-Liverpool involved the purchasing of what was previously public land, serving as a concrete example of the RPG’s ability to manipulate local government regulations. Part of the mall’s redevelopment was the addition of many of the services associated with mall branding such as a help desk and concierge service.

Figure 5.1 Liverpool in relation to Sydney CBD and the wider metropolitan area.
Source: Prepared by Olivier Rey-Lescure, The University of Newcastle NSW.
The centre itself has undergone a series of renovations since its initial construction in 1972 (City of Liverpool Champion, 1972, 1998; Sydney Morning Herald, 1972; The City of Liverpool Leader, 1969). Despite this, until 2006 it would have been considered a typical regional centre by Australian standards. However, beginning in July 2004, the centre underwent a $200 million redevelopment in what was described in industry journal Shopping Centre News as ‘a response to a dramatically changing demographic’ in the area (Shopping Centre News, 2005: 27). The redevelopment was described in terms of modernising the mall to meet the demands of an emerging affluence in south-western Sydney:

What Westfield-Liverpool is at present could be described as functional. It’s a comprehensive collection of basic retail; that’s needed, but in the super prime regional of the 21st century, it should be complimented [sic] by a component of the glamour, the special, the indulgence factor, the reward factor (Shopping Centre News, 2005: 28).

The centre’s expansion included the extension of the existing Coles supermarket and the addition of a Big W department store and approximately 150 specialty stores. To facilitate this, existing retail businesses adjacent to the centre as well as an existing public road were purchased from Liverpool City Council at a reported price of $9.24 million (Shopping Centre News, 2005) (see Figures 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5). As a result Westfield-Liverpool is now considered a ‘major regional’ mall. However, beyond the quantitative change in the size and range of stores, the centre’s redevelopment is indicative of a trend in retail property to (re)position malls as the new town square by encompassing many of the favourable elements of the old main street (Wooley, 2004). In this case the new town square includes a family friendly precinct, high-end retail, a fresh food market and al fresco dining.

The Shopping Centre Directory (Property Council of Australia, 2009) published by the Australian Property Council defines a Regional Centre as a retail property of 30 000–50 000 metres² of lettable area with one full line department store, a full line discount department store, one or more supermarkets and approximately 100 specialty shops. A Major Regional Centre is defined as a centre with approximately 150 specialty shops and 50 000–85 000 metres² of lettable area.
Figure 5.2 Westfield Liverpool in relation to the mall and Northumberland Street (Liverpool’s main street) before the redevelopment. Source: Prepared by Olivier Rey-Lescure, The University of Newcastle NSW.

Figure 5.3 Westfield Liverpool in relation to the mall and Northumberland Street after the redevelopment. Source: Prepared by Olivier Rey-Lescure, The University of Newcastle NSW.
Figure 5.4 Section of Northumberland St purchased from Liverpool City Council. Source: Liverpool Leader 14/07/2007. Reprinted here with permission of Newspix.

Figure 5.5 Corner Elizabeth and Bathurst St. Photo taken 01/01/2004. Before this redevelopment Northumberland St cut this façade in two. Source: Author.
5.4.2 Engaging with the Consumers’ Public

Given the repositioning of the mall, I want to investigate here what publics and types of publicness this new town square enables. The research targeted key informants in the local council and Westfield, as well as local youths and seniors in the area who had knowledge and experience of the public dynamics in the mall. In total six semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted, each taking between 45 and 90 minutes. Key informants were sought for the insights they had into the operation and governance of the mall. Local youths and seniors in the area were interviewed during a series of focus groups. Five semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted, each taking between 45 and 90 minutes in total with up to 10 participants in each session. These focus group interviewees were chosen as they were considered to represent a cross-section of the local community and as others have shown, their uses of and interactions in public spaces differ significantly (Dangar, 2000; Harley, 2003; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2006; Voyce, 2003, 2006). Users’ knowledge and opinions were sought during a series of focus group interviews that focused on the mall as a site of everyday publicness. Initially I targeted local youth, parents and seniors. However, efforts to organise focus group sessions with local parents proved unsuccessful, perhaps reflecting the time-poor nature of this group. Focus group sessions with local youth targeted two local youth organisations: a local representative group associated with Liverpool City Council, namely the Liverpool Youth Network, and the other youths associated with Liverpool Police Citizens Youth Council. Focus group sessions with seniors were conducted with two organisations, again one associated with Liverpool City Council, namely the Liverpool Seniors Network, and the Liverpool branch of the National Seniors Association. In what follows I combine data gleaned from focus groups and interviews with analysis of publicly available data and extracts from my own field observations to construct a picture of publicness in the mall. The following section explores how these groups and individuals experience and understand publicness in the mall before moving on to discuss the implications of these findings for notions of publicness in the city.
5.4.2 Time, Place and Publics

Publicness in this mall is not static; rather, it has its own public rhythm that changes according to the time of day, week, month and year. Importantly this public rhythm is not solely determined by the operations of capital and consumer culture. Rather, the rhythm of the mall is produced by the way different user groups occupy the mall at different times and, of equal importance, by how this rhythm of occupation ‘closes off’ the space to other publics. Thus, seniors consistently spoke of visiting the mall during parts of the day when other publics were not present:

Well I’m okay between the morning and early afternoon. I mean you do everything before the schools come out, that’s the way we operate, before the schools come out ‘cause [sic] once the schools come out then it’s the buses, everything you know (Respondent E, Liverpool Seniors Network).

...from what I’ve heard the young kids prefer to have the shopping mall of a Thursday night and I’m quite happy for them to do it (Respondent C, National Seniors Network).

Youth also identified that certain periods in the mall’s public life lacked the presence of others but they looked on these periods as an opportunity for social engagement and entertainment:

... on Thursday nights there’s a lot more young people there, like heaps, like I didn’t notice it for a while but then I started looking and there’s just a lot of people, not very many adults there, not on Thursday nights, because [that’s] where the kids go (Respondent A, Liverpool Youth Network).

Beyond the ways in which the temporality of the mall influenced the public which both engaged and disengaged from the space, youth spoke of the way temporality also influenced their access to the space. In particular, youth spoke of times associated with school hours in which they felt unwelcome:

...they won’t let you stay. If we’re talking about Westfields [sic] specifically they will not let students in uniform stay in the centre during school hours. I’ve been there [for] after school ceremonies, a half day and we’re not allowed to stay (Respondent F, Liverpool Youth Network).
Beyond the influence of subjects and publics on the nature of publicness, the research also uncovered a seasonal influence on the nature of publicness in the mall. Thus December was a time when:

...reassuring Christmas music (Live Aid) is [being] piped over the air waves ...
periodically interrupted by a voice which asks patrons ‘if they have visited such and such’ or ‘have they got x for y person’... Santa is here, taking photos with those willing to pay ... decorations are hanging from the roof ... there is no nativity scene. It is very crowded (Field Observation 9.45-12.00; 6/12/2006).

These accounts of the mall reveal the ways in which perceived public rhythms in place impact on publicness in the mall. In part this rhythm is determined by aspects of the store branding and regulation referred to earlier but it is also equally about how individuals respond to these strategies. More specifically, they illustrate the role of social inclusion and self-exclusion in determining the nature of the publicness that is facilitated in this space. Previous work has illustrated that both seniors and youths use public space at different times and in different ways (Crawford, 1992; Goss, 1993; Voyce, 2003, 2006). However, the role of other publics in ‘closing off’ urban space remains under-researched, with some notable exceptions (see Crane & Dee, 2001; Kowinski, 1985; Lees, 2003; Thomas, 2003; Vanderbeck & Johnson, 2000; S. Watson, 2006). Foucault’s concept of heterotopia is a useful lens which enables us to consider the ways in which the shopping mall is the product of quite complex socio-temporal relations. Undeniably these are related to processes of consumption such as the Christmas shopping period, however these relations coexist, and are juxtaposed with other social processes like how different user groups lay claim to the space according to an unwritten public rhythm in place.

5.4.3 Security and (in)security

The relationship between publicness and security in new public spaces has often been oversimplified. In earlier work new public space was presented as a site in which individual agency was forfeited to a combination of security personnel, security
technology and the public architecture of the mall, all designed to enforce an ethic of consumer capitalism (Cooper, 2006; Day, 2006; Gregson, Crewe, & Brooks, 2002; Iveson, 2005, 2007). However, more recently a more nuanced relationship between users of the mall and security has been revealed through the work of authors such as Allen (2006) and Button (2003). In line with the trend this research argues for a more complex understanding of (in)security in the mall, one which is as much the result of individual agency and positionality of as it is direct coercion. In this chapter I use security to signify two relationships, one being people’s perceptions of their personal security in the mall and the other being the relationships between individuals, publics and security personnel. More precisely, two findings are revealed: first, that the mall is perceived as secure but only in a relative sense and second, that the relationship between security personnel and the individual is influenced by positionality—the positionality of both security personnel, individuals and publics that use the mall.

Peoples’ use of the mall is driven by their perceptions of its safety which helps shape the publics attracted to the space and ultimately, the type of publicness enacted in place. This interpretation draws obliquely on the neoliberal critique of quasi-public space to suggest something different. Namely, users interact with security personnel with a mixture of thankfulness and weariness. Respondents argued that they were at times thankful for the presence of mall security because of the relative safety they provided the space, but that they were also at times weary of their presence because of the implications this had for their use of the space.

Both seniors and youth spoke of the mall as being a relatively safe place. Relatively is used deliberately here as the security of the space is consistently referred to as a comparative good; the mall was safe in comparison to other public areas in the Liverpool LGA. This was the case for both seniors and youth:

... where we’re situated we don’t have somewhere unless it’s organised entertainment like maybe an ice skating session or a movie session. There’s nowhere you can go to just hang out unless you pay for some sort of event or movie, a bowling session, something like that and because of that we need somewhere concrete that’s central, safer than say an outside park or garden (Respondent A, Liverpool Youth Network).
... when you get older and you’re not moving as fast as you want to be able to go somewhere where you feel secure and you haven’t got to be watching over your shoulder all the time like you feel you do in the street (Respondent D, Liverpool Seniors Network).

However this account of the mall as a space of relative safety is interspersed with comments in which the mall is described as a place of conflict and insecurity:

... so down stairs is safer but where you’ve got all the young people’s clothing shops, especially [compared to] upstairs where Galaxy World used to be all the gangsters ...
(Respondent E, Liverpool Youth Network).

So there’s [sic] even different spots within the mall that are safer? (Adam)

Yeah definitely (Respondent E, Liverpool Youth Network).

Seniors also recognised the mall as space that is sporadically insecure:

Very often you’ll be in Westfield of an afternoon or late evening [and] nine times out of ten there’s a fight and the security guards they can’t handle them, they call the police, they come they’re picking somebody up, they’re taking them to the station ...
(Respondent B, Liverpool Seniors Network).

As well as revealing an often conflicting and contradictory discourse of personal security, many respondents spoke of the complex relationship they had with the mall’s security personnel. Responses varied between the user groups but further to this, responses varied according to people’s positionality. Seniors often spoke of security personnel in positive terms and identified their presence as a significant reason for their use of the space:

The security men come to the door and stood there for me to come up so they were looking after me even though these people were out the front but I think as far as Westfield security—it’s well done (Respondent C, Liverpool Seniors Network).

However youth spoke of the security personnel in more nuanced ways. When asked how the shopping mall was different from other spaces, one pair of respondents
commented that the lack of a security presence in spaces such as the local soccer field was positive in terms of personal liberty because

You don’t have a security guard come up to you? (Respondent A, Liverpool PCYC)

Yeah, you have more freedom (Respondents B Liverpool PCYC).

However, youth also indicated that they often preferred the presence of security guards which were to be found in the mall, particularly if they were by themselves because in the words of one participant, ‘If you get into trouble you want a security guard to come and get you’ (Respondent A, Liverpool PCYC). But more fundamentally, for youth as much for seniors, the presence of security guards and the existence of others in close proximity is associated with a heightened sense of safety:

...there are so many people in there, like, in terms of like if you’re going for a walk outside you feel safer inside ‘cause there’s people there and there’s security guards ...
(Respondent D, Liverpool Youth Network).

The relationship between the mall’s security personnel, individuals and publics was further complicated by accounts that referred to the individual traits of security guards. These personal traits were often seen as a social barometer against which the welcome presence of young publics in particular was gauged. Speaking on the role of the mall in the social lives of local youth a Community Development Worker at Liverpool City Council referred to a period where many young people were being ejected from the mall and how this had changed when a more enlightened security manager was employed at the mall:

I think before what was happening was that [security guards were saying]; ‘Oh you’re not allowed to come in!’; they [young people] weren’t given any reasons why and so there was that constant conflict. Whereas I think the current security are a lot better with their communication, with that general kind of; ‘Hi guys how you going?’ And to keep that kind of positive communication going. So they don’t just interact when something’s going wrong they kind of go up and say ‘Oh hey how you going today?’
(Community Development Worker, Liverpool City Council)
This was supported by focus group participants who made a distinction between what they considered to be ‘good security’ personnel who welcomed diverse publics and the ‘evil scowling men’ who made young people in particular feel unwelcome in the mall:

What is a good security? They get out to young people, talk to them so that they’re not just patrolling around, they’re actually talking to us. Like I’ve got a security guard friend who worked at Westfields...he used to talk to everyone when it was quiet...so he’d get to know everyone...but the security guards now they wouldn’t say boo to you, they’re just evil scowling men...(Respondent C, Liverpool Youth Network)

There is a complexity of users’ and regulators’ positionalities have that is absent from more determinist readings of the mall (see Davis 1990). These comments suggest that users of the mall had a complex relationship with the mall’s security guards, that is often influenced by the personal character traits of guards as much as by their role as a regulatory instrument in the mall, that shaped the forms of publicness they experienced in this space.

Finally, many users’ perceptions of the space were based on reports in the public sphere rather than personal accounts or concrete experience:

I think you see it, if you don’t see it, personally see it, you read about it or see it on television [and] you think to yourself well if I go there to that place and if I’m going to the mall or a shopping centre or something like that at certain times, say school being out and something like that, well I wouldn’t be safe (Respondent D, Liverpool Seniors Network).

The relationship between publicness and security in new public spaces has often been oversimplified. These findings suggest users have a complex and at times contradictory understanding of security in the mall. The presumed safety of the mall is a comparative good which links the space to the wider public architecture of Liverpool City. In this case, the mall was assumed to be safe in comparison to the public mall which it directly adjoined (see Figure 5.3). However, whilst perceived as a safer space than the public mall, the shopping mall was also perceived as a space which was sporadically a
place of conflict and insecurity, a finding which is seldom mentioned in normative critiques of new-public space (Button, 2003).

Furthermore, in contrast to much of the literature which positions security personnel and users of the space, particularly youth, in a relationship of domination and subservience, the results of this research suggest a more complex interrelationship; than this, one which varies according to the position and preferences of all of the individuals involved. This suggests that individuals are always potentially in a process of negotiation with security personnel, often to their own advantage. Again Foucault’s concept of heterotopic space is pertinent here as it is a means of accounting for the divergent processes of domination, negotiation and collaboration which users have with security personnel in this space. Foucault’s heterotopia also enables us to account conceptually for moments of personal security, insecurity and conflict that are often contingent upon moments of individual perception and positionality. This speaks to a processual understanding of publics and publicness tied to personal perceptions of security and safety amongst others.

5.4.4 Consuming Politics

Much of the literature on the mall has argued that the democratic ethic associated with traditional public space has been replaced with the consumer culture of new public space. This ‘democratic deficit’ is often described as the outcome of overt coercion which actively discourages political activity within quasi-public space (Crawford, 1992; Davis, 1990). In writing quasi-public space in this way, individual users of the mall are often positioned as the dupes of all-pervading processes of consumer capital and culture. Interestingly, rather than lamenting the loss of a democratic ethos in public space, this research suggests that users of the mall are at best ambivalent about politics in the new town square, reflecting exactly the neoliberal critique of the effect of quasi-publics. Often they indicated that they thought the mall was an inappropriate site for political activity and, further to this, nominated other spaces in the city which they thought were more appropriate for the
practice of democracy. This finding was particularly pronounced amongst seniors who presumably recollected a time when the old town square and main street were the centre of urban public life:

...it’s different here [Macquarie Mall], there is movement all the way you know and this wouldn’t affect the public as much as people spruiking their wares or politicians or church people, anything like that, you know in shopping centres like Westfield whereas in a pedestrian mall like this [Macquarie Mall] I don’t see any trouble with that. Everyone sells stalls [sic] and all that sort of stuff I don’t see any problems with that but I wouldn’t like to see it in a shopping centre (Respondent C, Liverpool Seniors Network).

However, to characterise this response as endemic of a public which has been duped into associating the mall exclusively with consumption would be incorrect. Users often voiced quite complex understandings of what they thought were the deeper societal shifts which encouraged mall use and combined this with concerns about the impact these spaces may be having on their culture and community:

...that’s your problem with all these major centres. No matter what people these days [say] they want to go because they want to park the car once and do their shopping, and get into the centre to the detriment of the little shopkeepers up the road ... Much as we like to think of the past where it was nice to go into the little shops and everything like that ... they’ve [Westfield] seen the need for that, and this is what it comes back to, it’s the customers that want to do all their things in one place. This is why Woolworths and Coles [national grocery chains] have been able to expand out into areas which they never did before which was to get the fruit and vegetables and everything like that and so the face of buying has changed dramatically. From where I stand I can’t see it going back ... (Respondent B, National Seniors Network)

These responses were given despite the fact that during the final stages of the 2007 federal election campaign both the then Prime Minister John Howard and Opposition leader Kevin Rudd used shopping malls extensively in a bid to win key marginal seats; so much so that one of Australia’s senior political commentators Michelle Grattan, commented that ‘our consumer society has elevated the shopping centre to a forum democracy’ (Grattan, 2007: 1). The fact that this political activity but not others are deemed appropriate should be investigated further.
It’s a public, I reckon. It’s hard because Westfield is a company that has set up this building space to make money, but having said that the general trend of society is to become more materialistic and to become more wealth oriented and so that if you’ve got that sort of psychological process happening then people are naturally going to be drawn to shops where they can buy things and get things. And that becomes sort of [the] centre of where everything happens then it’s naturally going to happen that that becomes the place to hang out. So Westfield I guess can’t have it both ways, they can’t expect to have everyone in there and be wanting to buy things but then be selective as to who they have … (Respondent D, Liverpool Youth Network).

These responses suggest a more complex picture of subject agency in space, one in which the positionality of users exists somewhere between the poles of the cultural dupe of the dystopian account and the retail revolutionary who celebrates the emancipatory power of retail therapy. Empirical analysis must maintain a necessary tension between these two extremes. To limit users’ identities to those of consumers ignores the complex ways identity is always in the process of construction, at times in contrast to, but often through, consumer culture (Crawford, 1992; Davis, 1990; Goss, 1993; Mitchell, 2003). Again, Foucault’s concept of heterotopia is useful for thinking about how the mall can be a public, but not a political space. These comments suggest that users of the mall are aware but far from fully convinced by the consumer’s public. Mall users are conscious of its strategies of control but concerned by its politics, aware of the social consequences these spaces are having on contemporary public life but not completely complicit in its demands. This suggests that despite measures designed to manage publicness in the mall, users are still aware of and thus never completely captive to, its politics.

However, to write about the complexity of the mall is not to ignore that the space is a place of consumption. Indeed many participants admitted that at times they consumed—albeit consciously—in an almost impulsive manner:

… we get taught in commerce about all that stuff, about all the tricks they have to get us to spend money and stuff. One of my friends told me the other day that I was a perfect example like, of it working, because I’m a sucker ‘cause I walk up to something and I go, ‘Oh that’s cute’ and they go, ‘Yeah they put that there because they know
you’re going to buy it because they know it attracts’ and I go ‘But it’s cute’ and then I’ve bought it... (Respondent C, Liverpool Youth Network).

But to conflate this with a lack of individual agency ignores the fact that many users argued that consumption was often used as a functional means of remaining in public:

I do me [sic] shopping in Coles or Woolies, I meet friends we have coffee and sit around and I think we might as well be here as being [at] home on me [sic] own. And I’m a people watcher, I’ll sit there and I watch people going by ... (Respondent E, Liverpool Seniors Network).

This notion of shopping as a pretext for publicness was supported by others. Commenting on the role of the mall in the social life of local youth a Community Development Worker at Liverpool City Council argued that young people’s use of the mall was part of a broader context of public space use that reflected their need for a space of social life away from the domestic sphere:

I think young people use the public spaces a bit different, in that they need public space to interact with other young people, and socialise and connect and just hang out basically to get away from I guess the pressures of home life and just to have their own kind of space (Community Development Worker, Liverpool City Council).

And Westfield would play a pretty big part? [Adam]

Yeah you know like Thursday night that’s the meeting point you know what I mean. That’s where they go to, not necessarily buy stuff, although I do think young people are big purchasers of things (Community Development Worker, Liverpool City Council).

This social role of the mall is supported by the work of authors such as Vanderbeck and Johnston (2000) who argued that young people use shopping malls as spaces of autonomy and relative safety (see also Voyce 2003, 2006). Interestingly, the Community Development Worker at Liverpool City Council argued that, in functional terms, youths’ and seniors’ use did not differ dramatically but the nature, the tenor of youths’ behaviour attracts more attention from mall management compared to the understated and more acceptable use of the elderly:
I think in a way they [seniors] would use it [the mall] in a similar way...they have a bit more time than [other] adults who might be pressed in terms of work or family commitments. So seniors have the time, like young people, to have something to eat and have a look around the shops and things like that. But there’s possibly not that perception that they’re hanging out and causing a bit of trouble, because...they don’t look intimidating. So, I think in a way their use is quite similar... but the perception is different, [because] the oldies aren’t rowdy and in your face (Community Development Worker, Liverpool City Council).

Irrespective of the age of the individuals and publics, or the tenor of their use, this notion of the mall as a place where consumption was used as a pretext for publicness was one that the mall management was conscious of. Speaking on the role the mall plays in the social life of Liverpool the mall’s manager stated that management has:

...strategies in place that encourage people to shop not so much to congregate and hang around and cause trouble.... Having said that we fully understand that people come here to window shop, browse around and meet and socialize; you are more than welcome to come here and shop or be here and not spend money because you are probably getting ideas and will spend money later on (Centre Manager, Westfield-Liverpool).

This comment reveals the tension in place in the mall between what Staeheli and Mitchell (2006: 989) refer to as ‘civility and community, rather than publicity’. Mall management are mindful that people use the mall and its consumptive practices as a pretext for publicness. In these comments, the mall’s manager almost acknowledges that people and publics come to the mall legitimately for purposes other than shopping and yet, consumption creeps back into his response—almost as a reflexive afterthought.

Conscious of this tension, the mall manager was keen to frame the work of mall security in terms of its ability to engage with individuals and publics referring to them as; ‘...an extension of the customer service team. They’re kind of our eyes and ears to a large degree’ (Centre Manager, Westfield-Liverpool). So again, aware of the friction between the competing functions of the mall as a reputed community and consumer
space, management was keen to emphasize the surveillance and community engagement role of the mall’s security, rather than its ability to police and control the nature of publicness in the mall.

During an interview, a Community Development Worker at Liverpool City Council described the mall’s redevelopment as a missed opportunity for Council to spell out its role as a place of publicness in Liverpool LGA. The Community Development Worker argued that if the mall had a reputed role in Liverpool as a place of consumption and publicness then the spaces redevelopment was an opportunity for Council to stipulate and enforce some community obligations on the mall:

Um [extended pause] I think possibly Council just hasn’t taken the opportunity when they’ve arisen. Like when Westfield would have had to apply for [the redevelopment]... Council didn’t take that opportunity to say “Okay you’ve got a development application in let’s sit down and talk about what” [the space’s community obligations are] (Community Development Worker, Liverpool City Council).

This ‘missed opportunity’ would have presumably been enhanced by the fact that the redevelopment relied on the purchase of additional public and council land. Surely this presented a sound opportunity to demand some stipulations for community access and engagement. (see also Voyce 2003, 2006). However, one respondent put the practice of publicness and its relationship to consumption spaces in a historical context which for him suggested that such practices have for his living memory always been imbricated:

So in what ways has it [the mall] changed what it means to being public? How has it changed what it means to be in public space? [Adam]

I still look at it as a mall...it’s purely and simply a shopping area. But if you turn it around and you look at it no matter which way you think of it, what the younger generation does we did it ourselves...the mall to us is say shopping area but now there’s other activities going on, the youngsters meeting, using it as a meeting place. It is no different to what we used to use the milk bar for or the pictures, they were a meeting place...
These comments, which trace the confusion and complication of consumption and publicness over time reinforces a more heterotopic view of public space and public practice. These findings suggest that previous accounts of the mall and more particularly subject agency in the mall have served to oversimplify what is a complex relationship. Users are neither cultural dupes nor retail revolutionaries. Using Foucault’s concept of heterotopia as a lens, what emerges is a publicness that is shaped both by processes of consumption and individual agency. Certainly consumer culture plays its part, but it is also manipulated by users who are interested in being in public as a means of constructing identity and creating social connection. This complexity suggests that a processual approach focused on the nature and practices of publicness in place may provide a more comprehensive view of publicness in the mall.

5.5 Conclusion

Rather than a totalising environment of consumption, this case study revealed a publicness that is constituted by the complex and at times contradictory relationship people have with space. What is uncovered is space which periodically attracts some and repels others, a space associated with safety and security but one which is simultaneously a place of conflict and uncertainty, a space where one’s relationship with security personnel is not fixed but interchangeable, and a space which is apolitical but nonetheless one which invokes concern among users about the impact this space and places like it are having on culture and community in their city. However, beyond the banal conclusion that space and people’s relationships with it are complex and should always be referred to as thus what is the implication of this reading of the mall for notions of publicness and public space?

Publicness in the shopping mall fails to measure up to the utopian ideal of what publicness should be, but rather, what emerges from the accounts of everyday users is a messier heterotopic space which, crucially, is public nonetheless, a public space which is influenced by relations of capital and consumer culture but also the agency of individuals and publics whose behaviours often take place under, instead of, alongside
and through, consumption. Too often urban research has framed publicity as a zero-sum game which, given the privatisation occurring in our cities, is necessarily equated with a decline in publicness itself. This has left the social in the shopping mall largely unwritten, and has closed off opportunities to re-imagine and reengage such spaces with a more progressive public ethic. Rather than a quantitative change, I would argue that there is a qualitative change occurring in the nature of publicness in the contemporary city—brought about by these new spaces but also connected to wider socio-political trends.

Thus publicness should be conceived of in less rigid terms. Based on the work in this chapter I argue for a re-conception of publicness based on three points of revision. First, that publicness is a social practice that is applied across a variety of spaces in the city—ranging from private, to quasi-public, to so-called ‘traditional public space’. Second, rather than a predetermined practice fostered under exclusive preconditions, publicness is a dynamic practice, which although not wholly independent of space, is one which is not determined by it either. Publicness is both constituted by, and constitutive of space. Finally, whilst the role of the material and economic context in shaping publicness must be acknowledged, this should not occur at the expense of appreciating the role of individual agency. Foucault’s concept of heterotopia provides a useful tool for just such a re-conception. Arguably this reconception, by accounting for individual agency in place, is more attuned to identifying the subtle opportunities available to individuals and groups to create a more progressive public ethic. This interpretation supports the theoretical approach outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, a notion of publics as a plural and of publicness as a process that touches on a diverse terrain of public life. Foucault’s concept of heterotopia—with its focus on heterogeneity, juxtaposition and simultaneity of space—extends a processual understanding of publicness by providing a conceptual instrument for exploring how diverse publics and forms of publicness coexist with and amongst dominant publics and within spaces not traditionally associated with publicness. In the next chapter I further complicate normative categorisations of public space by considering how a religious space may facilitate a form of publicness guided by the ethical and ritual dimensions of religious practice.
Chapter Six

‘It’s a public space but one with certain ethical requirements’: Publicness and Auburn Mosque
Chapter Six

6.1 ‘It’s a public space but one with certain ethical requirements’: Publicness and Auburn Mosque

In the previous chapter, I used Foucault’s concept of *heterotopia* as an analytical tool to explore publicness in a suburban shopping mall. I uncovered a space constituted by the complex and contradictory relations individuals and publics have with the consumer environment of the mall, a space that simultaneously supports the coexistence of consumerism and publicness. In this chapter I explore how religion, rather than consumerism also blurs the spatial and conceptual boundaries between public and private via a case study based on a suburban mosque in Sydney’s south-west. Based on this research, I argue that religious spaces produce a particular form of publicness that is shaped by the ethical dimensions of religious life. More broadly I suggest that that the relationship between publics and religion should be recast for a post-secular age where, for some, religion defines place and publicness. By focusing on a space not typically associated with publicity, this chapter builds on the discussion set out in Chapters 2 and 3 by providing empirical support to the notion of an expansive terrain of public life based on processual approach to publicness. These arguments are set out across three sections.

This chapter begins by outlining the relationships between place, publicness and religion. I consider how religion has often been set apart from publicness—conceptually, empirically and geographically. By drawing on literatures concerned with the relationship between religion and the state I question this distinction, arguing that it is a product of the political philosophy of liberalism (Casanova, 2010; Habermas, Reder, Schmidt, Brieskorn, & Ricken, 2010; D. Herbert, 2003; Vries, 2006; XVI & Habermas, 2006). I argue that the separation of church and state, under liberalism, has influenced empirical work on space and publicness. In making this argument I consider the historical distinction made between public space and religion. I argue that the separation between religion and publicness should be rethought for a post-secular age as religions still play an integral role in influencing the places and processes of publicness.
In the context of this argument I then use the case study of Auburn Gallipoli Mosque (AGM) as means of exploring the connection between religion and publicness. I begin by outlining Australia’s religious landscape and Islam’s role within it. Islam has a long and distinguished history in Australia, shaped by the response of a largely migrant community to the opportunities of their new home. Committed to the retention of their faith, Australian Muslims have sought to carve out a place for their religious practice. Mosques, as places of community and religiosity, have been crucial to this process. AGM is such a space. My second focus in this section is on AGM itself and the surrounding suburb of Auburn. Auburn is one of Sydney’s most ethnically diverse and fastest growing Local Government Areas (LGAs) and AGM is one its most important institutions. Here I explore the mosque’s history and the role it plays as a place of worship, education and welfare within Auburn LGA. I finish by considering how the specific internal dynamics of AGM influence the nature of the public and publicness created and enacted in place which provides the central focus of the case study. Using a processual understanding, I ask: how does the space of the mosque shape publicness in place?

In the final section I seek to answer this question. My investigation uncovers four characteristics associated with this space’s public and publicness. First, I look at how the mosque influences publicness, arguing that the mosque serves as an important locus of ‘bridging and bonding social capital’, enabling the creation of a parochial Muslim identity and connecting this public with other publics elsewhere. Second, I consider how cultural understandings of the mosque as a religious and community space colours the nature of the publicness articulated in place. I identify how temporal, subjective and temperamental factors influence the nature of publicness in AGM and how this differs from predominant understandings of religious and public space. Third, I consider how Islamic practices circulate beyond the mosque into what is considered to be the secular public at the scale of the body. Finally, I show how the cultural and religious understandings in place serve as an ethical structure that influences the publicness produced here.
This case study illustrates the important role that religion plays in public life. Rather than being a private space of personal belief, AGM is a space that enables publicness and encourages the creation of a religious public connecting it to other publics beyond its walls. Based on these findings I suggest that we reassess the role religion plays in shaping publics, creating publicness and pervading space. These findings suggest that the separation of religion and publicness is an arbitrary category applied to social life rather than an accurate reflection of the spatial dynamics of publicness. This supports, at a conceptual and analytical level, the notion of a plural and processual approach to publicness.

6.2 Space, Religion and Publicness

In this section I consider the relationships between space, religion and publicness. I illustrate how conceptual understandings of publics and publicness have influenced work on religion and space. Religion has often been positioned as separate from ‘the public’— conceptually, empirically and geographically. I argue that in a post-secular age the relationship between religion and public space should be recast to allow us to consider how religious places and practices influence and encourage particular forms of publicness. I begin by outlining how the development of liberalism as a political philosophy led to the conceptual separation of the public from religion. By revisiting contemporary work on public space and publicness, I illustrate how notions of the liberal public influenced empirical work, leaving religious space and expression largely untouched by literature on the urban public realm. By drawing on the concept of the post-secular society I illustrate the public character of religion. I finish by arguing for a conception of the public that considers the role that religious expression and place play in producing publicness.
6.2.1 The Public vs. Religion?

There is a degree of unease in treatments of religious life and publicness. The intersection of religion and public life challenges long-held understandings of the relationships between the individual, the state and religion established under liberalism. Liberalism has long sought to place the sacred in private, away from the public concerns of the secular state. In the contemporary context this is seen in the assumed secularity of the public when concerned with matters of religious expression, a potent example of this being the enforced neutrality of public institutions in constitutionally secular states such as France and Turkey (J. R. Bowen, 2006; Chrisafis, 2011). In the following I argue that the association of public life with the secular, and private life with the religious is a product of the political philosophy of liberalism rather than any substantive empirical category. And also, that this theoretical and empirical separation is insufficient for analysing publicness and public space in the post-secular city (Stevenson, Dunn, Possamai, & Pirachi, 2010; Vries, 2006).

Liberalism as a political philosophy is based on a set of assumptions about the nature of the self and its relationship with the state. In his work *The Church, State and Civil Society* Ferguson describes liberalism as based on the public recognition of three broad claims: the equality of all citizens under the law; the freedom of each to pursue the goods of his or her own choosing while not interfering unduly with another’s freedom; and the neutrality of the state with respect to the particular preferences of its citizens, including religion (D. Ferguson, 2004: 48).

The standard narrative is that this ‘family’ of rights and responsibilities developed as a consequence of successive social and intellectual changes that influenced notions of the self and of individuals’ relationships to state and religious authority (D. Herbert, 2003; Sennett, 1974 [2002]). This began with the fragmentation of Christianity during the Reformation that in turn informed the intellectual development of the rational public self of the Enlightenment. The outcome of these developments was religion’s retreat from public view which, under liberalism, came to be associated with the private domain of the individual conscience (Asad, 2003; D. Ferguson, 2004;
Habermas, 2006; Habermas et al., 2010; D. Herbert, 2003). This process of privatising religious life—secularisation—was the product of the unique historic and intellectual circumstances of Western Europe at the time of the Reformation.

One result was a change in the social and political institutions of the West. In many accounts these changes are seen as a functional response to the religious conflicts of the seventeenth century. Thus Europe’s political institutions were separated from its religious ones, in order to subdue sectarian conflict: ‘the political foundations of modern Europe were built on a consensus that religion should not be allowed to become a divisive factor in public life’ (D. Herbert, 2003: 8).

Written at the height of Europe’s sectarian tension, Locke’s *A Letter Concerning Toleration* is an attempt to ameliorate the competing interests of individual religious freedom and political authority. For Locke the connection between the state and religion led to exploitation and oppression in the guise of religious orthodoxy. Thus he sets out to ‘distinguish exactly the business of civil government from that of religion and to settle the just bounds that lie between one and the other’ (Locke, 1689 [2011]: 3). Locke attributed those temporal and immediate needs to the state whilst leaving ephemeral matters to the church.

Whereas Locke sought to ensure personal religious freedom by removing the connection between religious and civil authority, Hobbes’ *Leviathan* (1651 [1996]) offers a more conservative solution. Hobbes sought to promote peace and stability through self-interest by the means of a ‘social contract’ between sovereign and subject. According to Hobbes, the individual submits to the sovereign in return for personal freedom. In return the sovereign does not interfere in the lives of individuals, including their religious lives, provided they do not challenge civil authority. Hobbes’s contribution to secularism is the distinction he makes between sovereign and religious authority (Dumouchel, 2001). Like Locke, he argues that the connection between civil and religious authority is a threat to social stability. He thought ecclesial authority dominated both the state and the people. In response Hobbes advocates the subordination of the church to state rule:
The Hobbesian sovereign is meant to exercise a very broad control of public discourse, in philosophy, in science, in politics and morals, and especially in religion. The fundamental purpose of his [sic] control is to prevent sedition (Curley, 2007: 1).

The idea of the secular state promoted by Locke, Hobbes and, later, by other enlightenment intellectuals (see Paine, 1807 [2005]; Tocqueville, 1838 [2003]) influenced the political structures of liberal democracies in gradual, albeit uneven ways ranging from the constitutionally secular states of United States, France and Turkey, to the state-sponsored religion of England, and the hybrid models of Australia and Canada (Possamai, 2008). Thus secularism led to the gradual retreat of religion from political life as the state took on many of the roles previously performed by religion:

the influence of religion on the state diminished first through the Reformation and then in the formation of nation-states in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many of which had secular constitutions. These changes were concurrent with industrialization and urbanization, both of which severed ties between religion and production. Then, through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, religion lost its educational and social influence, as the national and welfare state took over these functions (D. Herbert, 2003: 35).

Structural change in the nature of government was accompanied by social changes that reconfigured the relationship between the self and the state. Sennett (1974 [2002]) and Dewey (1927 [1991]) both argue that socio-cultural change diminished the role of religion in public life. For them secularism was the product of rising unbelief and individualism promoted by the enlightenment and modernity as much as it was a product of the development of the secular government. These social changes meant that religion came to be understood as a matter of the conscience, and thus a personal and ultimately private affair:

As long as the prevailing mentality thought that the consequences of piety and irreligion affected the entire community, religion was of necessity a public affair ... Gods were tribal ancestors or founders of the community. They granted communal prosperity when they were duly acknowledged and were the authors of famine, pestilence and defeat in war if their interests were not zealously attended to. Naturally
when religious acts had such extended consequences, temples were public buildings, like the agora and forum; rites were civic functions and priests public officials. Long after theocracy vanished, theurgy was a political institution ... The revolution by which piety and worship were relegated to the private sphere is often attributed to the rise of personal conscience and assertion of its rights ... Social changes, both intellectual and in the internal composition and external relations of people, took place so that men [sic] no longer connected attitudes of reverence or disrespect to the gods with the weal and woe of the community. Faith and unbelief still had serious consequences, but these were now thought to be confined to the temporal and eternal happiness of the persons directly concerned (Dewey, 1927 [1991] :49).

So according to Dewey, the decline in the importance of religion was the consequence of a decline in its public importance, as enlightened rationalism questioned religion’s validity as the basis for communal prosperity. The influence of liberalism in redefining the relationship between religion and public life can be seen in the empirical work on the urban public. Whilst many authors have questioned liberal concepts of publicness and space (see chapter 2 and 3, and Barnett, 2008; Iveson, 2005, 2007; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008) the literature on the urban public realm has largely left religious place and expression untouched. Watson’s (2005) study on the role of the creation of Jewish eruv in London and New Jersey, and Howe’s (2009) work on state-sponsored religious speech are two notable exceptions. However, as Dewey’s comments allude to, public life has not always been spatially separated from religious life—public space has not always been associated with the secular. The agora and forum, spaces that shape much of the thought on publicness and public space, were once places of politics, profit and piety (Arendt, 1958 [1998]; Detienne, 2006; Dewey, 1927 [1991]; Henaff & Strong, 2001; Mumford, 1961 [1989]; Sennett, 1974 [2002]). The association of public space with secularism is a relatively new phenomenon. This empirical bias reflects liberal understandings of publicness more than it does the realities of urban public life (Jamoul, 2008). Indeed, most work on the relationship between religion and publicness has been conducted by a relatively small group of authors influenced by post-secularisation theory. The following section explores this work, considering what post-secularisation and work on religious place and experience suggest about the relationships between religion, publics, publicness and urban space. The next section
also revisits the notion outlined in Chapter 2 that the boundaries between publicness and privateness are not predetermined but rather constituted in contextually conditioned practices.

6.2.2 Geographies of Religion Post-secularisation

Liberalism has sought to separate religion from public life, leaving considerations of religious place and expression largely untouched by geographical analysis. In this section I consider post-secularisation theory, with a mind to considering how we might reappraise the role of religion and its relationships with publics, publicness and space. I then consider a number of empirical works that have explored the intersection of religion, publicness and place to illustrate the role religion plays in shaping publicness. I finish by arguing that some of the theoretical and empirical directions outlined in this work suggest that analysis of the urban public realm should be reconfigured in order to account for the role religious place and expression plays in producing publicness and that doing this is facilitated by a processual understanding of publicness.

The development of the secular state in the West was accompanied by social changes that altered the importance afforded to public religion. The extent of the privatisation of religious life is seen in the development and influence of secularisation theory in the social sciences. Secularisation theory was used to describe the ‘exclusion or at least the reduction, of the role of religion in public life’ (Kennedy, 2006: 1). Proponents of secularisation from the 1960s onwards asserted that religion would cease to be a significant aspect of public life (Berger, 2000; Beyer, 1992; Bruce, 2002; Christofferson, Iversen, Petersen, & Warburg, 2010; Davie, 2007; D. Herbert, 2003; Kong, 2001; Levey & Modood, 2009). Drawing on its roots in social theory from Comte and Durkheim onwards through Marx, Weber and Simmel, secularism was closely connected to the

23 Casanova problematises the notion of secularisation arguing that ‘what usually passes for a single theory of secularisation is actually made up of three very different, uneven and unintegrated propositions: secularisation as differentiation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, secularisation as decline of religious beliefs and practices, and secularisation as marginalization of religion to a privatized sphere’ (Casanova, 1994: 211). It is the notion of secularisation as an uneven social process that I adopt in this chapter.
project of modernity—thought to be the natural outcome for all societies as they applied enlightened rationality to religious superstition (Aldridge, 2007; Davie, 2007). According to Casanova, in this period secularisation came to be ‘the main theoretical and analytical framework through which the social sciences have viewed the relationship of religion and modernity’ (Casanova, 1994: 211). Secularisation was thought to be the product of a number of societal changes that impacted on the relevance of religion in modern life, such as the rise of individualism and the development of the personal religious conscience. But importantly it was also thought to be closely linked to processes of urbanisation (Beaumont & Baker, 2011b; D. Herbert, 2003). Thus secularism had ‘a kind of territorial ideology’ rooted in the city (Howe, 2009: 640; see also Stevenson et al., 2010).

However in recent history religion has, in the words of Herbert (2003: 98), ‘challenged the place assigned to it in the private sphere by liberal theory’ (Asad, 2003; Berger, 2000; see also Casanova, 1994; 1996). Religion’s resilience as a mode of life, and its ability to influence and impact on the public sphere has challenged the assertion that the privatisation of religion is the necessary and inevitable outcome of modernity. In its place, authors such as Habermas (1994, 1996, 2010) and Casanova (1994, 1996, 2010) have argued for the concept of a ‘post-secular society’, where religion is not only undergoing processes of ‘deprivatisation’ but where it continues to influence the social lives of many and the public lives of almost all (Mouffe, 2006; Vries, 2006). In the place of modernist secularisation these authors have argued that the contemporary world is constituted by an uneven and messy religious landscape where societies are undergoing simultaneous and spatially diffuse processes of secularisation and de-secularisation (Beaumont & Baker, 2011b; Stevenson et al., 2010). A distinction can be made between those theorists who would revise secularisation theory and place it in a context of multiple modernities (see Casanova 1994, Bruce 2002), and those who suggest secularisation theory has been completely refuted (see Asad 2003, Berger 2000). In this chapter I adopt the former view.

The implications of a post-secular society for geographical analysis are clear. If religion continues to shape the social lives of many and challenge its place in private,
geographical analysis needs to be open to this possibility. As Reder suggests ‘modern societies not only have to gear themselves to the continued existence of religion, but that religions actively shape social life at different levels and in a variety of forms’ (Reder, 2010 : 37). In light of post-secularisation and growing interest in the role of religion in urban life, a number of authors have explored the interaction of religion, space and publicness. Their work suggests a more fluid understanding of religion’s public terrain and a greater role for it in the production of publicness in place.

In her review of geographical research on religion in the 1990s, Kong (2001) identifies ‘public-private dialectics in the context of religious place and experience’ (2001a: 227) as one of the key areas for ‘new geographies of religion’. For her the city is the territory best suited to exploring the intersection of religion and publicness as it is the place ‘where the sacred and the secular...exist cheek by jowl’ (Kong, 2001: 212). A decade on, she notes the rise of post-secularisation theory as a philosophy engaged with theoretical and empirical work on the city, much of this focused on the dialectics of public and private produced by religious practice, place and experience (Kong, 2010).

Following the theoretical direction set out by Kong (2001), a few key authors have explored the relationship between religion and publicness empirically (see Brace, Bailey, & Harvey, 2006; Buttimer, 2006; Holloway & Valins, 2002; Proctor, 2006; Sheringham, 2010). Some have sought to extend the boundaries of religious life beyond the ‘officially sacred’, arguing for the enchantment of everyday life, while others have challenged the territorial ideology of liberalism by considering embodied religious practices that transgress the assumed boundaries of secular public space. For example, Holloway’s (2003) and Gokariksel’s (2009) research extends the boundaries of religious life into ‘the public’ via the enchantment of everyday life. Holloway’s study explores the way that ‘new age’ spiritual practices challenge everyday and otherwise secular topographies and how these intersect with the spatial politics of public space. The personalisation of secular space through ‘new age’ religious practice challenges traditional understandings of religion and public space at the scale of the body, a body that moves through religious and secular topographies. Holloway contests the secular—
sacred divide by considering the role of embodied religious practice as a mobile agent of transgression.

Similarly, Gokariksel’s (2009) study of pious women’s veiling in constitutionally secular Istanbul looks at the role of the body as an agent of religious practice that extends beyond officially religious spaces. Her work argues that women’s veiling, as a gendered and embodied religious practice, challenges the official boundaries between secular and sacred, public and private in constitutionally secular Turkey, reinforcing the notion outlined in Chapter 2 that publicness is a contextually constructed social condition that shares a porous boundary with privateness. Among Gokariksel’s conclusions is the argument that geographies of religion have often focused on the built environment at the expense of considerations of the body as a symbol and signifier of religious practice in public:

religion’s influence and effects are not and cannot be contained within officially sacred spaces; religion is a pervasive force in everyday life for the religious as well as the nonreligious and even the secular (Gokariksel, 2009: 658).

She argues for an understanding of the relationship between the sacred and the secular that is ‘mutually and contextually constituted ... the religious and the secular do not simply compete with one another but also intersect in complex and sometimes contradictory ways’ (Gokariksel, 2009: 658). Holloway and Gokariksel argue for religion as an embodied practice that roams beyond officially sacred places and out across ‘secular public space’.

While these authors seek to expand the territory of religion, at the same time a number of authors have challenged the assumed secular nature of liberal public space. Howe’s (2009) research on the exclusion of religious symbolism and speech from public space in the United States suggests that this process represents a system of ‘secular iconoclasm’. He contends that secular iconoclasm serves as a boundary marker of public space in the liberal imagination, producing public spaces that are at times hostile to religiosity in the name of neutrality. Despite practices aimed at purifying, privatizing or profaning religious speech and iconography, he argues that
publics are always latently influenced and impacted by religious meaning: ‘the supposedly undifferentiated space of the secular public sphere consists of different kinds of place, each entangled in different webs of religious meaning’ (Howe, 2009: 641). For Howe, normative categorisations of public space are unhelpful and inaccurate; instead he argues that processes of exclusion and inclusion are more important indicators of the nature of spatial relationships in place:

The mere presence or absence of religious symbols tells us very little about the kind of public we are dealing with; their deliberate inclusion or exclusion tells us only slightly more. What matters are the performances of inclusion and exclusion themselves, to whom they are addressed, by what means, and above all, within what framework of cultural meaning (Howe, 2009: 644).

In a similar vein Watson’s (2005) study on the public-creating religious practice of the eruv challenges liberalism’s public–private boundaries. In many ways Watson’s research is characteristic of work that has charted the resistances to the creation of religious places in a variety of contexts (see Dunn, 2004; Eade, 2011; Naylor & Ryan, 2002; Vincent & Warf, 2002). Pertinently, Watson uses the creation of the eruv, a space designed by Orthodox Jews for freedom of movement during the Sabbath, to illustrate how these resistances are animated by assumptions about the nature of public space under liberalism:

The eruv by redefining the public (or more precisely semi-public) as private for the purposes of the Sabbath thus raises a major problem as it exposes difference to the public gaze, it allows for the public expression of minority beliefs and cultural practices, even though symbolically, to those involved, this public space in a temporal and spatial sense is now private (S. Watson, 2005: 609).

Both Howe and Watson question the liberal assumption of secular public space by questioning the neutrality of the boundaries of the secular public and by illustrating how relatively mundane religious practices unsettle common assumptions about urban public space under liberalism. The theoretical directions outlined by Kong (Kong, 2001; 2010 see also; Proctor, 2006; Sheringham, 2010; Yorgason & della Dora, 2009), identify a number of characteristics pertinent to the relationship between religion, publicness
and space. First, they demonstrate the territorial reach of religious practice beyond the officially sacred. Second, they highlight the interconnectedness and co-constitution of the secular and sacred. Third, they point to the role of the body as a purveyor of religious belief and practice. And finally, they identify the role religious practice plays in transgressing and complicating the liberal assumption of secular public space. More broadly, they illustrate the importance of religion to public space in the post-secular context. As Yorgason suggests ‘geographical theories of public space that do not factor in religion can only be partial at best’ (Yorgason & della Dora, 2009: 633).

Having established the importance of religion in shaping public space and influencing publicness, the following section places the case study site within its context as an important sacred space in Auburn, Sydney—the most post-secular of Australia’s cities. By considering how the mosque shapes this public and facilitates a particular publicness, I build on the geographies of religion just outlined.

### 6.3 A Place for Australian Islam

Australia is a relatively modest religious nation with significant regions undergoing processes of post-secularity. Islam, as Australia’s second-fastest growing religion, is playing a significant role in these processes. Despite discourses that seek to position Islam as a danger to Australia’s public life there is a developing sense of an Australian Islam that straddles adherents’ religious heritage and ‘secular Australian values’. AGM provides a space for this to take place, providing room for the creation of a religious public and the articulation of a publicness shaped by the material dynamics of place and the ethical dimensions of religious life. This section situates AGM in place as a suburban mosque in Sydney, Australia. I do this in three ways. I outline Australia’s religious landscape and the role of Islam within this context. Then I contextualise AGM, a significant religious space for Auburn LGA and the greater Sydney area. I finish by focusing on the history and architecture of AGM. This section serves as a background to the analysis that follows, placing these examples in a broader religious and public context.
6.3.1 Australia’s Religious Landscape and Islam

Australia is a nation of relatively modest religiosity. Its religious landscape is shaped by its unique history, institutions and evolving social expectations. At the beginning of the twentieth century Australia was predominantly Anglo-Celtic but three processes have changed this religious profile. First, immigration has broadened Australia’s religious base with the fastest growing religions—Buddhism and Islam—being strongly connected to the establishment and growth of migrant communities (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004, 2006). Second, like Europe Australia is experiencing steady but rising levels of disbelief and indifference; the proportion of those willing to nominate themselves as having ‘no religion’ has risen from 7% in 1971 to 22.3% in 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). This suggests a steady process of secularisation and a parallel increase in the social acceptance of agnosticism and atheism (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004, 2006)\(^\text{24}\). Finally, decreasing attendance at religious services, coupled with the personalisation of religious practice suggests that significant sections of the community are what Davie described more than a decade ago as ‘believers not belongers’\(^\text{25}\) (Davie, 1995).

In *Australian Soul* Gary Bouma (2006) describes Australians’ attitude to religion as a ‘low temperature affair’. Co-opting Manning Clark’s description of the Anzac myth, Bouma characterises religious adherents’ beliefs as a ‘shy hope in the heart’. He suggests that Australians are typically neither ostentatious nor zealous in matters of religion. He argues that Australians’ egalitarianism makes them wary of extravagant religious expression but also relatively open to religious difference. By international standards Australia is a religiously diverse country and one relatively free of religious conflict\(^\text{26}\) (Possamai, 2008; Putnam & Campbell, 2010). Part of the explanation for Australia’s contemporary religious landscape is its institutional traditions. Australia practises a model that we might call ‘soft secularism’, a unique blend of a separation of

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\(^{24}\) These trends mimic those underway in much of Western Europe but contrasts with the US where levels of religious belief remain comparatively high (see Bruce, 2002; Putnam & Campbell, 2010; Wilford, 2010).

\(^{25}\) Davie (1995) first used this phrase to describe the falling church attendance and the rise of new age beliefs in the British and Western European context.

\(^{26}\) Although recent history suggests that Australia is not free of religious conflict (see Shaw, 2009).
church and state with a relatively porous border between the two (Cox, 2002; Davie, 2007). Section 116 of the Australian Constitution provides a fundamental basis for a secular political life, declaring that:

The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth (Australia Parliamentary Education Office, 1991).

Stewart (2012) argues that the institutional and social practices which flow from this provision are a product of Australia’s ‘pragmatic attitude to religious matters’ in a country with no established church or explicit constitutional separation of church and state. Indeed, there has been little resistance to the distance between government and religion in Australia. In contrast to the United States, there is little debate on church–state relations in the national public sphere, to the extent that Frame suggests that:

most Australians generally accept that the church and state are (and ought to remain) separate and distinct entities that will interact from time to time in pursuit of common goals and collaborate in response to shared concerns (Frame, 2006: 9).

However others have argued that this accepted equilibrium is in danger of being disturbed (see Maddox, 2005; Marr, 1999). Stewart suggests that this attitude to church and state is as much a consequence of Australia’s unique history as it is of its institutional settings and constitutional framework. Stewart reminds us that:

Unlike the US, Australia was not founded by religious dissidents, but by people who had fallen foul of the state for quite different reasons. Ever since, despite the best efforts of the great and the good, we have remained a determinedly irreligious mob (Stewart, 2012: 9).

Despite this relatively benign and irreligious past, recent developments suggest that Australia’s religious landscape is changing, influenced by processes of post-secularisation. In Australia this is a complex process which sees religious revitalisation among Buddhists, Pentecostals and Muslims but decreasing adherence among
mainstream churches, coupled with the increasing personalisation of spirituality characterised by the rise of the ‘new age movement’ (Possamai, 2008). Stevenson et al. (2010) argue that Australia, like the US and parts of Europe, is a post-secular society but one that it is undergoing a kind of post-secularity particular to its historical and cultural context:

Australia’s post-secularisation is complicated and involves unique contradictions and subtleties. Australian post-secularisation is a consequence of parochial cultures of individualism and indifference, the histories of religious establishment and the constitutional settings on faith, as well as contemporary open immigration (Stevenson et al., 2010: 327).

Australia is a relatively irreligious community but one that is undergoing spatially diffuse processes of post-secularity. Islam, as Australia’s second-fastest growing religion is playing an active role in these post-secular processes. To understand this phenomenon, and to consider how AGM provides a platform for publicness, I now consider Islam’s long history in Australia and its role in the contemporary religious and social context.

6.3.2 Australian Islam

Part of Australia’s brand of post-secularity has been the rise and (re)-establishment of Islam in Australia. In 2011 the Muslim community accounted for roughly 2.2% of Australia’s population, making them the second-largest non-Christian religious group and the second-fastest growing faith in Australia27 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The majority of Muslims in Australia are Australian born, followed by significant Lebanese-born and Turkish-born communities (Dunn et al., 2011). Despite representations in the media and political discourse, Australia’s Muslim community is diverse and defined as much by its strong and ongoing cultural and ethnic ties as it is

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27 Many argue that this is an underestimation of the true number of Muslims in Australia as the religious question is the only question in the census form that is not compulsory. It has been suggested that many Muslims do not answer this question as they wish to avoid being stigmatised or defined by their faith (see Dunn 2004, Saeed 2003, Hussain 2011).
by its religious and sectarian affiliations (Hussain, 2004; Saeed, 2003; Saeed & Akbarzadeh, 2001). Islam has a long historical association with Australia. Maccassan tepang (sea slug) harvesters and traders from Sulawesi came into contact with Indigenous communities between Darwin and the Gulf of Carpentaria as early as the 1600s, predating European contact (Cleland, 2001; Dunn, 2004; Saeed, 2003). Muslims were among Australia’s earliest migrants with individuals such as John Hassan travelling on The Endeavour to Norfolk Island in 1813 (Cleland, 2001). Subsequent waves of migration place Islam at the centre of European expansion in Australia, and the development of Australia’s early industry and infrastructure (Cleland, 2001).

During the 1800s Afghan cameleers played a central role in establishing the overland telegraph between Adelaide and Darwin, thus opening up Australia’s interior; these Afghans were joined by Indian hawkers, Malay pearl divers and Albanian agriculturalists, all of whom were linked to Australia’s economic development (Cleland, 2001; Dunn, 2004; Saeed, 2003; Saeed & Akbarzadeh, 2001). This initial pattern of migration was halted with the introduction of government policies designed to stop ‘coloured migration’, beginning with the Immigration Restriction Act (1901). The impact on the small but significant Muslim community was devastating. For instance between 1901 and 1921 the Afghan population fell from 393 to 147 individuals during a period of significant population growth (Cleland, 2001).

Initial revision of the migration act in the late 1950s culminated in the abolition of the White Australia Policy in 1973 but before this ‘fair skinned’ Muslims from Turkey, Cyprus, Bosnia, Albania and Russia contributed to growth in the Muslim population which saw the community increase from 2,704 in 1947 to 22,311 in 1967 (Cleland, 2001). A significant proportion of these migrants were Turkish Muslims, who benefited from an immigration agreement established between Turkey and Australia that operated between 1911 and 1967 (Saeed, 2003). In the 1960s and 1970s significant waves of Turkish Cypriots and Lebanese Muslims migrated to Australia due to civil unrest in their homelands (Cleland, 2001).

28 ‘The Ghan’, a passenger train that traverses the continent from north to south from Adelaide to Darwin, is named in honor of the Afghan cameleers that explored the country’s interior.
In the post-war period the Muslim population has grown markedly. Between 1985 and 2000 the Muslim population more than doubled (Saeed & Akbarzadeh, 2001). The second wave of migration has shifted away from the industrial base of early settlement and toward a combination of humanitarian and skilled labour migration that has seen the expansion of Muslim communities in NSW and Victoria centred around Sydney and Melbourne (Dunn, 2004). Roughly two-thirds of Australia’s Muslim population lives in Sydney while about a third lives in Melbourne (Hussain, 2004). The growth in Muslim communities in the post-war period coincided with the establishment of the organisational structures of Australian Islam. During the 1950s the first Islamic societies were established in NSW and Victoria, followed by the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils in 1976 (Cleland, 2001; Hussain, 2004).

Growth in the Muslim community has led some to argue that an Australian Islam, with its own unique character, has developed. Humphrey (2001) argues that Australia’s Islamic culture is a product of migration and settlement process that tied Islam to working class migrant communities. In contrast to Muslim majority countries Australia’s umma29 is characterised by local rather than national control and tied to ethnic and cultural communities. Saeed and Akbarzadeh (2001) emphasise the inchoate nature of an Australian Muslim culture, but see second- and third-generation Muslims developing an affinity with Australia that combines rather than clashes with their religious beliefs. He predicts that:

The result may be a hybrid Islamic identity based on commitment to the secular norms of Australian society and Islamic/ethnic traditions ... [however] the exact contours of this identity are still evolving (Saeed & Akbarzadeh, 2001: 5).

Despite Islam’s long history in Australia, many remain wary of the role of Islam in Australia’s public life. This is reflected in wider debates on the compatibility of Islam with Western notions of religious plurality and secular publicity30 that resurfaced

29 Umma is Arabic for Muslim community (Hussain 2011).
30 These arguments made against Islam’s compatibility with the secular West are consolidated by Roy (2007) into three key arguments: first, that in Islam, there is no separation between religion and the state; second, that Sharia is incompatible with human rights and with democracy; and third, that the believer can identify only with members of their own community and hence has no knowledge of political society of citizens (see also Shaw 2009).
during the Arab Spring, where initial enthusiastic support for pro-democracy activists was tempered by concerns about the influence Islamist parties may have in a newly democratic Middle East (see Burgat, 2010; Hamid, 2011; Khanfar, 2011). In the Australian context Humphrey (2001) suggests that national debates mirror wider discussions on the appropriateness and compatibility of Islam with Western public life:

Islamic religious values, beliefs and practices are viewed as being in conflict with the organisation and rhythms of public life in the cities of the West. Muslim practices of prayer, fasting and veiling appear to challenge the conformity of secular public space and its values with respect to gender equality in social relationships and individual rights (Humphrey, 2001: 33).

These arguments ignore the long history of Islamic relations both with and within the West, and the range of ways Muslims position themselves in relation to the secular state (Asad, 2003; Saeed, 2003; Said, 1978 [2003]). In Australia and elsewhere, Islamic heterogeneity is ignored in preference for discourses that position the umma as monolithic and Islamic expressions of publicness as anti-modern (Humphrey, 2001). For Dunn (2004) this has seen both the introduction of forms of Islamophobia that has either sought to stereotype Islam or deem it absent from the national narrative. This is exacerbated by media portrayals of Islam and Muslims that are equal parts sensational, inaccurate and politically expedient (Brasted, 2001; Dunn, 2001; Pontying, 2002).

Above, I have provided an outline of Australia’s religious landscape and Islam’s role within it. Islam is playing an increasingly important role in post-secular Australia. Despite discourses that serve to alienate and stereotype the Muslim community, a parochial form of Islam is developing that encompasses the practices of Islam and, crucially, Australia’s secular public life. Australia’s religious history and Islam’s role within it suggests that religious and public life have always been intertwined in Australia and that due to processes of post-secularity this interconnectivity is set to continue. The case study analysis that follows explores the contemporary consequences of this enduring relationship. In the following I focus on Auburn LGA and the role of AGM within this Sydney suburb. This particular space enables us to consider
how Australian Islam is expressed in place and how this shapes the expression of a religious publicness.

6.3.3 Auburn and Islam

Auburn Gallipoli Mosque is in Auburn LGA, an area on the fringe of Sydney’s outer suburbs, approximately 20 kilometres west of Sydney’s central business district (CBD). The LGA covers 31 square kilometres of predominantly residential and light industrial land with significant areas dedicated to recreation and parklands including Sydney Olympic Park and Auburn Botanical Gardens (see Figure 6.1) (Auburn City Council, 2008). Auburn is an area of rapid growth and diversity. Currently the LGA houses an estimated population of 62 000 with significant growth occurring as a consequence of the redevelopment of industrial land in Newington and Homebush Bay which was converted in preparation for the Sydney Olympic Games in 2001.

Figure 6.1 Auburn in relation to Sydney’s CBD and the wider metropolitan area.
Source: Prepared by Olivier Rey-Lescure, The University of Newcastle, NSW.
Between 2006 and 2011 the LGA’s population grew by 8.7% to 78,286 (Auburn City Council, 2012c). By 2031, the ABS estimates that Auburn’s population will be in excess of 100,000 making it one of the fastest growing LGAs in Sydney. Auburn’s residential population is diverse in both cultural and socioeconomic terms (Auburn City Council, 2012a). Over half of Auburn’s residents are migrants with 71% speaking a language other than English at home (Auburn City Council, 2012b). The dominant language spoken at home other than English is Arabic. In comparison to Sydney as a whole Auburn is younger, has a larger proportion of residents born overseas, and has a smaller proportion of individuals on high incomes (Auburn Council 2008). Auburn is also an area with a vibrant religious life. Compared to Sydney as a whole Auburn is more religious with fewer people stating that they had ‘no religion’ in the national census. Contrary to popular perception, the dominant religion in the area is Christianity followed by Islam. Moslems comprise roughly 25% of the population. The area is also has significant Buddhist and Hindu communities and has 51 places of worship including seven recognised mosques (Auburn City Council 2012c).

Stevenson et al. (2010) identify Auburn as an area making a unique contribution to Australia’s complex processes of post-secularisation. They characterise Auburn as an area of significant de-secularisation, and refer to it as the ‘epicenter for the surge’ in non-Christian belief in Sydney’s west. They argue that recent migration patterns and the steady decline of those in the area claiming to have ‘no religion’ point toward processes of post-secularity. They describe Auburn’s religious profile as ‘divided three ways between non-Christians, Christians and the non-religious’ and thus it is a place of ‘diverse faith, non-faith and indifference’ (Stevenson et al., 2010: 345). Because Auburn is a diverse, fast-growing and religious suburb, it is an important example of the processes of desecularisation underway in some parts Sydney’s south-west. In the next section I look at the role AGM plays in Auburn by considering its history and geography. This examination suggests that AGM’s historic function as a place for its

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31 In local government and ABS statistics Christianity is separated out into its various denominations whereas Islam is counted as single religious group irrespective of ethnic or sectarian affiliations within Islam. This distorts the total number of Muslims present in LGAs by combining all sects into one religious group.
religious community, and its importance as a key institutional and iconic space for Auburn LGA, complicate the distinction between private space and public utility.

6.3.3 A Place for a Religious Public

In this religious and social context, AGM plays a significant role as a centre of Islamic faith. Its establishment and history reflect Australian patterns of migration as well as the particular development trajectories of Islamic communities in Australia. Mosques in Australia are typically associated with ethnic and cultural groups, in contrast to Muslim majority countries where mosque development often reflects national religious policy (Cleland, 2001; Dunn, 2004; Hussain, 2004; Saeed, 2003). Thus AGM has strong, but not exclusive, ties to Auburn’s Turkish community.

Auburn has a significant Turkish community. Roughly 4% of Auburn residents were born in Turkey with a much larger number claiming Turkish heritage. The Turkish community began to establish itself in Auburn following the establishment of an immigration agreement between Australia and Turkey that saw significant numbers of Turks migrate to Australia from the late 1960s onwards. In 2001, 29,821 people born in Turkey lived in Australia and almost double that number identified themselves as having Turkish ancestry. Most live in the capital cities of NSW (Sydney) and Victoria (Melbourne), with many establishing themselves in and around Auburn LGA (Hussain, 2004). This has led to the relatively rapid development of community infrastructure including mosques, cultural centres and businesses (Dunn, 2004). Indeed, AGM was first proposed when the local Turkish community became large enough to establish its own place of worship. Located adjacent to Auburn Station and set on a one-acre block, the mosque is built on the site of a much smaller mosque first used in 1979 (see Figure 6.2). The current structure was officially opened on 28 November 1999 after thirteen years of construction. The long construction time was due to the project’s dependence on donations provided by the local community, with some support afforded by the Turkish government. The mosque was designed by Turkish architect Omer Kirazoglu;
its central dome and two minarets are characteristic of classic Ottoman architecture (Saeed, 2003) (see Figure 6.3).

Internally, AGM is a relatively simple structure consisting of three levels. The underground level is used for ritual ablutions and the ground floor and second level are used for communal prayer. The ground floor is reserved for men during communal prayer (salat) while females pray above them on the second level (see Figure 6.4). In common with most mosques, the internal areas are sparsely furnished. In the western wall of the ground floor is the mihrab, a niche indicating the direction of Mecca and the mimbar, used by the Imam or speakers to deliver sermons (see Figure 6.5).
Figure 6.3 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque (streetview). Source: www.facebook.com/auburngallipolimosque reprinted with permission of Ercan Karasu (Mosque Secretary)

Figure 6.4 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque photograph (internal mezzanine level). Source: Author.
The dome of the mosque is decorated with verses from the Koran listing the 99 names of Allah. The mosque is run by the local community, however Imams are appointed and sponsored by the Turkish Government (Dunn, 2004). Despite its Turkish heritage, AGM has come to serve the wider Muslim community of Auburn including both Sunni and Shia Muslims. AGM’s significance to the local Muslim community and to Auburn more generally was borne out in interviews with key informants and focus group participants. For them, AGM is an iconic space that has come to represent, architecturally at least, Auburn LGA:

it is the gateway for Auburn. For everyone it is an identifying feature … it is tied to the identity of the area … you know you are in Auburn by this landmark (Community Development Officer, Auburn City Council).

In contrast to work that has illustrated local community resistance to Muslim architecture (Dunn, 2004; Eade, 2011; Hertzberg, 2010; Naylor & Ryan, 2002), AGM elicited widespread pride in the community. This pride is not necessarily tied to religious belief:
People are proud of the mosque. Even if people don’t go to the Mosque, people say they know of Auburn because of the mosque (Community Development Officer, Auburn City Council).

Thus, AGM is an iconic space for the area. Like many mosques it is a crucial part of a wider network of community infrastructure that has been developed by a migrant community. It is a space with its own internal logic, which influences the nature of publicness articulated in place. The nature of this form and its influence on publicness is explored next.

6.3.4 Engaging with a Religious Public

AGM is an iconic institutional space in the suburb of Auburn. This chapter explores how this public is shaped by the intersection of religious practice and space. The research targeted key informants affiliated with the mosque, in local government and within relevant cultural and religious organisations. In total three key informant interviews were conducted, each taking between 45 and 60 minutes. Key informants were sought for the insights and expertise they had on the history and ongoing operation of the mosque via interview. The research also targeted users of the mosque. With the aid of the mosque’s secretary I also conducted one semi-structured focus group. This focus group was conducted in a single 120-minute session. Focus group participants were invited to discuss the significance of the mosque to them personally, their experience of being in the space, and the extent to which it was used and experienced as a public space. Participants’ knowledge and opinions were sought during focus group interviews that discussed the mosque as a site of religious and public significance. These focus group interviews included Muslims from surrounding communities who attended different mosques but whose insights were invaluable for understanding the particular character of this religious community. This information was combined with analysis of publicly available data and notes from my field observations to construct a picture of religious and public life in place. The following section explores how these groups and individuals experience and understand the
mosque. It then considers the implications these understandings have for the formation of publics and the enactment of publicness in and through space.

6.4 A Public Ethic in Religious Space

Geographical analysis of mosques in Australia and internationally has often focused on local resistance to their construction (see Dunn, 2001; Gale, 2004; Ghosh-Dearborn, 2010; Hertzberg, 2010; Naylor & Ryan, 2002). The development of these spaces often unsettles well-rehearsed discourses that position Islam as an absent or exotic other in Australia’s public life. Their presence disrupts a territorial imagination that positions Islam and its spatial forms as elsewhere and thus unwelcome (Dunn, 2001, 2004). The analysis that follows is calibrated in a different way, focused more on the internal dimensions of an established mosque valued by and deeply connected to the community (see also McLoughlin, 2005). The focus here is on relationships between community members within this space and their relationships with others outside it. I examine how these relationships create a certain form of publicness. These relations are not devoid of resistance or tension, but they also embody moments of connection and common understanding. By focusing on these internal and external relations I explore how religiosity assists in the formation of publics and publicness suggesting that, in a context where processes of post-secularity are underway, this is an important part of the public city.

6.4.1 Enabling Australian Islam

AGM has been an important space for the development of a migrant community as it first sought to establish a space for itself and later, as a place for the creation of a parochial form of Islam with its own unique identity and publicness. The capacity to create publics and project a form of publicness unsettles liberalism’s distinction between publicness and religion and thus any pre-determined alignment of publicness
with certain spatial forms. Respondents were conscious that for new Australians the creation of a religious space is an important and reassuring landmark in a new country:

when we look at the early history of migrants to Australia, when they came there was nothing here which made them feel as a community. So a mosque was a central institution to establish because you could do things together which they were used to back ‘home’; Friday prayers, funerals ... So it has been quite instrumental in the Muslim community for it to feel like a community. To have a mosque, it was absolutely critical, perhaps more so than in a Muslim country (Respondent C, FG Interview).

These comments support similar studies which have identified both religious and secular spaces that are crucial to the maintenance and perpetuation of minority publics (Iveson, 2005; Rishbeth, 2001; Valentine, 2002; S. Watson, 2005, 2009; Young, 1990). However, beyond processes of maintenance and perpetuation, this study suggests that AGM is an important part of developing a parochial Islamic culture in Australia. On more than one occasion interviewees contrasted AGM with mosques in Muslim majority countries, arguing that its construction, and the financial and social struggles this entailed, imbued the space with special meaning that influenced community identity:

in a Muslim country [the mosque] would be either be paid for by the government or a rich man comes and builds it and donates it to the community. But here every member of the community has contributed to the building of it. So there is a sense of pride and ... and I think that shapes the identity of the community (Respondent C, FG Interview).

As well as being a product of community sacrifice and struggle, part of the attractiveness of the mosque was that it was a space of comfort and safety that contrasted to an at times hostile outside world. Indeed many of the respondents spoke of the space as a safe haven that provided protection and reassurance in a context that was not always familiar or friendly. Again this function was contrasted with the characteristics of a mosque in a Muslim majority country:

you feel at home [in the mosque] especially if you feel a little bit alienated from society. It is one area that is yours. It’s a bit like an embassy, a religious embassy
[laughs]. I mean I went to mosques in Muslim countries and they function just like buildings. People come and go and pray, whereas there is a greater sense of ownership in the mosque here (Respondent E, FG Interview).

These comments illustrate the importance of key institutional spaces in the creation and growth of minority publics, serving as spaces to create community identity and promote confidence and recognition. Respondents argued that the creation of this space and the social processes it enables, help shape what it means to be a Muslim Australian:

Why the sudden confidence? I mean I think we still go through challenges but I think these infrastructures, like the public spaces like the mosque and like the school, help in three things. I was reading Albert Adler, this behavioral theorist, who was saying that as humans we effectively seek three things: belonging, attachment and significance. So these public spaces provide almost [a remedy for] the void that is within us ... as a community I think we have come a long way because of that (Respondent D, FG Interview).

AGM is an important institutional space for the creation and perpetuation of a religious public, creating a space that helps solidify and modify notions of Australian Islam. This finding supports research conducted by others on the role of local religious organisations as important institutional sites for the promotion of services and information, particularly for migrant communities (Beaumont, 2008; Beaumont & Dias, 2008; David Ley, 2008). More broadly still, it supports work conducted on the need for minorities to have their own spaces for the development of identity and the maintenance of culture (Iveson, 2005; Rishbeth, 2001). These findings run counter to dominant portrayals of Muslim architecture as alien and divisive (Dunn, 2004, 2005). This works against liberal understandings of a universal and singular public (see Chapter 2). AGM is a space that reassures and helps redefine a Muslim public in a predominantly non-Muslim country. AGM’s role as an enabler of Australian Islam highlights the interconnection and co-constitution of the sacred and the secular. As the next section reveals, the creation of this religious public has fostered a confident and parochial public, willing and indeed compelled to interact with other publics.
6.4.2  

**Bridging to Others**

I want to suggest that AGM is a space that enables the accumulation of social capital (Putnam, 1995; Putnam & Campbell, 2010). This picture of the mosque runs counter to dominant narratives that position mosques as sites of segregation, division and fundamentalism (Dunn, 2001, 2004). Rather than closing the Muslim public off from others, AGM promotes both social bonding among members of the Muslim community and social bridging to the secular and religious publics beyond its walls, and this illustrates the confusion of liberal understandings of public and private, as ‘private’ religious belief compels adherents to connect with others in publics and places (Howe, 2009; S. Watson, 2005). Under liberalism, the mosque is positioned as a private space of personal religious expression, yet religious practice within AGM suggests this religious public reaches out beyond the confines of ‘private space’.

The capacity of AGM to be a vehicle for social bridging was emphasised by Auburn City Council representatives who argued that religious spaces in general, and AGM in particular, played a vital role in providing services for migrant and disadvantaged communities in Auburn LGA. They argued that the mosque was able to provide these services in culturally appropriate ways, free of the social stigma attached to some of the institutions of the state:

> places of worship are usually places where people go to get a lot of social support. Linking up with a congregation, linking up with food and electricity vouchers those sorts of things ... these are places where you can get some help, which is non-judgmental; not like going down to Centrelink and everybody knows what that means and there is a stigma attached to that, whereas at places of worship people feel protected and they have a sense of safety (Community Development Officer, Auburn City Council).

As well as suggesting AGM acts as a bridge that connects members of the local Muslim community to the state, this work a space that facilitates social bridging between Muslims and other publics. One example of this is the Mosque Open Day, an annual event where the mosque opens its doors to community members who wish to visit the space and learn about the Islamic faith. Thus, rather than being a space that promotes
segregation and division, the mosque is a space that attracts publics and fosters connection and common understanding:

[the mosque] brings people from way outside of Auburn into Auburn ... from places like North Sydney or the North Shore ... the open days are fantastic in terms of educating people on the importance of the mosque and also on the broader teachings of Islam to the non-Muslim community. It plays a really good role in promoting that awareness and breaking down those barriers and misconceptions that people have (Community Development Officer, Auburn City Council).

This function as a bridge between publics is part of a deliberate strategy by the local Muslim community. Conscious of the wider political context, and aware of the ways in which Muslim identity has been shaped and defined since September 11, the local umma sought out connections between themselves and other publics in an attempt to re-position the mosque and its members in the public imagination. The effectiveness of this strategy in countering negative portrayals and perceptions is illustrated in an anecdote told by the Mosque’s then secretary about a visitor who after many years had finally found the courage to visit the mosque during an Open Day:

going back a few years a lady approached me when we were having the Open Day and she said, ‘You know I’ve been travelling on that railway link for twenty years and I’ve always wanted to come and have a look to see what this building was about’ and I said, ‘Madam why didn’t you?’, she said, ‘I was too damn scared! [laughs] (Secretary, AGM).

More importantly however, this connection to the community was described as being an expression of religious principles as much as it was a political necessity. Illustrating the power religious belief and practice plays in the creation of AGM’s public. This is shown in the mosque’s dual role of uniting the Muslim community and connecting with non-Muslim publics:

There is an ethic in Islam to have hospitality for anyone who comes to visit you. So basically that hospitality is offered to the community, anyone who is part of the community even a stranger ... that ethic is lived through the Opens Days when we
invite people in and we give them free food and show hospitality (Respondent C, FG Interview).

AGM is an important space of social bonding. AGM is a place that attracts a religious public but one that also compels adherents to reach out to others with hospitality. Again this confuses liberal constructs of privatised religious expression and spatiality. It highlights the interconnectivity and co-constitutionality of secular and sacred places and publics. Secular understandings of religious interaction in public often focus on the corrosive influence religion can have on public life, at the expense of considering the role such institutions can play in fostering, goodwill, connection and common understanding between disparate groups in a plural society (see David Ley, 2008; Putnam & Campbell, 2010; S. Watson, 2009). The role of the mosque as a bridge between the local umma and publics beyond this space illustrates the role religion plays in transgressing and complicating liberal assumptions about the role of religious spaces—that they are private and thus unable to facilitate and foster publicness—and their connection to publics and spaces beyond their walls.

6.4.3 An Ethic of Publicness

As well as bonding a public and connecting it to others, the mosque facilitates a publicness shaped by the cultural and ethical expectations of place. Thus religious practice combines with the articulation of a public in religious space to produce a particular form of publicness. In arguing this I differ from other work on the urban public that has often position publicness apart from religious, statist or capitalist regimes of control (Bruce, 2002; Davis, 1990; Kennedy, 2006; Roy, 2007). In line with the insights garnered from post-secular theory I argue that religious life is an important contributor to publicness in the post-secular city (Beaumont & Baker, 2011b; Berger, 2000; Casanova, 2010; Habermas et al., 2010). Following on from Foucault’s concept of heterotopia outlined in Chapter 5, my contention is that the mosque is both a religious and public space, but one with certain characteristics and conditions shaped by the temporality of ritual practice, subject-centred religious
expression, and the cultural expectations of place. I now turn to explain each of these dimensions.

*Time and Ritual*

The nature of the publicness in AGM is influenced by temporal changes brought about by ritual expectations that influence the nature of the public created and its articulation:

A mosque in one day can be a very early morning prayer site where people can congregate in the mosque from 4.30 or 5 am onwards, and that will really start the day off. And then you've got the midday, the five daily prayers and, during Ramadan, it is a very busy period where there is constant Quran readings in the mosque (Secretary, AGM).

These ritual expectations influence the number and identity of mosque attendees. Speaking about how many people attended the mosque throughout the week, interviewees spoke of a space where the identity of its public was influenced by differing religious obligations attributed to certain days in the Muslim calendar:

I think between 300 to 500 [people] on a normal day and up to or more than 2000 on a Friday. The reason is that Friday prayers have to be done in a Mosque. The others you don’t have to ... So the numbers change and twice a year in the festive times at the end of Ramadan and in the Eid season there is a special morning prayer and we get 5000 people [on these days] (Respondent C, FG Interview).

This religious time scale also influences the nature of the activity and the spatial configuration of subjects within the mosque. Most forms of publicness involve relatively organised spatial activity arranged according to gender and orientated towards Mecca (see Figure 6.5). However, the Mosque at certain times is a much less organised space:
on a Sunday for example inside the mosque you will have little groups, circles, study circles, three or four [groups]. And a different person will lead each study circle and that is a common practice as well (Respondent C, FG Interview).

Thus the publicness of the mosque is influenced by the ritual calendar of religious life and that helps determine the cadence and terrain of publicness in this space. It illustrates the role of the body as the purveyor of religious practice and the ability of ritual expectations and belief to discipline these bodies into certain forms of publicness. The role of the subject in these temporal and spatial circulations of publicness is addressed below.

*The Subject of Religion*

As well as being a temporal public influenced by the religious calendar, the nature of the public created at the mosque is also determined by subject-specific expectations such as gender and age. These traits influence the spatial position of religious subjects specific to certain rituals such as *Salat*. The segregation of male and female worshippers during communal prayer is a widespread practice in Islam. Gender segregation differs from mosque to mosque but can include women praying on the same floor but behind the men, behind partitions or in separate rooms (Ozalp, 2004). The origins of the practice are disputed and are a point of ongoing challenge by contemporary Muslim feminists (Goodstein, 2004; Wiltz, 2005). These restrictions in AGM are not uniform, however interviewees (perhaps aware of the perceptions this potentially creates) were keen to cite events that enable the co-mingling of male and female adherents:

> The ground level is predominantly for men and the mezzanine level is for women who can pray comfortably upstairs. But there are various events that happen and they can be mixed ... A good example is when there is preparation to go on Pilgrimage. We then use the whole ground level to give out information to men and to women (Secretary, AGM).

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32 *Salat* is the Arabic word for communal prayer (Hussain, 2004).
Interestingly, women involved in the focus group research rationalised this segregation by trivialising the nature of masculine community rather than drawing on a discourse of masculine superiority or dominance. Asked during the research how they felt about the separation of the sexes during communal prayer and whether this had a negative impact on their experience of this public, one focus group interviewee said:

Not necessarily because every injunction that occurs in Islam there is always logic and sense behind it. And the male and female species are slightly different [laughs]. So prescriptions are given according to our natures. With us females I think we find it easier to bond with [each other]. The congregational prayers it is really to—as brother Levent has been saying—to unite people together and I think males find it more difficult. I don’t know; this is my theory [laughs]. I think they have some sort of issues internally [much laughter]. Whereas females I think we are naturally more social and we don’t find it difficult to congregate or to come together so hence there is not this obligation for us to come on a Friday (Respondent D FG Interview).

Publicness in this mosque is determined in part by the ritual expectations of place. These expectations are subject-centred, requiring different individuals to adopt spatially-defined forms of publicness. This influences the interactions within AGM in quite specific ways. It governs how people position themselves in the mosque and shapes their interactions with others. This suggestion reflects work done elsewhere on how positionality influences public behaviour in subtle ways, influenced by gender, sexuality and age in publics spaces like parks, baths and shopping malls (Crane & Dee, 2001; Greed, 2011; Iveson, 2005; Lees, 2003; Valentine, 1996, 2002). Rather than proving that such stipulations disqualify this space from the articulation of publicness, this further reminds us of the subject-centredness of all public experience and expression, and the role of collective and individual agency in producing publicness.

Beyond gender, the variety in expectations of public behaviour is also determined by age. This was particularly the case for the elderly and younger members of the community where the space served different functions and expectations were applied accordingly. In the case of the elderly it was argued that the mosque fulfilled ‘a social function where people come and gather and have a chat’ (Secretary, AGM). The role of
the mosque as a social sphere added to the importance that was afforded to it by the elderly. As one respondent argued, for this group in particular AGM was, in many respects, more important than their homes:

Adam, you will find that in a spiritual context the mosque in many ways is more important than your own home. When it comes to the elderly for example it is virtually sometimes first home, second home basically. You know if you look at it in that contextual sense it is a very important place for them to have (Respondent B, FG Interview).

While for the elderly the mosque represented a space of social significance which rivaled their home life, for younger members of the community the mosque was associated with interaction and play:

What I find is that young people are more interactive; they know each other through lots of youth groups and Muslim youth groups and all that, whereas people from older generations use the mosque in more a functionalist sort of way (Respondent E, FG Interview).

Another focus group interviewee supported these comments, arguing that the presence of different groups enabled her to see the mosque in a different light, and that this highlighted the different expectations that are placed on different subjects; young people in particular:

once we came to pick him up [interviewee’s younger brother] and I was looking for him and I could see a bunch of ten young boys just running around the mosque playing hide and seek and suddenly it was like a new time. So I just saw the mosque in a different light and it was alive with youth and so again it is a sacred space but used differently by young people. They were using it obviously for spiritual instruction as well but then having said that it is sometimes within the etiquette of the youth to express themselves like that as well (Respondent C, FG Interview).

These findings are consistent with work done in a secular context on youths’ use of other public spaces such as shopping malls where young people often disrupt established patterns of public etiquette (Crane & Dee, 2001; Lees, 2003; Thomas,
These differing expectations on the part of different groups have a cumulative effect on place, shaping the nature of its publicness. Not all subjects are expected to behave in the same way and these disparate behaviours combine to produce the sense of publicness in place. This speaks to a procedural rather than normative understanding of the relationship between publicness and space. Rather than a static and prescribed publicness, the individuals involved and the community expectations regarding appropriate behaviour for particular groups influence AGM. The activities and articulations of individuals in public further emphasise the vast terrain of public life that a procedural approach to publicness opens up, a terrain where the act of publicness is shaped by, but also shapes, the location of its articulation.

*Expecting a Culture of Place?*

Beyond gender and age expectations, the nature of publicness was also thought of in cultural terms. The mosque is a place with its own cultural expectations, the product of its nationalist, and ethnic and sectarian connections. Again a parochial form of Islam appears with Australia Islam contrasted against other Muslim communities:

> culture comes into it as well and sometimes culture really turns the whole thing. It gives a different flavour and colour to it. You will find that if you go to America you will experience a different kind of Muslim than you would in Turkey or say in London or here in Australia (Respondent A, FG Interview)

Beyond a nationalist sense of Australian Islam, the temperament in the mosque was also determined by cultural and sectarian expectations related to AGM’s Turkish heritage and its association with Sunni Islam. Thus, the style of worship and the types of behavioural expectations were slightly different from those of other mosques in the area. Focus group interviewees argued that the ‘cultural aspect’ shapes the nature of publicness in the space in subtle ways:

> there is also a cultural aspect to how you behave in the mosque ... because Auburn Mosque is mainly Turkish in culture—so their behavior is a little more disciplined in the sense that the noise level has to be really down even to the level of below a whisper.
But you [can] go to other mosques where the community is much more relaxed towards kids running around or speaking loudly ... for example if you lay down in the mosque some people don’t feel that it is respectful, but in other mosques they think it is okay (Secretary, AGM).

This was affirmed by members of different Muslim communities who participated in the project and who could identify the character of the public created in AGM in contrast with their other communities. The relative formality and reserved atmosphere was contrasted with the nearby Shia mosque in Lakemba which was described by one respondent as ‘more relaxed [and] not as tense’ (Respondent D, Focus Group Interview). However, beyond these national, ethnic and sectarian elements a determining factor in the culture of publicness in AGM was an overarching requirement of respect enforced through the quiet expectations of the community informed by their religious beliefs. This subtly controlled the behaviour of individuals, for instance the volume of a person’s voice:

There is a certain requirement while you are in the mosque that is to be as quiet as possible you shouldn’t speak loudly. For example you might meet someone there that you know and you might whisper a few words but you have got to be as quiet as possible (Respondent A, Focus Group Interview).

The consequences of this expectations is as one interviewee put it ‘a mannerism’, a mannerism animated by the religious beliefs of adherents and based on what is considered ethical behaviour in a sacred space, a sacred space where the volume of one’s voice, one’s economy of movement, the focus of one’s gaze are all seen as a measure of reverence and respect. As another focus group interviewee put it, for him it is like being

at a friend’s house—you won’t just go to the fridge and reach out for things and put your feet up and switch the channels—you are a guest in the mosque and you are God’s guest during that time and so you should act in accordance with that
(Respondent D, FG Interview)
AGM is, like all public spaces, a place that encourages a particular way of being, a public temperament that is governed by both the ethical dimensions of Muslim life and the cultural expectations of this community. It is a space that places subject-specific expectations on adherents based on factors of age, gender and the time of the day or week and the religious season. These expectations speak to the processual nature of publicness in space that is created by the interactions of subjects with material form and socio-cultural expectations (Iveson, 2005; Podmore, 2001; Valentine, 2002; S. Watson, 2005, 2006). In this case community expectations and personal belief more than any explicit dictates determines the form of publicness that is considered acceptable (Allen, 2006). Thus the cultural expectations of religious practice help shape a certain mode of publicness in a particular sort of public in ways that refute liberalism’s separation of public and religious life.

6.4.4 Circulations of Muslim Publicness

Culture shapes how adherents perform their publicness in the mosque by guiding the volume of their voices, the position of their bodies and their exuberance. However, in the process of discussing the nature of publicness in AGM, respondents also spoke of how their Muslim identity circulated beyond the walls of the mosque and into ‘secular public space’. Thus the body plays an important role in complicating liberal understandings of public and private space. I found their descriptions to be compelling examples of how religious practices transgress and complicate liberal understandings of public space at the scale of the body. It also illustrates the extent to which publicness in the mosque is not isolated but is connected to publics and modes of publicness that extend beyond the officially sacred. The influence of the mosque and other religious spaces on the wider Auburn LGA is experienced particularly on Fridays which, for Muslims, is a day of communal prayer best performed in a mosque. Asked to describe the impact of Friday prayers on Auburn’s main street, one interviewee described the scene:
it’s bustling. It is noisy. It is chaotic, cars everywhere. It is just packed … But it is amazing. It is as though there is some sort of huge festival going on every Friday afternoon … A lot of people from outside of Auburn [are] coming into the area for those two hours and then going back. It is just quite amazing to see (Community Development Officer, Liverpool City Council).

The preparation for communal prayer was also discussed in terms that blurred the boundary between the secular and sacred space, demonstrating the ability of the religious public to transcend and subvert liberal understandings of religion’s proper place:

on your way to the mosque you are psychologically preparing yourself and then once you enter the compound of the mosque then you follow through with the ritual and you wash yourself, the ablution part, and during that phase, apart from just cleansing yourself physically, you also are in a mental state, preparing yourself for congregational prayer which you are going to be doing with the rest of the community (Respondent B, FG Interview).

In this respect the boundaries between sacred and secular and in turn between notionally public and private space are blurred in a cognitive sense for religious adherents as they prepare themselves for their religious duties in public before crossing the threshold of supposedly private religious space. Focus group interviewees also spoke of the affective dimension of the space as they approach and ultimately cross the threshold from formally secular to symbolically sacred space:

I personally get a sense of separation as I enter the mosque. The taking off of the shoes symbolically tells me that I am entering into a different ground and, for us, praise or worship is to be in a meditative state in the presence of God. So we need to separate ourselves from our daily lives. So that is a very symbolic way. You take your shoes off put them on the rack and walk into the mosque. You are [now] in a different world and I personally sense that. I feel very much at peace, a sense of tranquility comes to me (Respondent C, FG Interview).

Importantly, interviewees’ religious beliefs also shaped the nature of their publicness beyond the mosque in ways that illustrate how religious expression suffuses secular
As well as moving from secular to sacred, religious expression also moves from sacred to secular. For instance interviewees’ descriptions of the problems of adhering to ritual prayer (Salat) and the preparation for this illustrates how embodied religious expression crosses unfamiliar and at times hostile terrain in public, often with humorous consequences:

I remember once I prayed in a fitting room! (Respondent C, FG Interview).

I had to pray in a car park (Respondent F, FG Interview).

But it is not just the place of prayer though you need to have suitable places for taking ablution as well. And you know honestly I have had some really funny situations; you can’t put your foot into a sink to take an ablution [much laughter]. One guy came up to me in the company that I am working for and he did not know that I was a Muslim ... he came up and goes, ‘What is it with these people? There was a guy just standing there with his foot in a sink! I drink from that sink!’ [much laughter] (Respondent B, FG Interview).

You know you don’t have to say anything. You know once that happened to me and I was like this [makes gesture with foot] and a person came in and I just stopped like this and he was like, ‘Wow’ (Respondent C, FG Interview).

Yeah but you’ve got your socks hanging from the sides of your pants and [much laughter] what’s a guy to think? (Respondent B, FG Interview).

He said, ‘What is this? What are you doing?’, and I said, ‘I am doing spiritual meditation’ [much laughter]. You know it is preparation for that and he said, ‘Oh yeah? Ok.’ and I said, ‘You know you should try some’ (Respondent C, FG Interview).

This light-hearted interchange was combined with serious concerns about the potential impact that embodied practice of ritual prayer was having on the opportunities afforded to women in particular. This was put in terms of some pious Muslims choosing between education and fealty to their religious practice:
I think the greatest challenge is for women though because for example TAFE\textsuperscript{33} they have a lot of women who want to get educated ... but if they don’t have space for them to pray some women stop themselves from going because these facilities are not available (Respondent F, FG Interview).

This respondent went on to describe his wife’s efforts to establish a prayer centre at the local TAFE so that Muslim women in particular, could continue their education. This combination of light-hearted farce and outright concern illustrate the extent to which religious practice shapes public life for these individuals. It speaks to the territorial reach of religious practice as it extends beyond the officially sacred out into people’s workplaces and shapes the educational opportunities of adherents. It highlights the false separation of publicness and religious life and demonstrates how the sacred and secular are often co-constituted. It reinstates the importance of the body as a purveyor of religious practice—in this case ritual prayer. And it illustrates the ongoing importance of religion in shaping the relationships between publicness and space in a post-secular context. It reiterates the role space plays in shaping the process of publicness without determining the location of its enactment.

6.5 Conclusion

Do you think of the mosque as a public space? (Adam)

Sure anybody can come here (Respondent B, FG Interview).

I would say it is a public space but one with certain ethical requirements that have to be respected. It is not just like any other public space like a shopping centre or any other area. It has to be different (Respondent F, FG Interview).

David’s right because there are certain morals and ethics you have to follow, certain guidelines and principles. It’s not a public space in the concept of a park for example (Respondent B, FG Interview).

\textsuperscript{33} An acronym for Technical and Further Education which is a group of government trade and vocational training institutions.
The exchange above speaks to many of the key themes of the literature on urban publicness. AGM is a religious space with a distinct public character that distinguishes it from other public spaces. These comments reveal the complex interplay of religion, space and publicness in the post-secular city. Access is open to all but is based on a tacit understanding of acceptable forms of publicness. AGM is a religious space that facilitates the creation of a public and the articulation of a certain mode of publicness. AGM is a space that bonds a diverse Muslim community, but it is also a space that enables this community to bridge to others. It is a space that creates a public and encourages a publicness shaped by the ethical dimensions of religious life, by individual religious expression, and by the community and cultural expectations of place. AGM and its adherents show the role that the body plays in circulating religious practice beyond the officially sacred as individuals express their religious practice in public, elsewhere.

These findings suggest that the association of religious life with privateness and publicness with secularity under liberalism is an insufficient framework for considering public life in the post-secular city. In the post-secular city, religion reaches out beyond the officially sacred while simultaneously religious practice at times takes on a public character. Thus the secular and sacred are interconnected and co-constituted. The body as a carrier and articulator of religious life transgresses, complicates and challenges boundaries of the ‘sacred private space’ and the ‘secular public space’. Religious life is not simply the product of place and neither can it be contained within a particular location. As post-secular theory suggests, religion will continue to play a spatially and socially diffuse role in the public life of cities where,

the dividing lines (and hence) roles of religion and science, faith and reason, tradition and innovation are no longer rigidly enforced (or indeed enforceable), and new relations of possibility are emerging. (Beaumont & Baker, 2011a: 2)

As Holloway (2003, 2006), Gokariksel (2009) and Watson (2005) show, the practices of individuals and publics will continue to confuse liberal understandings of religion’s terrain. To come to grips with what it means to be public in the post-secular context we must reassess liberal understandings of the relationship between publicness and
space so that our analysis includes the movements and processes that position religion and its practice as part of the processes of publicness. We must focus on the processes of publicness and how they interact with a diverse urban terrain. In the next chapter I test the limits of a processual approach to publicness and consider the extent to which publics’ access to place remains an essential component of contemporary public life. In this final chapter I investigate the relationship between a traditional public space and the production of publicness—a subject at the core of liberal understandings of public life and topographical approaches to publicness.
Chapter Seven

Absence and Address in Martin Place
Chapter Seven

7.1 Absence and Address in Martin Place

In Chapters 5 and 6 I argued for an enlarged conception of publicness by considering how publicness is expressed in two notionally private spaces—a shopping mall and a mosque. In this chapter I focus on the process of publicness and its interaction with a notionally public space. Importantly, my focus here is not on the space or the mode of publicness per se but on the processes of two publics which sought to use Martin Place—a historic civic mall in Sydney’s CBD—as a stage for publicness. As a means of engaging with these processes I use Iveson’s (2007) notion of the political labours of public making. I contend that, in the course of public making, publics draw on various resources—relational, institutional, mediated and material—in negotiations about the ‘what’ and ‘where’ of publicness. Implicit to this argument is the idea that these negotiations and resources help shape the nature of publicness in place.

Based on this analytical frame I make two key arguments about publics and publicness. First, I argue that publicness is the product of embodied, material and mediated structures in the city. Publics draw on the material structures of the city and embodied forms of publicness but they also exploit what Crang (2000) refers to as the ‘electronic agora’ (print and electronic media, communications technologies, social networking) in their efforts to address others (de Freitas, 2010; Georgiou, 2011). Second, I argue that because publics are able to connect with broader mediated structures—the instruments that circulate ideas and discourse in cities—they are able to circumvent efforts aimed at excluding their address (Barnett, 2008; Mahony et al., 2010; Rodgers et al., 2009). The ability of publics to negotiate exclusionary practices renders any account that focuses purely on access or denial of publics to particular spaces an insufficient measure for analysing the equity and efficacy of urban publicness (D’Arcus, 2003; Iveson, 2009; Koopmans, 2004). I advance these arguments by considering how the relationship between two public events and Martin Place shaped two moments of publicness.
To set the theoretical scene for the analytical work that follows, I begin with Barnett’s (2008) notion of the ghostly public, which claims that publicness is a discursive notion with a tenuous connection to space. Whist attracted to the transient and discursive qualities of this model of publicness, I temper this approach by arguing that space still matters to some publics and some forms of publicness. After providing a critique of Barnett’s approach I explore the work of Iveson (2007) and Emirbayer and Sheller (1999) in an effort to ground the ghostly public. I draw on Iveson’s (2007) notion of the political labours of publicness as a means of accounting for the influence of space on the processes of public making. Having affirmed the importance of space to publics and publicness, I locate Martin Place in context by outlining its history, materiality and connection to the socio-cultural life of Sydney. I then situate Martin Place within a public sphere and policy context arguing that, in relatively recent times, it has been asked to play an important role in the promotion of a ‘Global Sydney’. Martin Place is a space with deep connections to the cultural, economic and political life of Sydney. It serves as a backdrop for the analysis of two public events. Each event draws on different aspects of the material and relational power of Martin Place as resources for the articulation of a certain mode of publicness.

In Section 6.4, I consider the enactment of two events focused on Martin Place. The first is the opening night of Sydney’s premier cultural festival—The Sydney Festival. This event, known as Festival First Night, used Martin Place as a stage for a dance music concert aimed at Sydney’s youth. The second is a protest organised by the Stop Bush Coalition that coincided with Sydney holding the 2007 APEC summit. Protesters hoped to pass through Martin Place on their protest march held on 8 September 2007. Ultimately, due to the legal structures and the efforts of local law enforcement authorities, they were unsuccessful. However, I suggest that protesters’ exclusion from Martin Place in fact aided rather than limited their efforts to be public and address others. These two moments of publicness are explored through a narrative structure that follows the process preceding the event, the event’s articulation in place and its reception in the public sphere. This narrative form teases out the ‘political labours’ of these publics as they negotiate and ultimately enact their particular forms of publicness. In the process I show how the strategic negotiations of publics, over the
‘what’ and ‘where’ of publicness, leads to very different spatial outcomes. This builds on the idea that agency has a crucial role to play in the articulation of publicness but that this agency can be both constrained and encouraged by the opportunities and limitations of space (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Emirbayer & Sheller, 1999).

By tracing the political labours of public making by two publics, I uncover various degrees of presence and absence in Martin Place. In one regard, physically being in Martin Place is crucial to understanding what it means to be public in ‘Global Sydney’. In part this reflects the new regime of publicness in ‘Global Sydney’, where international events rather than large-scale democratic engagement is encouraged. In this context festivals are welcome but protests less so. Festival First Night is clearly the type of publicness nurtured by ‘Global Sydney’—profitable, safe and arguably apolitical. However, the symbolic power of Martin Place, its latent history as a place of assembly and protest, and its connection to the mediated infrastructure of the city render measures of presence and absence insufficient for gauging its importance to publics’ urban publicness. The Stop Bush Coalition illustrates the inadequacy of propinquity alone as an effective gauge for the efficacy and equity of public life. The Stop Bush Coalition, formed around the APEC Leaders’ Week in September 2007, drew on the symbolic power of Martin Place and its connection to the mediated structures of the city to circulate its politics and to address a wider audience. In practice, being excluded from Martin Place by legal structures imposed by the state proved an equally effective resource for circulating the protesters’ message because it amplified rather than excluded their address. These findings suggest a less than dystopian future for publicness where opportunities for dissent remain despite spatial regimes designed to silence them (Bridge, 2009; D'Arcus, 2003). These findings show that when the ghostly public touches down, it draws on the resources and characters of grounded space, and that this influences the articulation of publicness. Moreover, it suggests that despite spatial absence, publics can still draw on the resources of space in their address to others.
7.2 A Spectre and (Public) Space

In this section I consider a framework for exploring the processes of two publics in relation to Martin Place. I begin by exploring Barnett’s (2008) notion of the ghostly quality of the public. Whilst attracted to the empirical and theoretical implications of Barnett’s transient public ‘cut adrift from any proper location’ (2008: 7), ultimately I seek to temper this approach. I agree with Barnett that ‘publicness is a process: it’s something people do, rather than a space they inhabit’ (2008: 10). Yet my contention is that space is often an important part of this process. As a means of grounding the ghostly public, I critique some aspects of Barnett’s approach and argue that a greater emphasis should be placed on the importance of space in shaping the process of publicness. I do this by drawing on Iveson (2007) and Emirbayer and Sheller (1999) whose work emphasises the importance of context to social processes.

7.2.1 Derrida’s Spectre, Barnett’s Ghost

In Convening Publics Barnett (2008) begins by examining how and why publics and publicness are important to democratic politics. He contends that geographers often over-emphasise either the instrumental or intrinsic value of publicness to democracy. For instance, he argues that electoral geography overplays the instrumental value of public action by focusing on the decision-making processes associated with voting patterns at the expense of the intrinsic value of public action and discourse. Equally, he is critical of geographers influenced by cultural theory who emphasise the deliberative value of publicness at the expense of its utility as a tool of democratic practice. He seeks a middle way between these two extremes, a path that recognises both the intrinsic and instrumental value of publicness to democratic politics. Publicness is an intrinsic social good but it also has instrumental value for democratic processes. In seeking this middle way Barnett constructs a notion of publics as communities of address and attention whose relationship with space is tenuous at best.

Barnett critiques what Iveson has characterised elsewhere as the ‘topographical approach’ to the public space (Iveson, 2007). This approach is characteristic of early
work on the urban public realm that focused on particular spaces in the city and from this constructed a (typically dystopian) picture of contemporary public life (see Chapter 5 and Davis, 1990; Kohn, 2001; Sorkin, 1992). Barnett claims this approach to publicness rests on two faulty assumptions. The first is that it privileges face-to-face relations in traditional public spaces over other forms of public engagement. For Barnett, frameworks that place a premium on embodied relations in traditional public space are ill-suited to the complexity and interconnectivity of contemporary public life. For him presence in particular spaces—the kind of propinquity that has been a central tenet of much work on the public realm—is increasingly irrelevant as a measure of a healthy public life (see also Iveson, 2009; Mahony et al., 2010). His second criticism is of the idea that some spaces are the essential locale for authentic forms of publicness. Barnett argues that this ignores the fact that, to varying degrees, all forms of publicness are dramatic, performative and thus contrived, making appeals to ‘real’ forms of publicness in public space redundant:

[the problem with ] invocations of ‘real’ or ‘material’ public spaces is that this fails to accurately register the ways in which spaces like streets and parks actually function in contentious politics ... [as sites of] strategic dramaturgy, or theatrical styles of protest that enact claims (Barnett, 2008: 10).

This is supported by a number of works that emphasise the performative characteristics of publicness and, in turn, question normative appeals to authenticity. First, Cooper’s (2006) work on London’s Speaker’s Corner illustrates the extent to which publicness is influenced by the performative acts of others. Drawing on Bakhtin’s work on the carnival, he argues that the formation of publics and the circulation of address works in counter-normative ways. Cooper claims that publics are attracted to speakers’ communication as much for their emotive, competitive and theatrical qualities as they are by the persuasiveness of their arguments. Conscious of this, speakers nurture a theatrical persona aimed at enticing listeners and thus creating a public. Second, Gill Valentine’s work on gay and lesbian publicness also questions the extent to which normative notions of authentic public life hold. Valentine’s studies illustrate how queer subjects adopt various public personas in relation with and proximate to heterosexuality. She argues that there is a queer
production of space which exists simultaneously with normative heterosexual notions of publicity (Valentine, 1996, 2002). Finally, Mona Domosh’s (1998) study of New York City in the mid-nineteenth century highlights the extent to which street life was a contrived and choreographed practice aimed at complex social and economic ends. She argues that the street was a place of ritual where subjects, with class and social aims in mind, performed bourgeois values. These authors show that there is nothing ‘real’ about publicness—it’s all theatre.

In the place of a topographic approach Barnett constructs a processual one, inspired by Derrida’s phantasmal public34 (Derrida, 1992). He argues that we should think of publics in discursive rather than spatial terms. For Barnett, like Derrida, publics are created through the act of addressing others, maintaining their attention and convening a discussion (see also D’Arcus, 2003; Koopmans, 2004; Warner, 2002). So publics are related to space only to the extent that spatial forms provide room for the articulation and reception of public address: ‘If publicness has a spatiality, then it resides nowhere else than in the treacherous and promising space that is enacted by throwing words, signs and tokens out into the world’ (Barnett, 2008: 9). Space allows for ‘a spacing-out of discourse over time’ (Barnett 2008: 16) and is thus a medium of address which connects publics with a potentially diverse and decentralised audience. This concept of publicness encourages a shift in empirical focus from place and toward process, as Barnett states simply: ‘publicness is a process: it’s something people do rather than a space they inhabit’ (Barnett, 2008: 10).

Barnett’s notion of the ghostly public has a number of implications for work on the urban public realm. His model suggests a decentralised and plural model of publicness, where publics are convened and communicate across place. It eschews any notion of a settled public topography of the city based on face-to-face relations in key public

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34 In The Other Heading (1992) Derrida uses a ship’s course as an extended metaphor for the state of post-Cold War Europe. In the second section of the collection, ‘Call It a Day for Democracy’, Derrida meditates on the production and location of public opinion and locates public opinion as always everywhere and nowhere: ‘The wandering of its proper body is also the ubiquity of a specter’. His point is that public opinion is a construction rather than a concrete entity, a construction that is drawn upon and crafted in the political interests of those wishing to address others.
spaces. It frees publicness from what many consider to be its traditional terrain. Instead, publicness may be found anywhere where there is room for its articulation:

Rather than modeling public space on the idea of gathering and assembling in the presence of others, we should look at the ways in which publics are convened through practices of dissemination, dispersal and scattering (Barnett, 2008: 26).

Barnett extends his notion of the public ‘cut adrift from any proper location’ (2008: 7) further still, arguing that publics in fact feed off the preexisting material and social infrastructure of the city:

there is a strong sense that public action is parasitical on the material configurations and social relations laid down by other forms of activity, in the sense that it is dependent on those as its condition of possibility, as well as in the sense that it is these conditions that in turn become the object of transformative public action (Barnett, 2008: 19).

Thus not only do publics depend on the social and material structures of space, which shape the conditions of their enactment and articulation, but these social and material structures also become the object of publics’ address—the subject of their message.

There is much in Barnett’s model of publicness that I find attractive. His focus on the process of publicness rather than space helps disaggregate the act from its context, enabling us to consider how and why publics and some forms of publicness engage with certain terrains and not others. His call to think of publics as discursive entities suggests a diverse and de-territorialised publicness and reminds us of the temporal, spatial and social reach of contemporary public life. This in turn encourages us to think of how publics are connected beyond embodied and immediate relations in space. His insight into the material and social context of address, and how publics use these conditions, is a useful way of thinking through how publics are sustained and for what purposes—namely, they often spring from a particular context in an effort to maintain, change or identify the conditions of their becoming. His insistence that publics ‘have no proper place’ compels us to think about new spaces where publicness might be found, or to think about old spaces in new ways. This opens up new avenues for
empirical work on the urban public and new ways of thinking about and acting on the politics of public space (see also Bridge, 2009; Mahony et al., 2010; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008). However, while Barnett’s notion of the ghostly public is a fruitful way to think about publics, I wish to temper his approach by considering the role space plays in the articulation of some forms of publicness. To put it simply, in the next section I ground the ghostly public.

7.2.2 Grounding the Ghostly Public

Here I argue that Barnett emphasises the transient qualities of publics at the expense of considering the role space plays in shaping publics and publicness. But my critique is one of degree rather than direction. In this section and in the case studies that follow, I work with and against Barnett’s model of publicness, arguing that space is periodically important and immaterial to the aims publics wish to achieve. Barnett’s ghostly public ‘has no proper place’ but this does not make space irrelevant to the formation of publicness.

Like the geographers referred to in Barnett’s work I argue ‘that there are, in fact, some places, spaces, and spatial configurations that are peculiarly valuable as scenes of genuine public life and authentic public expression’ (Barnett, 2008: 7). I share Barnett’s suspicion of terms like ‘genuine’ and ‘authentic’ when they are associated with particular spatial configurations because this valourises some forms of publicness over others and denies the theatrical qualities of all publicness (Cooper, 2006; Domosh, 1998; Valentine, 1996). However, I maintain that there are some spaces that are peculiarly valuable as resources for some publics and for the production of some forms of publicness. I am not calling for a return to a topographic determinism where the process of publicness is lifted from the material terrain; my contention is that some spaces retain certain attributes, characteristics, latent histories and living cultures that are used as resources by publics seeking to address others. These are not immovable or immortal but they retain a certain inertia that helps shape variations in the types of publics and forms of publicness that these spaces facilitate and encourage. Some
spaces have long public histories, traditions of association and tacit understandings of
how to act in the company of others (see Arefi & Meyers, 2003; Carr et al., 1992;
Domosh, 1998; Drummond, 2000; Jennifer, 2011; Low, 2000; Mumford, 1961 [1989];
Salvatore, 2004; Sennett, 1992). These histories, traditions and understandings must
be activated to ensure they are perpetuated and yet they remain as latent resources
that can be drawn upon by publics in place.

The concept of the ghostly public risks overlooking these characteristics. It risks
assuming that space has a uniform topography upon which publics project their
concerns. By implication it implies that the message—the public address, the form of
publicness—is articulated without alteration by suggesting that there is no tension
between publics, their publicness and the place of enactment. There is a hint of this
attitude in Barnett’s characterisation of publics as parasitical on the material and social
infrastructure of space. However, this underplays the extent to which publics and
publicness help create and contribute to the material and social infrastructure of our
cities. Part of the physical and social structure of space is created by the activities and
expectations of publics. The relationship is better thought of as sometimes symbiotic
and periodically parasitic. To paraphrase McLuhan (1994) the medium is at least part
of the message and for some forms of publicness the medium is physical co-presence
in place.

Whilst the concept of a transient public is important, so is the notion that there is a
varied topography of public life. Rather than being uniform, the topography of
publicness is differentiated. The public landscape is one with points of convergence
and divergence, one with various levels of public density and regulation, one where
space makes a difference to publics and the formation of publicness. The relationship
between publics and space is not frictionless but involves varying degrees of traction
and resonance. If publicness is a process, it is one that shapes and is shaped by space.
As Iveson suggests, ‘Surely all kinds of public space have a “material structure” which
influences the political possibilities and opportunities they afford?’ (Iveson 2007: 12,
emphasis in original)—though one could remove ‘public’ from this phrase.
So while publics are transient entities, when they touch down, take root and are enacted in space they are in some way shaped by their context and thus are open to the potential opportunities and limitations of their space of articulation. They are, as Emirbayer and Sheller have suggested elsewhere, ‘a synthetic product of the channeling influences of the structuring contexts of action, on the one hand, and of human agency on the other’ (Emirbayer and Sheller 1999: 761 emphasis in the original). In this context, space and its associated habits are the structuring context of action. Human agency is expressed in the political labours of publics as they try to renew or reimagine these habits and practices. Separating space from publicness conceptually frees us from tired associations between certain forms of publicness and certain types of public spaces but it does not render space irrelevant. In practice space and publicness are imbricated and co-constitutive.

Bearing this in mind the task, then, is to determine why some publics and forms of publicness resonate with some spaces and not with others and conversely why some spaces may have a reputation and indeed a facility for encouraging some forms of publicness and why others may not. This is why a procedural framework open to the role space plays in the process of publicness is key. To enable us to do this we must, as Mahoney et al. suggest, ‘attend closely to the events, practices and processes through which publics come into view, sustain themselves over time and extend themselves over space’ (2010: 9). Part of our attention must be focused on the role space plays in shaping the events, practices and processes associated with publicness. We must focus on the process of publicness but we should be clear about the components that constitute this process—the logic, strategies and resources (spatial and otherwise) that are used in its articulation. The key is to develop a conceptual and empirical focus that is lithe enough to encompass what Iveson suggests are the ‘multiple dimensions of publicness and the city’ but cohesive enough to make some sense of the interplay of these dimensions (Iveson, 2007).

In an effort to make some sense of the relationship between publicness and space Iveson suggests we think about the public city ‘as an emergent and contingent product of political labours which are conducted on behalf of particular forms of publicness’
(Iveson 2007: 223 emphasis in original). A landscape of contingency and emergence suggests an openness that in part draws on similar notions of the transient public in Barnett’s work. Iveson’s identification of the political labours associated with publicness is sufficiently malleable and cohesive to reveal the process of publicness and its relationship with space. Political labours refer to the negotiations publics engage in and the strategic decisions they make during the process of public making. I contend that, in the course of public making, publics draw on various resources—relational, institutional, mediated and material—in negotiations about the ‘what’ and ‘where’ of publicness. At times material public space and its related meanings are one of these resources. The implication of my understanding is that these negotiations help shape the nature of publicness in place. Being attentive to the political negotiations of publics and the resources mobilised in this process bring to mind other works that have sought to trace the machinations of institutions, individuals and publics and their influence on the built environment (see Bridge, 2009; Flyvbjerg, 2001; Mandanipour, 2010).

I began this section by arguing that I want to work with and against Barnett’s notion of the ghostly public. Whilst attracted to the analytical possibilities afforded by this notion, I also argued that it runs the risk of underestimating the value of space to the processes of publicness. To temper this approach I drew on Iveson’s notion of the political labours of publics as a means of engaging with the processes of publicness whilst preserving the role of space in this process. In the following section I set out the context of this research—the space—before considering how the processes of two publics interacted with Martin Place in Sydney’s CBD.
7.3 The Place of Martin Place

Above the General Post Office in Martin Place, the great clock booms time into history every fifteen minutes, custodian letters, telephone messages, the cables received from and going out to Melbourne, Darwin, Perth and Weipa, to the countless towns and settlements in between, and beyond them to the world.

There are also along this fine street huge banks and insurance offices, storing, investing, paying out the nation’s money. For good measure the oldest established hospital in the continent, modestly facing the length of the street from its eastern end, symbolizes scientific advancement. On the northern side of the street opposite the G.P.O., the Government Tourist Bureau and private travel agencies set Australians on their way to explore their own country and the next. Beside the kerb along the colonnade of the G.P.O are flower stalls where native and exotic flowers may be bought. And there, in the centre of the roadway, is the Cenotaph, symbol of a once-isolated continent’s involvement in world events.

And so, in this street, the hub of Sydney, every segment of the nation’s life and history is represented (Grainger, 1970: Preface).

Grainger’s description of Martin Place is of a public past. We no longer receive cables, write letters or use the telephone at Sydney’s GPO. Sydney’s GPO has since been redeveloped and sold. However the huge banks, insurance offices and flower stalls are still there and, for some, Martin Place is still the hub of Sydney. In the following I argue that Martin Place remains an iconic space in the public life of the city and because of this it has been appropriated in a narrative designed to promote ‘Global Sydney’, with implications for the types of publics and publicness that are enacted in this place. By drawing on notes from field observations, key informant interviews and document analysis, I advance this argument, firstly by dealing with the materiality of Martin Place, and secondly by dealing with the connection Martin Place has with the economic, institutional and cultural life of Sydney and the role Martin Place has assumed as a promotional tool for ‘Global Sydney’. I construct this argument to set up

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35 It now contains a collection of expensive restaurants, bars, a jewelry importer and Sydney’s very own ‘Temple of Cheese’ (GPO Sydney No. 1 Martin Place 2012).
the context for the analysis of the role Martin Place also plays in two instances of public making.

7.3.1 The Materiality of Martin Place

Martin Place was opened in 1891 and was named in honour of Sir James Martin, three-time Premier of NSW and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of NSW. During the 1930s an expert committee, convened to re-arrange Sydney’s civic quarter, nominated Martin Place as the city’s main civic space (Freestone, 2000). Initially a wide boulevard, it was closed to traffic in 1971. Following a review by the City of Sydney Council the pedestrian precinct was extended between Pitt Street and George Street eastward to Macquarie Street which is home to Sydney Hospital, the State Library and State Parliament (City of Sydney 1971, Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2). It remains unchanged except for some superficial alterations.

Figure 7.1 People cross on the corner of Elizabeth St and Martin Place. Source: Author
Martin Place’s location and long history make it an attractive space for enacting publicness. Key informants argued that it was one of the city’s premier public spaces, particularly for events because

it’s smack bang right in the middle of the city. You can’t get a better profile [in Sydney] ... you’ve probably got a stronger profile than the Opera House ... It’s right in the middle of the retail [centre] ... I t’s [also] a natural amphitheater ... [and] everybody knows where it is (Creative Director of Public Events, City of Sydney).
However, the advantages of the centrality and relative exposure of Martin Place have their limitations. Its size, location and the presence of influential stakeholders close to the site also make it a problematic space for certain kinds of publicness. Respondents suggested that, although Martin Place is a central and well-known location, it can be a technically difficult to hold public events in the space. However, Martin Place’s power is not only due to its materiality—its location and physicality—but its connection to the economic, cultural and institutional life of Sydney.

7.3.2 Connecting Martin Place

Economic Life

Martin Place is as much a product of its association with the economic, cultural and political life of Sydney as it is of its material form. Daly and Pritchard argue that ‘Sydney has become the unquestioned corporate and financial capital of Australasia’ (2000: 167) and Martin Place is at its centre. Until relatively recently Martin Place was the headquarters of three of Australia’s four major banks (Rochfort, 2012). It is also home to global financial firms such as France’s Societe General, US giant Bank of America and what was once referred to ‘Australia’s millionaires factory’, the investment bank Macquarie Group Limited (Abelson & Dominy, 2001; Haigh, 2007).

Sydney’s role as Australia’s financial and corporate capital has helped shape the nature of urban space in Sydney’s CBD. This is evident in both its architecture and the nature of the publicness enacted in Martin Place. Martin Place has a number of buildings which are heritage listed, including the Sydney GPO, ‘one of the most significant public buildings in Sydney’ (Abelson & Dominy, 2001; Daly & Pritchard, 2000). The buildings are grand and exude establishment Sydney. The weekday public is influenced if not dominated by those who work on or nearby Martin Place (see Figure 3).

36 Sydney GPO, located at the western end of Martin Place, has historically been used to as the centre point of Sydney (see Figure 7.1).
As a consequence of its long association with Sydney’s corporate sector, Martin Place is also a site of elite consumption. Armani, Prada and Canali outlets all open directly onto the plaza (see Figure 7.4). Along with these high-end retailers a series of exclusive eateries and bars are found throughout, such as Lindt Chocolate and the creatively named Martin Place Bar. The latter boasts a feature wall dedicated to prominent Australian entrepreneurs and celebrities. Each portrait is accompanied by a short phrase attributed to that individual. Presumably for the benefit of the bar’s clientele Rupert Murdoch tells onlookers that ‘Our reputation is more important than the last 100 million dollars’. Martin Place is at the heart of Sydney’s financial district and is home to many of the city’s high-end retailers. It is where many of the city’s elite work, eat and shop.
Cultural Life

Martin Place is also connected to the city’s cultural life through its role as a site of entertainment and civic ritual. Historically Martin Place has been the civic centre of Sydney, as the result of deliberate decisions made by successive state and local governments. The space plays host to a number of civic events throughout the year such as citizenship ceremonies, Chinese New Year, Christmas and Easter. These events help to reinforce notions of Martin Place as Sydney’s civic centre. It also has a central role as a place of entertainment and cultural production. For instance the country’s most popular TV breakfast program *Sunrise* is filmed here. The huge glass façade of Channel Seven’s Colonial Building and the relative elevation of the street mean the cast and crew perform in a giant fish bowl that opens onto Martin Place. A ‘live audience’ watches the production of these programs in real time. The cast of *Sunrise* uses this public interaction to great effect, shooting much of their show at street level rather than in the studio. A typically enthusiastic public audience serves as the backdrop to the show’s segments (Scanlon, 2007). At the end of each show the stars of
Sunrise sign autographs and mingle with the crowd in Martin Place, adding to the spectacle\textsuperscript{37} (see Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5 People watch the live production of Channel Seven’s Sunrise program. Source: Author.

In addition to this television presence, Martin Place has also been used as a site for the production of commercials, television shows and films. Hollywood feature films such as the Matrix have used Martin Place as a setting, reflecting both the globalisation of cinema and its relationship with the cultural economy of cities (Shiel & Fitzmaurice, 2001).

However, Martin Place’s most enduring cultural association has been through its function as a site of national mourning. The Cenotaph, located between George and Pitt St., has served as a memorial to Australian armed service personnel since 1927. The monument is the centrepiece of memorial services each Anzac Day, a national

\textsuperscript{37} 8.30. The crowd outside the Sunrise has been growing steadily and presently a cameraman is setting up for an outside scene. 8.40. A cow comes onto Martin Place and dances. People with Manly and Melbourne (Rugby League) flags vie for attention in the background. People often speak on their mobiles to people at home telling them that they are on television. A child waves to camera from the shoulders of his father. Security guards asks people to ‘step back please’ and the producer gets people to move into the shot as the stars Koshi and Mel make their way out onto Martin Place to finish the show. They both stay behind afterwards to sign autographs. ‘Enjoy the rest of your stay’. ‘Oh you again, there you go’. The stars work the crowd, they are gracious, there is laughter and the public waits patiently for a personal photograph or signed photo of the crew. I get a copy, ‘What’s your name’ Koshi asks me, ‘Adam’, ‘There you go mate have a good one’. 9.15 AM the crowd dissipates and a security guard accompanies the stars back into the building... (Field Observation 06/10/08).
public holiday dedicated to Australian soldiers lost in war. Martin Place’s Cenotaph, and Anzac Day more broadly, have proven to be increasingly popular in recent years with thousands gathering for the annual dawn service. The Cenotaph has long been a feature of in Martin Place, serving to bring both solemnity and a degree of functional complexity to the space—every event planned for Martin Place must take into consideration the existence of the Cenotaph (see Figure 7.6).

Figure 7.6 Anzac Day Ceremony, Martin Place Cenotaph, 1930s. 
Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/statelibraryofnsw/3406448598/

Martin Place is deeply connected to the cultural life of Sydney. It encompasses the full spectrum of public emotion from celebration to solemn remembrance, the location of civic ceremonies and entertainment. As the case studies that follow show, this cultural element is drawn on by publics seeking to use Martin Place.

38 This relatively recent popularity is associated with what Brett (2005) has called a burgeoning ‘new-world nationalism’ through which the military and in particular the Gallipoli narrative play an increasingly important role as a means of defining Australia’s national story.
Institutional Life

In addition to its function as a hub for Sydney’s cultural life, Martin Place is also associated with the city and arguably the country’s institutional life. The NSW Parliament sits at its eastern end and across the road, in the southeastern corner, is the Reserve Bank of Australia—Australia’s central bank. At the midway point between Macquarie and George St is the MLC Centre which boasts the US Consulate as a tenant. Further west, closer to George St, is the country’s consumer and competition regulator, The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, whose Sydney offices are in the refurbished Sydney GPO (see Figure 7.1). Like central public spaces in many global cities, Martin Place is a site of significant institutional power (Allen, 2006; Low, 2000). Perhaps as a consequence, it has a long history as a place of political protest.

For many, part of the quality of urban space is measured by its ability to facilitate and sustain political engagement (Davis, 1990; Mitchell, 2003; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008). A variety of political publics use Martin Place as a space for representational politics. These movements encompass the political spectrum ranging from what could be regarded as a progressive through to more conservative causes. This reflects other work conducted on the ways in which traditional public space has been used as a site of representation for progressive but also conservative publics (see Basson, 2006; Lee, 2009; Shaw, 2009). For instance Walk Against Warming, a group associated with online progressive lobbyists GetUp!, used Martin Place as the starting point of a march calling for action to address climate change, while protesters opposed to the introduction of a carbon tax aimed at tackling climate change held a rally in the same space (Don, 2011). Martin Place contributes to the political life of Sydney through its long tradition of facilitating and engaging with the country’s political life. It has a long and latent tradition that is reactivated as publics engage with the space. These traditions serve as the context of all protests in the space and are a resource used in the case studies that follow.
Martin Place is at the heart of much of the city’s economic, cultural and institutional life. In the sections that follow I argue that publics draw on these characteristics as resources in the political labour of public making. Publics are conscious of Martin Place’s connectivity and long history and they want to draw on these connections to amplify their address and the aims of their public, whether it is for reasons of political or commercial value. However, as well as having a long history, Martin Place is also constituted by processes with a much shorter memory. Martin Place is recreated and re-inscribed through strategic political discourses that help shape what it means to be public in Martin Place today. In the section that follows I discuss how in relatively recent times, Martin Place has been asked to play an active role in promoting ‘Global Sydney’.

7.3.4  **Martin Place and Global Sydney**

Publicness in Martin Place is a product of its material form as well as its connection to the political, economic and cultural life of Sydney. However Martin Place also has a much shorter spatial memory influenced by relations between the public sphere and public policy. As Staeheli and Mitchell (2008) suggest, the nature of public space is often a product of the tenuous relationship between the public sphere and the material public space (see also Barnett, 2008; C. Calhoun, 1998; Habermas, 1962 [1992]; Iveson, 2007). The varied and often conflicted ways subjects perceive public space influences the types of publics and the nature of publicness that are enacted in place. Consequently, as well as being a product of its materiality and socio-cultural connections, publicness in Martin Place is also a product of the tenor of discussion occurring in the public sphere. Recently Sydney has been engaged in a conversation about the nature and quality of the city’s public domain. This has framed the context of this study.

Former Prime Minister and student of urban policy Paul Keating once said ‘if you’re not in Sydney, [then] you’re camping out’ (Nowra, 2009: 23). Keating’s brash one-liner reflects the conscious construction of Sydney as Australia’s *only* global city, an
assertion repeated by officials both publicly and in policy documents created for the
city. Sydney’s engagement with the discourse of the global city through a combination
of public policy and place marketing has served as the basis of much academic
Recently, an integral part of this (re)positioning has been a focus on the quality of the
city’s public domain both as an indicator of its residents’ quality of life and as a
function of its ability to attract events of national and international significance. In this
policy context, the city’s public domain has been perceived as an important signifier of
its ability to compete with other global cities (Connell, 2000; Harvey, 1989). However
in recent times, despite Sydney’s claims to global city status, an earnest reassessment
of its place as a globally competitive urban space has been underway:

For decades, Sydney was known as the world’s best-kept secret, a dazzling harbor with
a strong civic-culture, modern infrastructure, family friendly suburbs, and great
beaches. But traffic congestion, noise pollution, and the city’s ongoing public-transport
woes have taken the gloss off our international reputation ... So what went wrong?
(Chipperfield, 2009: 49).

As the statement above suggests, this re-evaluation has been articulated through an
ongoing discourse played out through the city’s newspapers, journals and blogs (see C.
Bowen, 2009; Chipperfield, 2009; Dalley, 2008; Farrelly, 2006; Jennifer, 2011; Jinman,
2008; Nowra, 2009; Suki, 2007). There are echoes of this concern in the academic
literature (Gleeson, 2004, 2006b). Admittedly this work has focused on the decline in
the urban public realm in Western Sydney in the context of neo-liberalism but there
are parallels between this and more recent work conducted on the quality of public life
in Sydney’s inner city (see Epstein & Iveson, 2009; Goodman, 2010; Iveson, 2009;
McNeill, 2011). Much of this discourse has influenced, and has been driven by, the
policy decisions of Sydney’s powerful City of Sydney Council and by the State
Government of New South Wales.

Independent politician Clover Moore was elected Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney in
2004. Under Moore’s tenure, Sydney’s inner city has undergone a series of policy
redirections aimed at making Sydney both an attractive destination for investment and
public events, and a more livable city for its residents. The driving force behind these changes has been the white paper *Sustainable Sydney 2030: The Vision* which frames policy decisions within the context of an environmentally sustainable, globally competitive and socio-culturally connected urban form (City of Sydney Council, 2007).

A significant part of this vision has been a reassessment of Sydney’s public life. Part of this reassessment took the form of a major public space audit commissioned by the City of Sydney and undertaken by ‘urban planning rock star’ Jan Gehl in 2007 (Maley, 2007: 33). Gehl’s study serves as the basis for many of the recommendations made in *Sustainable Sydney 2030*. The study compared the quality and nature of Sydney’s public life with other world cities such as London, Copenhagen and New York, as well as other harbour cities such as Boston and San Francisco (Gehl, 2007b). According to Gehl the results were mixed. In an opinion piece published in a special issue of the *Sydney Morning Herald* Gehl described Sydney as having ‘great edges: its magnificent harbor, the green spread of the Domain and the Royal Botanic Gardens. But where is its heart?’ (Gehl, 2007a). Gehl’s argument is that Sydney is dominated by motor cars and related infrastructure which limits the facility of public space and in turn constrains and discourages public engagement, creating a city with ‘public space [but] with an absence of public life’ (Munro, 2007: 1). Gehl’s overarching recommendations were to capitalise on Sydney’s amenities, create a twenty-first century traffic system and thus create an attractive public realm.

In this new vision Martin Place would serve as one of a series of public spaces which connected Sydney with its foreshore and would also serve as a location of civic engagement and public life. This discussion over the direction of Sydney’s public policy serves to place this study in a period of relative change regarding the nature of publicness in ‘Australia’s Global City’, a change in which Martin Place would be asked to play a major role because of its prominence as one of the city’s premier public spaces. Many of the policy directions set out in Gehl’s report and the *2030 Vision* are yet to be adopted. However, at the time of this study key informants at City of Sydney Council indicated that the city’s framework for public events was under review. In the current policy framework, publics (whether they be political, cultural or commercial)
wishing to stage an event in the city must both apply for a permit and meet certain policy and legal requirements to operate within the council’s public spaces:

there is the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act which governs lots of that stuff and sitting below that we have some area specific planning rules and legislation such as the Local Development Control Plan which comes into play as well as the Local Environment Plan. There are Plans of Management for individual space is a key one which comes into to play, so these are the basis for determining in the assessment process that we have to go through when considering events and we have to keep in mind all the other legislation which cover other aspects of the event, you know everything from legislation that covers temporary food venues through to noise requirements, through to temporary structures and the building codes in terms of constructing things to Australian standards, there’s a fairly extensive list...OHS legislation, the Liquor Act (Manager of Events and Film Liaison, City of Sydney Council).

As these comments suggest, the application process is extensive and ensures that participants are both adequately organised and sufficiently experienced to hold an event of the intended size and complexity. In each instance organisers must submit a preliminary assessment which outlines the impacts the event will have on the space, followed by a more detailed submission which may necessitate adherence to planning instruments, development approval, waste management plans, event schedules and security and risk management plans. This bureaucratisation of publicness is in part driven by the council’s need to protect itself and organisers from the possibility of litigation. This reflects the legal constraints of publicness in the contemporary city

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39 As one key informant put it ‘a standard condition of any approved use of one of our spaces includes the condition that the organiser has to indemnify the City completely and also has to present evidence of public liability insurance to our satisfaction ... there are sometimes obviously complications when it comes to some of those small groups like protest groups who may not have public liability insurance. Now in those cases our approach is generally that they would normally require approval from the police, a Schedule 1 or a permit to conduct a public assembly. If they are able to get that from the police then our approach to these sorts of events in the interests of freedom of speech is to try to work with the organiser to minimise the impacts but essentially to allow that activity to take place without a formal approval from the City because we’re unable, with our insurance company, to give formal approval to an activity where the organisers don’t have adequate public liability insurance’ (Manager of Events and Film Liaison, City of Sydney Council).
and the relations between council, local authorities and potential publics (see Button, 2003; Mitchell, 2003; NÈmeth & Hollander, 2010).

Despite this, it would be simplistic to suggest that the (local) state stands between publics and the city’s public spaces. Key informants spoke of actively engaging with publics to assist them through the application process. In some circumstances this enabled Council to manage the display of politically sensitive material:

> we try not to limit the sort of things that can happen here [Martin Place] obviously if something is going to be completely offensive to everybody then we need to look because it is happening in the public domain. And just to give you an example of that, we have had some protest events in the past which have wanted to display particularly graphic images that would have without a doubt upset a number of people in the community. So rather than just say to them you can’t include that as part of your protest because it is an important part of their protest what we’ve looked to do is have some other means for them to include it (Manager of Events and Film Liaison, City of Sydney Council).

The Council also ensures that publics comply with the conditions of their permits and that relevant stakeholders and authorities are notified. In part this bureaucratisation of publicness is a function of the council’s liability, but it can also be seen as part of a growing awareness of the value of publicness to globally competitive metropolises. But the bureaucratisation of publicness should not necessarily be associated with a confrontational approach to public life. As the discussion above, and the following case studies reveal, there is a conscious effort within City of Sydney Council to facilitate publicness, although as the second case study shows, this is a particular type of publicness aimed at particular economic and cultural aspirations.

This policy context, along with Martin Place’s ties with the cultural, economic and political life of Sydney, help shape how it might be drawn upon as a resource for publicness. It is within this social and material context that publics negotiate over the ‘what’ and ‘where’ of publicness. In the section that follows I discuss two publics that seek to use Martin Place as a stage for publicness, a stage for embodied practice that is well connected to the mediated structures of the city. One successfully stages its
public in place; the second is unable to use Martin Place as a venue for gathering a physical public. However, I argue that Martin Place remains a crucial resource for this public in its efforts to address others. These publics, and their interaction with Martin Place, illustrate the ghostly and grounded qualities of the relationship between publicness and space.

7.4  Chasing Two Ghosts in and around Martin Place

In the previous sections I sketched the material and relational context of Martin Place and showed how it has been used as a tool in the discourse of ‘Global Sydney’. In this section I explore the relationship between this context, this discourse and two public events. The accounts that follow are based on key informant interviews, participant observation sessions and media analysis. In total five key informant interviews were conducted, each taking between 45 and 90 minutes. Key informants were chosen from local government for the insights they had on the management of the city’s public domain. Key informants were selected from the public organising each event and the enactment of publicness within the city. In addition to these interviews I also conducted a series of two-hour participant observation sessions over a week period. I drew on these observations to flesh out the discussion of Martin Place’s context and everyday use in Section 7.3. The accounts follow a narrative structure, beginning in each instance with the public’s rationale, moving through the public’s negotiation, its articulation in place and its reception in the public sphere. Consequently this section relies heavily on the accounts of interviewees as a means of telling that public’s story. This is not to suggest that this is the story of that public; rather, it is an account of the articulation of publicness in place. The focus here is on the political labours of each public and how this influences the articulation of publicness in place. By charting these political labours I highlight the importance of Martin Place in these labours. I argue that publics engage in these negotiations conscious of the space’s symbolic power and its connection to the mediated structures of the city. In turn these characteristics are exploited through embodied publicness in place and/or through disembodied address that nonetheless uses the idea of Martin Place as a resource.
These qualities render simple measures of presence and absence as an insufficient tool for considering the equity and efficacy of urban publicness in ‘Global Sydney’.

7.4.1 Sydney Festival

The Sydney Festival is Sydney’s premier arts festival. It has been an annual event since 1977 and offers a combination of music, theatre, dance, lectures and cinema. This research focuses on the festival’s opening which, for the first time in 2008, encompassed Festival First Night, a series of free public events held in five different precincts throughout the city. Importantly for this study, Martin Place served as the location for an open air dance party described in the Festival’s media releases as turning Sydney’s CBD into the CDD— the Central Dance District (Sydney Festival, 2007). It serves as an example of a public organised by a group skilled in the political labours of public making. They engaged in negotiations over the ‘what’ and ‘where’ of publicness, confident in their ability to shape this process. They targeted key stakeholders by drawing on their significant political acumen borne of their close and collaborative relationship with government and local authorities. This process was influenced by poor experiences of past publics but also a willingness to reposition and renegotiate the hurdles of public making. Martin Place was key to this process as a space with the appropriate prestige, a central location and a long history of publicness.

The purpose of Festival First Night was to promote the opening and continuing program of the Festival. However, this was the first time such as ‘mass’ public event had been used as part of this strategy. The organisers’ rationale was that they needed ‘to open with more of a bang...[because] in a big city it is very hard for a festival to get a sense of critical mass’ (Head of Production, Sydney Festival). As well as helping create a critical mass, Festival First Night represented a microcosm of the Festival’s program rather than a definitively different event. It was developed by the Festival’s

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40 In this section I focus on how organisers enacted their event in place. Subsequently I use the public in two senses, first in reference to the group charged with organising Festival First Night and second, in reference to the group of people who gathered on the night to witness the Festival First Night event in Martin Place.
Head of Production as ‘a taster of the Festival as an event ... linking back into the rest of the program which would be on for the rest of the month’ (Head of Production, Sydney Festival). The promotion of the Sydney Festival’s ongoing program was the key message. The addition of a dance event in Martin Place as a component of the Festival First Night was part of a concerted strategy to broaden the Festival’s appeal demographically and economically (Hallett, 2008). The following commentary reveals the extent to which this strategy was actively pursued and the role that Martin Place played in its execution:

the rationale behind Festival First Night was that we would be inviting people from 8 to 80 ... So we identified Martin Place as being the place that we would like to have that group of [young] people and ... the rationale was that it was a hub, it was a central place, it was big and it was open and we would be able to land a stage at one end and put screens up (Head of Production, Sydney Festival).

Martin Place was central to planning this event. Organisers wanted to stage a dance event aimed at the city’s youth so a central location, close to public transport was key to its success. Thus the event drew on the material and symbolic qualities of the space as a resource in planning for this public, suggesting that it was both ghostly and grounded. The Festival’s opening night was without precedent so organisers had to create a public through the choice of artists, content and targeted promotion. In this instance social media was used as a means of engaging with the tastes of a young public:

How did you work out what acts to book? (Adam)

Hit the internet and the blogs and it will probably take you half an hour to work out what kinds of kids and what age groups are listening to what ... that audience in Martin Place ... They are communicating at a level that is unprecedented and the niches that once upon a time would have had ten people [in them] has five thousand people in it now ... the way that works and the speed at which it works, is incredible, it’s huge. So all we had to do was monitor the blogs and once it hit their radar it just went like a virus (Head of Production, Sydney Festival).
Thus, this public was created based on an awareness and utilisation of the city’s mediated structures. Social media helped determine the type of event and the resonance it had with the city’s youth. It drew on social media’s ability to aggregate interest, to transmit information and to convene a disparate public. This reflects work elsewhere on the connection between the electronic public sphere and the material public space, the intersection of material and mediated public space, and the knowledge that publics have of operating in such a context (see Crang, 2000; D’Arcus, 2003; de Freitas, 2010; Georgiou, 2011; Koopmans, 2004). The attraction was not only where the event was held but also the nature of the event and its connection to a ready-made online community able to evolve into an embodied public.

The formation of Festival First Night was a public encouraged by the economic interests of government and business. In 2008 the state government contributed $1 million to the event while the City of Sydney provided $200 000. In the subsequent year, funding was increased to $1.5 million from the state government and $500 000 from the City of Sydney (City of Sydney Council, 2008). In both instances the increased funding was justified in terms of the benefits Festival First Night provides for a globally competitive Sydney. The then NSW Premier Morris Iemma asserted that ‘First Night is about ensuring that Sydney remains a creative hub that can attract high-skill workers, investors and tourists’ (Sydney Media 2008). In addition to this public support, Festival First Night was supported by corporate sponsorship principally from banking firm ANZ. The Sydney Festival’s Head of Production emphasised the importance of sponsors to holding the event, to the extent that he commented that if there were no major sponsors for Festival First Night, there would be ‘no Festival First Night or Festival First Night in half the number of precincts’. Sponsors were seen as having a collaborative relationship where corporate support entailed a degree of promotion and product placement. Asked about the concessions granted to sponsors the Head of Production offered this explanation:

It works more like we say, ‘Look we are doing this thing called Festival First Night, we are looking for a naming sponsor and here’s how much it’s worth … here are the things that you will get. You are the naming rights sponsor, we are going to scrim and put lots of signage around and there was others things’ … they did these things [hands me an
origami crane]. They’re ANZ origami cranes ... and we handed thousands of these out to kids (Head of Production, Sydney Festival).

The relationship between organisers and their commercial backers contributed subtly to the public enacted on the night. This was a cultural event backed by major commercial sponsors. However, their support was not dependent on any direct influence over the nature of the acts, for instance. The extent of their influence is evident more in the theatre of the night, the ambience of the event rather than the event itself.

*Festival First Night* was created to provide a ‘taster’ for a broader arts festival. To do so it sought to create a critical mass that would influence the wider public of Sydney by creating significant event-based publics. In staging this event, organisers utilised the mediated structures of the city, by using the Internet to help create and promote the event to a young public. As well as sponsor support, *Festival First Night* was also a vision shared by a state and a local government keen to promote the event as a measure of the quality of public life in ‘Global Sydney’. However, as with any event in Sydney’s CBD, the Martin Place component of *Festival First Night* involved an extensive process of political labour with local government, transport authorities and police. In this instance event organisers in a concerted and methodical way convinced the necessary stakeholders that this public event was both safe and necessary:

> When we say we want to do an event for thousands of people in Martin Place [we] have to calm everybody down [laughs]. That’s the first thing that has to happen because all of the stakeholders panic ... So basically then we just went in and we talked to endless numbers of people which is really what we do. We kind of just figure out who all the stakeholders are so all the people who are plainly and obviously on Martin Place and John [the event’s executive producer] did a remarkable job of discovering who people were and in his calm and very charming way he went out and convinced them (Head of Production, Sydney Festival).

This process was made easier by the ongoing relationship that the Festival’s organisers had with key stakeholders and the political impetus provided to the organisation by state and local governments:
we started with an imprimatur really, from the premier really in a way, or certainly that’s the way we treated it. Whether we had it or not is another question, but we certainly said, ‘Look he’s [then Premier of NSW Morris Iemma] given us the money and he really wants this event to happen (Head of Production, Sydney Festival).

However this is not to say that the political labours were conflict-free, or alternatively, that the space’s recent past did not work against the realisation of this public. In the course of the interview the Head of Production indicated that a significant obstacle to the event was a previous experience stakeholders had had with a similar event in Martin Place:

They had a very, very bad experience in Martin Place during the Olympics ... it was almost riot conditions ... It left a scar in public space in Martin Place. So we were very keen to prove that it was going to be, that it didn’t have to be like that (Head of Production, Sydney Festival).

This suggests that there is a public memory in place, expressed and sustained by the collective memory of those who use and regulate Martin Place (see also Domosh, 1998). It supports the notion of a differentiated public topography that interacts and contributes to the ghostly processes of publicness. This public had to contend and indeed work against the spatial memory of Martin Place in the processes of public making. This suggests that the material, mediated and memorable combine in the process of public making in ways that further support the notion of a grounded ghostly public. It implies that some places contain latent resources that restrict or resonate with particular publics and forms of publicness.

Despite problematic past experiences in Martin Place, organisers remained determined to overcome the negative perception of youth-based publics. This fortitude was coupled with an attitude among organisers that the challenges of holding such an event were up for (re) negotiation ‘and [if] they come back and say, “Oh look I’m sorry but you just can’t do it” you have to kind of constantly go back and say, “Ok so you are saying no now, [but] how do I make it a yes?”’ (Head of Production, Sydney Festival). The healthy relationship between the company’s producers and local
government also extended to the police. This relationship was discussed in terms of collaboration and common purpose rather than one of conflict:

Yeah we had to talk to the police. I think we have an excellent relationship with the police ...Our target was absolutely for a free, safe, happy event. That was our target. That’s their target. So we have a lot in common (Head of Production, Sydney Festival).

However, this relationship included an awareness of both the practical and political aspects of the relationship. The strategy used by event organisers involved meeting police expectations and a knowledge of the political implications of the event not going ahead:

They will want to look at your level of security. They’ll want to know where you are placing security. They will want to know where the appropriately placed user pays police involvement would be and they don’t, [long pause] politically all of those agencies are in a bit of a bind if you think about it. You know they don’t want to appear in the [Daily] Telegraph saying, ‘Police Banned Event in Martin Place’; effectively they can’t do that at the end of the day. Maybe once upon a time they could of but the days when they could do that [are over] ... but by the same token they can find ways of making us not do something [laughs]. You know in a way you couldn’t really run the story. It would be a non-story because they would be able to say, ‘Oh no well they just decided not to do it’, the fact that we made it practically impossible for them to go ahead is neither here nor there (Head of Production, Sydney Festival).

These descriptions support other research that shows that increasingly, publics are conscious of the political and mediated context of their address whilst in the midst of their political labours of public making (see D’Arcus, 2003; Iveson, 2009; Koopmans, 2004). This was an event negotiated by a public who enacted a methodical process targeted at key stakeholders. This group of organisers showed that they had both political acumen and a collaborative relationship with local government and authorities. The process was influenced by poor experiences from publics past but also a willingness to reposition and renegotiate the hurdles of public making in ways that emphasise both the grounded and the ghostly nature of this form of publicness. The result was described as a success by the organiser based on the event’s reception on
the night and in the media afterwards. The city’s only daily tabloid *The Daily Telegraph* began a review of the evening with the following:

> It wasn’t quite the Olympics revisited but there certainly was a similar mood and spirit in the air. The unprecedented free celebration to mark the start of the *Sydney Festival* on Saturday night, truly gave back the city to its people. There was a magic feeling wherever you went (L. Ferguson, 2008).

This excerpt is instructive in that it draws on notions of people’s ownership of the city though public action but it also shows that a measure of the event’s success was its reception when compared to another international event. This shows the extent to which the notion of public space that is tied to the amenity and fortunes of Global Sydney has permeated the public discourse. The Festival’s Head of Production was equally happy with the outcome, but his assessment was based as much on his reading of the reaction of influential stakeholders as it was based on whether people enjoyed the event:

> Have you seen the photos of Martin Place? Well seriously, from the barrier back, just on that level you go, ‘Oh they were having a good time’. So anecdotally that was a success. The feedback, the bloggy feedback was good, the stakeholder feedback was mostly good, the level of injuries [was acceptable] ...The artists’ feedback was superb (Head of Production, Sydney Festival).

Again his comments are indicative of something deeper about the nature of publicness in ‘Global Sydney’. His emphasis on stakeholders’ feedback as much as the responses of those present suggests that the processes and pressures of the bureaucratisation of space have become recruited into assessments of the health of the city’s public life. His focus on the numbers present and their physical presence again demonstrates that for this public the material qualities of the space, or more accurately, the presence of people within this space, is also in some way a measure of the quality of a city’s public life.

*Festival First Night* represents the articulation of a new form of publicness in Martin Place. It was an event with no history or perceived tradition and indeed the experience
of previous youth events in Martin Place was a point of considerable difficulty for
organisers. The event itself was designed with the purpose of promoting the broader
festival and extending its appeal to a wider audience—in this case, among young
people. Martin Place served a specific function in this purpose. It is a central space,
known by this group, and close to public transport. The event was also part of a vision
of a Global Sydney wished for by governments both local and state and subsequently
supported by authorities.

Significantly *Festival First Night* is an example of the strategic and collaborative
construction of publicness by an organisation with healthy relationships with key
stakeholders and a keen sense of the political and regulatory architecture of place. The
political labours of this public, its sound relationship with key stakeholders and its
ability and willingness to reconsider the event enabled it to articulate its public in
place. Martin Place’s unique material and symbolic qualities influenced where the
event was held and why, how it was enacted and coloured how organisers measured
its success. Negotiations often centred on how to enact such an event given the
parameters of place—the opportunities it afforded to connect with a certain public but
also the limitations of holding such an event in a space with many different
stakeholders. By using Martin Place organisers were able to connect with the mediated
structures of the city and mobilise certain arguments in their political labours. This
case shows the extent to which the grounded qualities of space pervade the ghostly
actions of publicness. Martin Place’s qualities—both symbolic and physical—shaped
the nature of this event, its public and its publicness.

7.4.2 *Stop Bush*

The Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum (APEC) is a multilateral meeting aimed
at promoting economic growth and integration in the Asia Pacific region (APEC, 2007).
In 2007 Australia hosted the forum, culminating in the APEC Leaders’ Week of 2 to 7
September. Leaders’ Week brings together the heads of state of the 21 member
nations including the leaders of the United States of America, China and Japan
(Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2007). My focus is not the forum itself but a march planned to coincide with the APEC Leaders’ Week. The march was organised by the Stop Bush Coalition, a coalition of student activists, unions, environmental and human rights groups. This public sought to use APEC as a platform to protest on the issues of the Iraq War, climate change and workers’ rights. As part of a series of actions planned for Leaders’ Week, the Stop Bush Coalition organised a protest march for Saturday 8 September 2007. In the course of negotiations over where this march would go, Martin Place became a strategically important space for this movement, and a resource for public making.

This event contrasts with the previous case study in four ways. First, it was a different type of public event—a protest march not a dance party, and thus it introduced a different spatial socio-political dynamic. The march planned to move through Martin Place to deliver a political message rather than to congregate there to be entertained. Second, this public was constructed in opposition to an event which fitted neatly within the ‘Global Sydney’ motif, and so it tested the boundaries of ‘Global Sydney’s’ public vision. Third, the public and its planned publicness were not supported by key institutional or economic players; in fact important institutional actors opposed it. And finally, the spatial intentions of this public were different. For the Stop Bush Coalition, protesting in Martin Place was not their initial wish, and nor did it become their final destination. This case illustrates both the importance of Martin Place as a traditional public space and its material irrelevance. It shows how publicness is both ghostly and grounded, how publics may adapt to the shifting terrain of public life but also how this terrain still retains unique qualities which can be utilised for address by publics despite or indeed because of their absence.

During the course of these political labours, Martin Place became a poignant symbol of The Stop Bush Coalition’s resistance to the spatial politics associated with APEC. Martin Place’s importance as a site of embodied publicness altered during the course of these political labours. The group’s inability to use the space became a resource

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41 Stop Bush was by no means the only group of activists using APEC as a platform for representing issues. A number of groups including the Greens, Amnesty International and political satirists the Chaser organised actions which coincided with the heads of state visit (see Epstein & Iveson, 2009).
used to highlight injustice and to better connect the movement with the mediated structures of the city. However, the fact that Martin Place was not used in any grounded sense—in the staging of a public in this space—did not make it irrelevant. Martin Place’s imprint, its signature and its symbolism remained an important component of how this public engaged with the mediated structures of Sydney, addressed a wider public and articulated its message. Indeed, part of the Stop Bush Coalition’s agenda became access to the city, and not being able to enter Martin Place became a clear illustration of this agenda.

The political labours between the Stop Bush Coalition and authorities were framed by a certain political discourse and a particular legal architecture that set the terms, and to some extent the direction, of the negotiations that followed. This began on 21 June when the NSW Government introduced the APEC Meeting (Police Powers) Act 2007 (NSW). This piece of legislation gave NSW Police ‘extraordinary policing powers’ between 30 August and 12 September. It enabled a series of road blocks and police checkpoints and the erection of five kilometres of security fencing throughout Sydney’s CBD during Leaders’ Week. Beyond the physical changes to the city, the Act rewrote the legal architecture of Sydney by enabling the police to (re)categorise large swathes of its public space. Under the legislation police were able to designate parts of the city as being Declared Areas or Restricted Areas. Declared Areas extended south from Circular Quay to King St (see Figure 7.8). This area, which included Martin Place, was open to most of the public but upon entry, individuals were subject to extended police powers to stop and search persons or vehicles, to issue fines, seize prohibited items and exclude persons listed on a prohibited persons list (2007 see Figure 9).

Restricted Areas, which encompassed the Sydney Opera House, its foreshore and part of Darling Harbour, were closed to all but participants, residents, workers and security personnel associated with APEC. In addition to the powers available to police within Declared Areas, people entering the Restricted Areas without authorisation could be

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42 The act eventually passed both house of the NSW Parliament on 26 June 2007.

43 The legislation targeted specific individuals by denying them access to the Restricted or Declared Zones. This was facilitated by the creation of an excluded persons list which gave police the power to exclude anyone on this list from ‘...any APEC security area during the APEC period’ (APEC Police Powers Bill, 2007). The list was based on police Intelligence and remained unreviewable.
imprisoned for six months to two years (APEC Police Powers Act, 2007 see also Figure 10).

The justification given for these ‘extraordinary powers’ was the likelihood of violent protesters threatening the safety of Sydneysiders. Speaking in the NSW Parliament, the then Minister for Justice, Tony Kelly, argued that these measures were necessary because of a history of violent protests and the likelihood of such an occurrence happening during Leaders’ Week:

Based on the experience of other APEC meetings overseas and other similar events in Australia, the NSW Police Force has also identified the threat of large organised and sustained violent protests ... We have all seen footage of extremely violent and organised protestors who engage in planned attacks on Police, destroy property and terrify the public. We need to ensure that our Police have sufficient powers to prevent or to stop such violence (NSW Legislative Hansard 2007)

Reminiscent of research elsewhere on defining who is ‘the proper public’, there is a powerful process of discrimination occurring here (see D'Arcus, 2003; Epstein & Iveson, 2009). The public, according to the Minister, are those people who will not be involved in the protest and who deserve protection from protesters. To protect this public the Minister argues that the freedom of movement and association of those outside this newly constituted public must be curtailed. This is a powerful rhetorical device with legal consequences. These comments also illustrate the two competing imaginations of APEC at play here. In one imagination APEC is a key international event for Sydney, an opportunity for ‘Global Sydney’ to promote itself under the gaze of international media. Working alongside and against this, is the alternative vision of protesters who saw this attention as an opportunity to address others (Benton-Short, 2007; Epstein & Iveson, 2009; Goodman, 2010; S. Herbert, 2007). This legal

\[44\] In addition to the powers given to police to exclude particular individuals, the legislation also ensured that persons charged were given either a presumption against bail or alternatively, an automatic condition of their bail being granted was that they must keep away from APEC security areas. This applied not only to those arrested at APEC events but also to activists involved in unrelated and distant actions in the months leading up to the meeting.
architecture and political discourse shaped the political labours that followed. The political discourse employed by individuals within the NSW Government tried to de-legitimise the protest movement and create a distance between them and ‘the public’. As these political labours illustrate, the coalition was conscious of this agenda and sought to broach this distance by positioning themselves as a reasonable and mature participant in negotiations over publicness in Sydney’s CBD.

The legal architecture put in place under the *APEC Meeting (Police Powers) Act 2007* shaped the political labours of the coalition in a number of ways. First, it determined the actors involved in the negotiations over publicness in Sydney’s CBD during Leaders’ Week. Due to spatial and legal parameters set out in the legislation, the coalition negotiated almost exclusively with NSW Police rather than with civic authorities like the City of Sydney Council. Thus a process that would normally involve civic engagement became a law enforcement issue because NSW Police had effective authority over these spaces. Second, this legal architecture limited the options available to the coalition in negotiations over publicness in Sydney’s CBD. The creation of Declared Areas and Restricted Areas limited the capacity of the Stop Bush Coalition to challenge police directives via the legal system. Thus the legal architecture in place had a procedural influence over these political labours.
Figure 7.7 Map of Declared and Restricted Areas, APEC Police Powers Act 2007. Source: Olivier Rey-Lescure, The University of Newcastle, NSW.
- Spray paint cans
- Chains, handcuffs or other devices capable of being used to lock persons or things
- Poles more than one metre in length
- Marbles, ball bearings or other similar spherical items
- Smoke devices
- Flares
- Flammable or noxious liquids or substances
- Laser pointers
- Devices capable of being used to interfere with broadcast or communication devices
- Any others things (or things belonging to a class of things) prescribed by the Regulations

Figure 7.8 Prohibited Items List, APEC Police Powers Act, 2007
Source: Constructed by author from APEC Police Powers Act 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declared Areas</th>
<th>Restricted Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police were able to exclude or remove a person if the person:</td>
<td>Offence to enter restricted area without special justification. Persons with special justification:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Failed to submit to a search as a condition of entry</td>
<td>- Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Failed to surrender a prohibited item as a condition of entry</td>
<td>- Police Officers on duty in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hindered/resisted/obstructed police who are performing a search</td>
<td>- Persons required to be in or to pass through the area for work purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Failed to obey a reasonable direction given by police</td>
<td>Penalty for unauthorised entry jail terms six months to two years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Was on a road that is closed under the Act, without a lawful excuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Was on the excluded persons list</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.9 Police Powers in Declared & Restricted Areas, APEC Police Powers Act, 2007
Source: Constructed by author from APEC Police Powers Act 2007
Figure 7.10 Stop Bush Coalition and NSW Police’s Proposed March Routes. 
Source: Prepared by Olivier Rey-Lescure, The University of Newcastle, NSW
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAY 2007</td>
<td>Notice of Intention to march from Town Hall to the Opera House submitted to NSW Police (see Figure 10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JULY 2007</td>
<td>Coalition contacts NSW Police seeking response to proposed march route. Police reply in late July by asking whether the protest march was proceeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 AUGUST 2007</td>
<td>Revised Notice of Intention to march from Town Hall down George Street through Martin Place and to Hyde Park submitted to NSW Police (see Figure 10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LATE AUGUST 2007</td>
<td>Coalition contacted by NSW Police Negotiators and notified that Police would prefer march route proceeded from Town Hall up Park St and to Hyde Park, avoiding Martin Place (see Figure 10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 SEPTEMBER 2007</td>
<td>APEC Leaders’ Week begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 SEPTEMBER 2007</td>
<td>Police notify coalition of legal challenge to march route in NSW Supreme Court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 SEPTEMBER 2007</td>
<td>Coalition receives legal documents and is requested to defend case with 15 minutes’ notice. Adjournment granted for following day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 SEPTEMBER 2007</td>
<td>Justice Adam rules in favour of NSW Police citing police barrier as threat to public safety (see discussion pages 224-226).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 SEPTEMBER 2007</td>
<td>Protest march proceeds along NSW Police’s preferred route from Town Hall down Park Street to Hyde Park (see Figure 10).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.11-Timetable of negotiations between Stop Bush Coalition and NSW Police. Source: Author

Given the nature of the ‘negotiations’ to this point, protesters began to reassess the route of their protest with a mind to the spatial realignment underway in the city and how the wider community would perceive their actions (Koopmans, 2004). During this process Martin Place became an important part of the strategy employed by the coalition. Like the organisers of the Festival First Night, the coalition was conscious of
police power but also of publics’ perceptions. In choosing Martin Place the group sought to draw on the space’s long history as a site of protest and publicness. In doing so they hoped to take advantage of the cultural awareness of Sydneysiders who view Martin Place as one of its traditional public spaces. This illustrates the extent to which the terrain of public life is sustained by a city’s collective memory, how some spaces resonate with some forms of publicness and why the terrain of public life is differentiated rather than uniformly responsive to public address (D’Arcus, 2003; Domosh, 1998; Iveson, 2007). By choosing this space they would be seen as having a reasonable claim for articulating a protesting public:

we didn’t want to be in a situation where we had been totally strung along and a day before or the week before APEC takes place they [the police] say, ‘No you can’t do it’ and all our plans are thrown into disarray. So the tactics we decided on was that we would unilaterally announce a march route ... from Town Hall down George St to Martin Place and back out to Hyde Park ... nowhere near the fence, nowhere near the Opera House, nowhere near any of the APEC venues. We basically figured that would be perceived as being reasonable in the public mind and that therefore it would be very difficult for the police to try and stop us (Spokesperson, Stop Bush Coalition) (see Figure 19)

The decision to unilaterally announce a ‘reasonable’ march route shows the evolving aims of the coalition with a mind on the police tactics and what we might call a wider public notion of fairness. There are parallels here between the coalition’s attitude and those of the Festival First Night organisers who acknowledged police power but were also aware of the sensitivities of the police to being seen as shutting down a legitimate public event. This also highlights the evolving importance of Martin Place to the movement. Martin Place became a symbol of both the United States of America and the curbing of civil liberties under the current legislation as the spatial and political aims of the movement shifted. This mirrors work elsewhere on the ability of publics to respond to the shifting material and discursive terrain of public life (D’Arcus, 2003; Koopmans, 2004). Martin Place was given this symbolic power because the coalition was barred from protesting at the site of APEC and so Martin Place represented the next-best alternative because of its role as a place of protest in the city’s collective
memory. This betrays the significance of place to embodied publicness and re-emphasizes the ghostly and the grounded qualities of publicness. There is a tension here between being present on or near the conference but also not too far away. Proximity is key: the closer protesters could get to APEC, or at least to a space symbolising the event, the more effective protesters thought their movement would be:

we could have had the protest in Parramatta but it’s not going to get the point across ... The fact that the march did go past the US Consulate that was one of the rationales because it involves a certain symbolic [value]; we can’t get to the Opera House where the main meeting is at least we can go past the Opera House which represents George Bush and represents the war, one of the key things that we were protesting against ... it was not an accident that we chose a march route that went through the Declared Area because we did view the whole Declared Area regime as an affront to civil liberties and an affront to the democratic way of life (Spokesperson, Stop Bush Coalition).

For the coalition Martin Place served a dual function: first, as the nearest and most accessible symbol of US foreign policy and second, as a potent symbol of the right to protest in the context of ‘extraordinary police power’. It suggests a relationship between the message of this public and the medium of address—a tension between the public’s aims and the place of its publicness (Parkinson, 2009). Martin Place was swept up into the message of the coalition during the political labours of this public. It became an important rallying point of the protest in a city where mobility had been curtailed. By drawing on Martin Place, protesters also drew on the growing disquiet in the community over police powers during Leaders’ Week. The Stop Bush Coalition was unable to get close to the APEC venue and determined that Martin Place represented the most significant site outside of the Restricted Area that would be perceived as a reasonable place for a protest march in the public’s view, but it was also a space endowed with the necessary symbolic power to assist in circulating the coalition’s address.

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45 Parramatta is a suburb of Sydney which is more than 20 kilometres west of the CBD.
Faced with the unilateral decision made by protesters, the police began to dictate to the coalition the march route which they thought would be appropriate. During these negotiations the police indicated that they would prefer that protesters did not enter the Declared Area, including Martin Place. They preferred that protesters proceed from Town Hall down Park St and into Hyde Park—a march route which was outside of the Declared Area and well away from the meeting venue (see Figure 7.10):

Eventually when they came back they said, ‘Look this is the march route that we will allow you to take’ which started off at Town Hall went down Park St went through Hyde Park north and south, went the far side of Hyde Park north and then behind the cathedral and up into the Domain. So apart from the bit of Park St between Town Hall and Hyde Park it was all surrounded by park land and went basically totally out of the way. So anyway we discussed that and decided that we didn’t want to accept that. It was totally out of the way. What was the point? The protest was supposed to be visible because we valued the symbolic nature of going past the US Consulate and we also valued the symbolic action of entering into the Declared Area (Spokesperson, Stop Bush Coalition).

The Stop Bush Coalition rejected this proposed route due its lack of profile because as one of the protest organisers put it, ‘the protest was supposed to be visible’ (Spokesperson, Stop Bush Coalition). Martin Place gave the movement its visibility because of its proximity to APEC, its traditional role as a site of protest and because its symbolic attributes amplified the movement’s issues. This is crucial for as D’Arcus points out, one of the central powers of physical protest is that it renders power visible by ‘making spatially manifest often-intense disagreements about the nature and legitimacy of dissent’ (D’Arcus, 2003: 15).

Faced with an ultimatum from police, the coalition decided to maintain its route that included marching past the US Consulate via Martin Place, confident that only legal action could stop them. The notification of the revised route was tabled on 8 August (see Figures 7.10 and 7.12). This set off a chain of events in which the organisers insisted that they wanted to enter Martin Place and police became increasingly
adamant that this would not take place. Following a breakdown of negotiations on Monday 5 September 2007, the police challenged the protesters’ right to enter Martin Place through the courts. The following Tuesday morning the Stop Bush Coalition received the legal documents and were requested to defend their case with 15 minutes’ notice. A hastily organised adjournment saw the case heard on the next day, Wednesday 5 September 2007.

Following the drawn out negotiations with the police, the court case represented a relatively quick but nonetheless interesting development. The legal issue centred not on the rights of the Stop Bush Coalition to be in the Declared Area, but on whether their presence would be safe under the circumstances. As a justification for the protest not reaching Martin Place, police argued that a road block, which was to be set up at the edge of the Declared Area, would hinder the progress of the march and thus endanger protesters (see Figure 7.13). This represented a new development in the negotiations as, up until this point, the presence of a roadblock on the corner of George and King streets had not been discussed during the course of five months of negotiations:

They basically said, ‘There will be a road block on the corner of George St and King St which was the edge of the Declared Area’ and, so this roadblock was made legal, made possible by the APEC Police Powers Legislation and this was the first time they had mentioned it, literally in court (Spokesperson, Stop Bush Coalition).

The legal architecture set up by the APEC Police Powers Act (2007) made this a rational tactic for those within NSW Police who were trying to stop protesters entering the Declared Area. In response to this the coalition altered their march route again, now stating that they would march toward the roadblock and hold a sit down protest at the edge of the Declared Area:

Well we prepared an affidavit for the case where we said, essentially [we] modified our march route at the last minute. We would march up to the roadblock and then we would hold a sit down protest and have speakers there and basically hold a protest about the fact that we weren’t allowed to march the rest of our march route (Spokesperson, Stop Bush Coalition—emphasis added).
Justice Adams upheld the police challenge to the *Stop Bush Coalition’s* march route but did not make a judgment on their ability to march. His ruling centred on whether the police road block represented a credible public danger to march participants. The decision was based on the spatial regime introduced under the APEC Act which made it impossible for Justice Adams to make judgment on the appropriateness of police actions within the Declared Area:

one of the unsatisfactory features of the APEC Act was that the Police powers in relation to the Declared Areas was absolutely unreviewable and so the court was left with the difficult task of assessing what would happen when the march reached King St and the Police didn’t let it proceed further. How would it unfold and where there any unacceptable public safety issues that would arise in the involvement of that occurring? And the courts balancing public safety I suppose and [Adam: civil liberties] civil liberties yes, well civil liberties didn’t get much of a look-in actually; it was held that it was unacceptable to have a march which was going into an unmovable police line (Spokesperson, NSW Council of Civil Liberties).

So essentially the judgment was based on [the concept that] that this was a march to nowhere because of the Declared Zone? [Adam]

That’s right, that’s right. Yes because, whereas the police needed an order to prohibit the march outside of the Declared Zone they didn’t need any such order inside [the Declared Zone]. They had the powers to do what they wanted (Spokesperson, NSW Council of Civil Liberties).

Again, the negotiations above illustrate the political labours of public making. However, in contrast to the previous case explored above, this was not a collaborative relationship entered into by equals acting in good faith. Despite the *Stop Bush Coalition*’s attempts to renegotiate the terms of their publicness, NSW Police were able to determine what sort of publicity could occur in certain parts of Sydney’s CBD because of the legal architecture in place during Leaders’ Week. Space, and more particularly the spatial regime in place in parts of Sydney during APEC Leaders’ Week, actively shaped the nature and enactment of the public’s publicness.
As one organiser argued:

I think the police negotiations were not conducted in good faith ... They were also largely conducted by people who didn’t have the power to make any commitment to anything—which was a bit useless ... It was presented to us as a take it or leave it. And we were the ones who were asked to negotiate and compromise (Protestor cited in Snell, 2008: 27).

Given the judgment by Justice Adams, the coalition decided to proceed down the march route provided by police outside of the Declared Area and well away from Martin Place and the US Consulate. Despite this spatial setback they argued that the protest was a success for a number of reasons. This success was connected to the organisers’ ability to address a broader public despite, or indeed because of, their inability to place their public in the spaces that they preferred:

I think the fact that the protest happened, the fact that it came off so successfully, the fact that it was so large, all those things bode well, they make it easier to organise a protest next time. They tried to intimidate [us] and they were basically rebuffed, they came out second best because of it (Spokesperson, Stop Bush Coalition).
The success of the event was judged both in terms of personal satisfaction and the reaction of wider publics:

I think that a lot of people, I think in general we had a lot of support even from people who didn’t come along or weren’t able to come along or were scared away from coming. I think there was a big sentiment of, ‘Good on you for doing it and what the government is doing is unreasonable (Spokesperson, Stop Bush Coalition).

This sentiment draws on the city’s collective memory about the latent political capacity of Martin Place. By denying the Stop Bush Coalition access to Martin Place the authorities amplified their address because the wider public could not understand why they were effectively banned from protesting in a place renowned for its political capacity. This is reflected in the comments of another key informant who argued that because of these developments the public’s awareness and acceptance of such legislation had changed, making similar legislation and such treatment of Sydney’s public less likely:

I think post-APEC the public was very concerned. I think during APEC we saw a huge swing in public perception to these types of laws. Before APEC though I don’t think they really understood what in the end was trying to be set up and the media as well. Post-APEC, the media got treated very badly by the police chief during APEC and since then they’ve been skeptical of police demands for power and the general police discretion and so I think the public, the public culture, ... and the public I think are now well alert to the issues and I think we are going to have some really interesting debates over the next few years (Spokesperson, NSW Council of Civil Liberties).

Another indication of the extent of public sympathy toward the protesters and thus a measure of their success, can be seen in the degree to which they were able to appeal to individuals who would normally dismiss their cause or indeed their right to enact this sort of public. Miranda Devine, a conservative commentator and strident defender of free markets, the war on Iraq and a ‘climate skeptic’, argued in an opinion piece on the following Monday that

the security overkill in Sydney was just a big show, designed not to protect anyone from terrorists but to stymie protestors ... It’s a sign of an emasculated, rudderless
police force, with systemic small-man syndrome, acting like bullies in an attempt to cover up weakness, and chronic dysfunction (Devine 2007: 2).

Whilst not sympathetic to the protesters’ cause, channeling Voltaire, Devine was nonetheless troubled by the tactics of police and the treatment of protesters on that day. Along with the views of organisers and media reports, these comments suggest that the march was successful in articulating a message addressed at others. This was achieved by connecting the grounded march with the mediated structures of the city. Despite not being articulated in an embodied sense, Martin Place was used as a resource by the coalition in their negotiations with police. Using Martin Place enabled the coalition to remind the public of the history of political activism in Sydney’s CBD. Using Martin Place was a means of presenting a reasonable and rational public face to a wider audience. The inability of protesters to enter Martin Place was a reminder of the draconian regime in place during Leaders’ Week that shut one of the city’s most popular public spaces off from the public.

The Stop Bush Coalition’s attempts to create a public in Martin Place are a fascinating example of the political labours of public making and the grounded and ghostly qualities of some forms of publicness. The coalition wished to create a public in a significant area in the city, initially close to Circular Quay but ultimately in Martin Place. For protesters, Martin Place was a site of symbolic power that aided their negotiations with police. Police and legislators, through a new regime of urban governance, wished to project the image of a safe and presentable inner city. The process of negotiations reveals the political and strategic labours of two actors trying to realise a particular public vision in Martin Place and additionally the importance of this central public space as a symbol of representational politics in Sydney. The importance of this site changed as the negotiations progressed, suggesting that place has a relative power related to the aims of a public’s address, and that different publics draw on the different resources that a space affords for different reasons. It is

46 Encapsulated in the fact that the APEC fireworks display created for delegates remained off limits to Sydney’s citizens due to the security zone which encompassed Sydney Harbour. It was a light show for insiders only. The then Deputy Premier reportedly said before the event to ward off errant sparkle watchers: ‘There will be little to see and security precautions will be tight’ (Tadros, 2007).
not that space is integral or irrelevant, but rather that its importance is relative to the requirements of the publics and expression of publicness. Space has an importance that is periodically drawn on by publics in the process of public making. Ultimately, although unable to articulate their public in Martin Place, protesters maintained that their protest was successful in raising the issues they wished to address because their exclusion enabled them to connect to a wider audience via the mediated structures of the city. Significantly, the coalition used their absence from this place to attract awareness and admiration amongst the wider public about the nature and quality of public space law and the (in)discretion of the police.

7.5 Conclusion

Space matters to publics and publicness, albeit in a diverse and indeterminate way. Although publicness is a process, it is still a process that is connected in some way to space and spatial practices. These case studies have shown how space shapes publicness and publics even in the absence of propinquity, when physical presence in place is discouraged or defeated. To explore the boundaries of a processual approach to publicness and its intersection with physical space I have used Iveson’s notion of ‘political labours’. In part this was driven by an effort to break free from accounts of publicness which either cut off the agentic capacity of publics in place or come to the equally banal conclusion that the possibilities for publicness in place are open-ended and limitless. The case studies in this chapter suggest that publicness is the outcome of the political labours of publics working within the limits and possibilities afforded by space. Publicness in Martin Place is neither infinitely open to the work of human agency nor completely determined by the material, economic, legal and cultural architecture of place.

Festival First Night represents the actions of both state-sanctioned and commercially supported publicness. The latter represents the agentic work of an organisation aware of, and indeed comfortable with, the architecture of place and confident in its ability to negotiate and articulate a public in this context. This public was aimed at certain
cultural and economic goals that are shared and encouraged by ‘Global Sydney’. The *Stop Bush Coalition* illustrates the limitations place puts on the articulation of certain forms of publicity in the contemporary urban environment. However, *Stop Bush Coalition also* illustrates how publics may adjust for absence and renegotiate the articulation of address elsewhere—using particular spaces as a resource nonetheless

These events suggest that publicness is a product of the actions of publics in place and their connection to both the material and mediated structures of the city. This context can provide opportunities for enactment but can also place limits on how publicness is enacted. These are not hard and fast expectations or barriers but rather moveable and malleable moments that, by necessity, provide points of negotiation and transformation, but also tension and resistance. This chapter highlights those points of tension, resistance, opportunity and attraction to create some understanding of how publicness is enacted in Martin Place in ‘Global Sydney’. Certain spaces have a physical and intangible quality that resonates with certain modes of publicness and not with others. This resonance is in part the product of an association between place and public memory born of time and sustained by the actions and expectations of individuals and publics. Thus publicness is a ghostly process often grounded and altered by its articulation in place.

Following this argument to its logical conclusion, the relationship between publics, publicness and place renders simple measures of presence and absence as a clumsy tool for analysing contemporary public life—the quality of publicness in place is determined by more than access to specific places—traditionally pubic or otherwise. Instead we need to document, discuss, debate and think through the process of publicness as an inherently political and strategic process that sometimes uses place as one of its resources of articulation. In an increasingly interconnected public landscape, analysis of publicness should consider how place allows publics to connect with the immaterial infrastructure of the city. It is better to think of publicness in more nuanced ways than simple measures of presence and absence. We must account for the ghostly nature of publicness but appreciate how grounded qualities of space influence and impact on the address of publics.
Chapter Eight

And Finally Fairey Again
Figure 8.1. Sarah Mason photographed during the Occupy LA protest.
Source: http://www.mediabistro.com/fishbowlla/shepard-fairey-time-magazine-cover-features-occupy-la-protester_b48052
Chapter 8

8.1 And Finally Fairey Again

I began this thesis with the cover of *Time* magazine; Shepard Fairey’s image of anonymous eyes peering between beanie and bandana. The anonymity of those eyes did not last long. Shortly after the magazine’s publication it was revealed that they belonged to Sarah Mason a protestor photographed during the Occupy LA movement (Power, 2011) (see Figure 8.1). Fairey deleted the 99% slogan that adorned Sarah’s bandana and applied his graffiti-inspired palette to the image: washed out yellow, red and black set against a collage of street images from elsewhere (see Figure 1.1). Mason was reportedly surprised and a little embarrassed that she had become the face of a year of public discontent (Wilson, 2011). Interviewed in the United States by NPR, Mason said that she had attended Occupy LA because ‘...she felt a moral obligation to speak out against injustice’ (Hillard, 2011: para 21).

Occupy and the tale of Fairey’s image touches on some of the key themes of this work: namely, how the process of publicness intersects with, influences and at times transcends particular spatial forms. Writing about Occupy in *The Nation*, Richard Sennett argued that ‘the movement dramatised questions about public space—who owns it? who can use it?—and provided some interesting answers’ (Sennett, 2012: para 1). Like my work on the mosque and mall, Mason and her public extended the terrain of publicness beyond traditional public space, in a privately-owned quasi-public space in New York and on the steps of a cathedral—a religious space—in London (amongst many other places). In doing so protesters reminded us (again) that for all of space’s pretensions of permanence as notionally public or private, space is constantly open to and influenced by the processes of publicness.

By deleting 99% from Mason’s bandana, Fairey deterritorialised and to some extent tamed the political message of the figure. Fairey’s action took the protestor and her address out of context. The figure staring out from the cover of *Time* was ambiguous enough to be a protester in Tahrir square or on the streets of Athens, anonymous enough to be an ‘Indignant’ in Madrid or a rioter in London. And so, Fairey’s
manipulation also illustrates the connection between the mediated and material structures of the city. It shows how physical presence in place connects with mediated instruments of address. The 99% slogan was articulated in a particular context and became a potent symbol of the movement, a message able to transcend the particularities of place and be broadcast well beyond the limits of a privately owned park in New York. Fairey had to delete this slogan from the image because 99% placed Sarah Mason in one of only a handful of contexts—leaving the slogan would have identified her as a protestor in Los Angeles, London, or Sydney but not as easily a participant in the Arab Spring, a Greek Anarchist or Spanish indignant. And so despite the incredible ability of social media and communications technology to aggregate, organise and address publics, context still shapes the nature of address. Space still matters to publicness.

In this conclusion, I collect and connect the arguments and insights from the preceding chapters to make three propositions about how we as scholars might productively engage with publicness in the city. First, I propose that analysis of urban publicness is better served by rejecting normative categorisations of space as either public or private. Rather space should be seen as always potentially open to the practices of publicness. Second, I argue that the interplay of the mediated and material in the city renders measures of presence and absence an ungainly instrument for assessing the efficacy and equity of urban publicness. We should focus instead on how and why publics gather and address others, and consider the extent to which space enables this connection and broadcast. And finally, I suggest that the complexity and interdependence of public life demands an analytical framework focused on the processes of publicness. Such a framework is equipped to deal with the various practices and resources publics deploy and draw upon when enacting publicness in place. It enables analysis that focuses on how publicness intersects with and influences spatial form. Ultimately, I suggest that a processual approach is best equipped to engage with the complex mix of relations and resources that produce publicness. Importantly, this approach is also coherent enough to make some sense of the interplay of these relations and resources.
These proposals are developed over two sections. In Section 8.2 I revisit the thesis’ theoretical foundations and reflect on how my initial assumptions about the nature and processes of publicness were played out in the case studies. This serves an important analytical purpose, addressing the theoretical contribution the thesis makes to work on urban publicness and highlighting the extent to which the thesis builds on and out from the literature. In Section 8.3 I reconsider the key arguments that grew out of the case studies. The case studies demonstrate how the collection of publics and the production of publicness transcend any straightforward alignment with traditional public space. Rather these cases demonstrate that publicness is a process that draws on spatial form as one of the numerous resources deployed by publics in their efforts to address and interact with others. The purpose here is to draw the various arguments together, to remove them from isolation and reassemble them alongside each other to see what they collectively say about publicness. Treating the arguments as a community of ideas clarifies the thesis’ core arguments and crystalises the contribution the research makes to work on urban publicness.

8.2 Tracing Publicness, Thinking Publics

In Chapters 2 and 3 I established the theoretical foundations of the work, setting an analytical horizon and providing a series of focal points for exploring the case studies. I achieved this by examining the theoretical and spatial dimensions of publicness, drawing on the etymological heritage of publicness and conceptual understandings of the public sphere. These chapters charted how work on urban publicness has been influenced by what we understand publicness to mean and how we think about the public sphere. In the following, I consider how these founding assumptions influenced the analysis and were expressed in the case studies.

By engaging with theoretical debates about the nature and processes of publicness I sought to establish a working vernacular and conceptual idiom for my analysis. With this aim in mind I explored the antecedents of publicness and its evolution via the work of Arendt (1958 [1998]), Sennett (1974 [2002]) and Habermas (Habermas, 1962
I explored how these authors trace the meanings associated with publicness as a historically and contextual constructed social condition; from its origins in the Greek agora, its alteration in the Roman forum and coffee houses of Europe, through to its contemporary iteration. I traced these through to recent criticisms that focus on liberal theories’ tendency to valorize public over private life. I then considered calls by some to abandon the distinction between publicness and privateness, given its supposedly diminishing relevance amid the complexities and interdependencies of contemporary public life. This exploration of the etymology of publicness traced the arguments around its past meaning and present application and enabled me to settle on two principles about the nature and characteristics of publicness that shaped my analytical engagement with each case study.

First, publicness is a relational and sedimentary term whose characteristics are the product of its relationship with privateness and the gradual attribution of meaning over time, as the cultural expectations of particular periods, peoples and places contribute certain characteristics to the condition (Warner, 2005). Consequently, I took the view that publicness is best understood as contextually determined, the product of the porous boundary it shares with privateness and the cultural expectations of peoples and publics in place. Second, despite adopting this relational take on publicness, along with Warner (2005) and Young (1990) I suggest that maintaining some distinction between publicness and privateness serves useful conceptual and analytical concerns. Maintaining this distinction allows us to consider what publicness means within any given context, enabling the analysis to contend with how publicness coexists with and confuses practices and places often associated with private life. And critically, as Staeheli and Mitchell (2007) point out, maintaining this distinction serves as a heuristic device that allows us to consider what the negotiations and struggles over what is public reveals about the politics of place. For as Iveson suggests, ‘the very classification of some place or interest as ‘public’ rather than ‘private’...inevitably invokes norms about what is properly ‘public’ or ‘private’ (2007: 10). And so deeming a group or action public (or private) invokes a set of power relations which bestows upon practices and collectives legitimacy and thus political power. Maintaining a distinction between publicness and privateness lends work on
urban publicness the ability to consider how the boundary between publicness and privateness is socially and spatially constituted and in the process it enables this work to consider what this reveals about the power relations associated with particular publics, publicnesses and places (see Benton-Short, 2007; D'Arcus, 2003; Kirby, 2007; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2007, 2008).

Adopting this understanding of publicness lent the thesis an analytical flexibility, an ability to assess how publicness intersects with space, free of any idealised notions of what constitutes its proper practice or place. Thus the work remained open to the possibility for publicness in a mosque and a mall, as much as in Martin Place. I went into these spaces looking for how the dynamics and expectations of these places shape social practice, conscious of the extent to which these practices can be thought of as having a public character. For instance, using Foucault’s concept of heterotopia, I illustrated how consumer culture and public life can coexist in a suburban shopping mall. Rather than embrace the dystopian narrative of decline I argued that this quasi-public space has shaped the nature rather than diminished the prevalence of publicness. In Auburn Gallipoli Mosque I showed how religious practice colours the publicness of Muslim Australians in notionally sacred and secular space. In the process I questioned liberalism’s separation of public and religious life. Consequently, I suggested that considerations of urban publicness in the postsecular city must include the practices and processes of religion. In Martin Place via a protest march and promotional event I explored the activities, actions and events that are considered public in Global Sydney. I traced the political labours of two publics that were seeking to use Martin Place as a place for publicness, in the process revealing the extent to which publicness is a negotiated rather than normative practice. Crucially, by focusing on how publics sought to reconstitute what is considered properly public in Martin Place, the work unveiled the spatial politics of Martin Place by documenting how norms, legitimacy and thus power is granted to particular groups and activities in Global Sydney.

Along with defining the working vernacular of publicness as a foundation for analysis, I also explored conceptual understandings of the operations of publics by examining
how theoretical understandings of the public sphere influence analytical engagements with publicness. Beginning with Habermas (1962 [1992]) and Arendt (1958 [1998]) I considered the conceptual form and function of the liberal public sphere with its emphasis on universality, objectivity and rationality. Persuaded by critiques of this approach, I then considered the plural models of Young (1990) and Fraser (1990) and their reframing of the liberal public to include plurality, difference and affectation. Ultimately, I suggested that publics are plural, the temporal product of individuals’ many fleeting fidelities. Equally publicness is plural, having no ‘proper place nor proper expression’—for the place and practice of publicness context is key. I argued that thinking of the operations of publics in this way was a more conceptually appropriate instrument for engaging with how diverse publics express themselves in place.

This notion of the plurality of publics and publicness was borne out in differing degrees in each of the case studies. In each case I considered how diverse publics interact in and experience place. In Westfield-Liverpool both young and old were attracted to the mall as a place for safe social encounter. This reading questioned dystopian positioning of mall security, architecture, regulation and management as necessarily draconian. Instead I argued that subjects and publics were differently affected by the presence of these measures according to their momentary positionality. For instance, an individual’s response to the presence of mall security was determined by their relationship with the security guard—whether the individual thought the guard was ensuring their safety or curtailing their personal freedom. Crucially, my analysis also showed how the presence of young publics could influence the decisions of the elderly some of whom actively avoid the mall when this youthful public is present. This illustrates the attraction and interaction of diverse publics in a single place and also the potential for publics, quite independent of place management, to ‘close off’ space from others (see also Iveson, 2005; O’Neil, 2008). In Auburn Gallipoli Mosque participants spoke with great affection about a space that the community had built and whose existence enabled them to create a public based on religious belief. However, in contrast to liberalism’s tendency to position religious places and publics as sectarian and thus a hindrance to social connectivity, Auburn Gallipoli Mosque encouraged and indeed compelled social bonding and bridging to other publics.
suggesting that notionally private space is capable of enabling diverse and socially-engaged publics. Additionally this case showed the different expectations placed on publics within the mosque influenced by factors such as age and gender. Young and old saw the mosque as a space of social connection. But, whereas the elderly looked on the space as sacred ground which entailed for them a reverential disposition, young people often looked on and were allowed to use the mosque as a place of play. In Martin Place negotiations over what was properly public highlighted the different opportunities afforded to, and constraints placed on, particular publics in Global Sydney. A promotional arts event that fulfilled the ambitions and auspices of Global Sydney was defined as properly public for Martin Place whilst a protest march was considered inappropriate for the same space during the APEC period. Both events were proposed by publics willing to negotiate over the articulation of their publicness in place, however only one was deemed as legitimately public and thus able to be enacted in Martin Place. Again, Martin Place illustrates the different expectations placed on diverse publics. These cases suggest a differentiated public terrain that resonates with a different timbre with some publics and forms of publicnesses thus facilitating the collection and expression of diverse publics and forms of publicness. More importantly though, these cases suggests that analysing the intersection of space and publicness is better served by a focus on difference and plurality rather universalism as contexts exact different expectations and pressures on publics according to their constitution, how they practice publicness and crucially the place of this practice. The mall, mosque and Martin Place cases drew on the foundational principles established in Chapters 2 and 3 but they also uncovered three key propositions about urban publicness. I return now to these three propositions.

8.3 Three Propositions

To paraphrase Victorian era writer and critic John Ruskin ‘composition is the arrangement of unequal things’ (Ruskin, 1849 [2001]). In many respects a processual approach is equally an arrangement of uneven things, a piecing together of empirical insights and conceptual perspectives around a general disposition. Rather than
beginning with a theory about the nature and processes of urban publicness I began with two foundational principles. These principles emphasised the processual, contingent and contextual nature of urban publicness. The purpose of this was to ensure the analysis remained responsive to the practices and places I encountered. I combined this disposition with ideas taken from different theoretical traditions—Foucault’s *heterotopia*, postsecular theory and Barnett’s ghostly public—as accompaniments to this broad conceptual approach. Thus a processual approach is a disparate collection of conceptual and empirical engagements rather than a settled program or agenda. This is a strength and also potentially a weakness. Free of any normative concept of the spaces and practices of public life, a processual approach may seem to risk positioning all space as equally open to the processes of publicness. However, as I argued in Chapter 7, space is a differentiated rather than a uniform resource for publics and publicness; a resource that affords different publics and forms of publicness varying degrees of traction, diverse opportunities and different limitations. As noted in Chapter 4, the antidote to overstating the potential publicness of all space is a *phronetic* focus on the socially constructed and historically conditioned contexts in which publics practice publicness (Flyvbjerg, 2001). A focus on how context influences and is influenced by publics and publicness enables the analysis to tread a path between a cumbersome normative universalism and an equally imprecise relativism. Below I reflect on the major insights collected from the three case studies. Rather than presenting each case in isolation I arrange them around what I suggest are the three key propositions of the work. This enables me to reflect on what both each case and the research collectively suggests about future work on urban publicness.

*Beyond Categorical Practice and Place*

The first key proposition of the work is that analysis of urban publicness is better served by rejecting normative categorisations of space as either public or private. Rather space should be seen as always potentially open to the practices of publicness. My reading of Westfield-Liverpool and Auburn Gallipoli Mosque illustrated the capacity for publicness to flourish in notionally private space. Westfield-Liverpool
illustrated how commercialism and publicness coexist, despite and to some extent because of the mall’s management. Auburn Gallipoli Mosque showed the public character of religious life—so often confined analytically to privateness—revealing how religious and cultural expectations shape publicness in place. In Martin Place the negotiations over what was public and where this could occur was a live demonstration of how publicness is contextually and politically constructed in Global Sydney. Ironically a protest march, an event considered by many to embody publicness, was considered an inappropriate action for Martin Place (an iconic public space with a long tradition of demonstration) during the APEC period. These insights suggest that the boundaries of public space should be extended if not extinguished. They speak to the dynamic intersection of publics, publicness and space and thus question the efficacy and utility of categorical space. My analysis directly questions the extent to which it is useful, conceptually and analytically, to categorise space a priori as either public or private. This work suggests that a more fruitful alternative is to think of space as always potentially open to practice of publicness. Rather than seeking after a predetermined socio-spatial topography we must consider why some publics and forms of publicness resonate with certain places at particular times. We must also consider how the practices of publics and the processes of publicness constantly reconstitute the boundaries between publicness and privateness in place with a mind to what this reveals about the politics of place. As considering how this distinction is socially, spatially and politically constructed uncovers the tacit powers relations of place. This demands an analytical and conceptual approach that focuses on how diverse publics deploy and enlist the resources associated with place—institutional, relational, material, mediated—when practicing publicness.

Beyond Presence and Absence

The second key proposition is that the interplay of the mediated and material in the city renders measures of presence and absence an ungainly instrument for assessing the efficacy and equity of contemporary public life. In Chapters 2 and 3 I illustrated the role propinquity has played in shaping how we conceive of and frame contemporary
publicness. The idea of co-presence is still a powerful idea that influences how we imagine urban publicness, anything less than face-to-face exchange is often positioned as an isolating and inferior alternative (Davis, 1990; Mitchell, 2003; Sorkin, 1992). My work in Martin Place illustrated that for some publics, in some contexts, absence can be an effective means of address. However, as many authors suggest, to place a premium on material presence over and above mediated exchange is to misunderstand the interdependence and interconnection of contemporary public life (Iveson, 2009; Mahony et al., 2010; Rodgers et al., 2009). In the contemporary city the instruments of publicness and the inclinations of publics have altered this dynamic, making presence in place but one resource for the articulation of publicness. In my analysis of Westfield-Liverpool and Auburn Gallipoli Mosque, I approached this issue obliquely by illustrating how the practices of publicness these spaces facilitate are not contained by spatial form. In Westfield-Liverpool, publicness was seen as comparatively safe in relation to other spaces in the city suggesting that individuals and publics conceive of the mall as one component in a wider and interconnected public fabric. Furthermore some interviewees expressed their concern about the impact malls and spaces like it were having on the nature of urban public life, suggesting that even when they were absent from these spaces the residue and intonation of spatial practices in mall influence their practices of publicness elsewhere. Similarly, my analysis of Auburn Gallipoli Mosque identified the ability of religious practice to circulate beyond sacred space and again to influence the public practices of subjects in what may seem like unrelated spaces. Thus despite being absent from a consumer or religious space the imprint of the practices of publicness these spaces engender are present elsewhere. Taken together, this suggests that because publicness is not confined to particular places, it is an interconnected spatial and social practice, and so we need to think through how the residue of particular practices of publicness may influence publicness in other dislocated contexts.
Toward Process

The third and overarching proposition is that the complexity and interdependence of contemporary public life demands an analytical framework focused on the processes of publicness. A processual approach is able to engage with how publicness intersects with spatial form and is an instrument equipped to deal with the various practices and resources publics deploy and draw upon when enacting publicness in place. Rather than casting an eye across the public landscape looking for spaces and practices that adhere to normative (and thus preconceived) notions of publicness we must focus instead on how exactly publics enact publicness in place. Above all I have argued that publicness is a contextually-constructed process. However, it is not the elements of publicness, the materiality of place or practices of publics, but the interaction of these elements, their comparative importance and influence in place, that matters. In these cases, I demonstrated how each space conditioned publicness, giving it a different inflection and influencing the nature of public expression in place; whether it was the draconian or encouraging measures applied to an iconic public space in an increasingly entrepreneurial Global Sydney; the consumer sociality of a mall; or the religious and cultural expectations of a mosque. The question then is what is the best means of engaging with this dynamic and its associated elements? The task then is to fashion a conceptual and analytical approach that remains open to the diversity and complexity of contemporary publicness. The answer is a processual approach to urban publicness.
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Appendix A

Westfield-Liverpool Indicative Interview and Focus Group Schedules
A1. CBD Coordinating Manager (Planning)—Liverpool City Council

1. Can you outline what your role is within council, particularly in relation to the CBD and the LGA’s public spaces?

2. Can you identify the major policy documents that pertain to the planning and development of Liverpool’s CBD and public spaces? Are any that deal with Macquarie Mall and/or Westfield-Liverpool in particular?

3. What economic and social roles does the council perceive the CBD and the accompanying public spaces fulfill within the wider LGA?

4. What measures does council undertake to encourage economic development and activity in the CBD?

5. What means does the council use to ensure that the CBD and its accompanying public spaces are serving the community’s needs?

6. What are the ways that council regulates the development and operation of Westfield-Liverpool?

7. Have there been any instances where the wider community’s and the company’s interests have come into conflict, could you outline specific instances?

8. In these instances what has been the outcome and what role has council played in resolving these issues?

9. Was there a period of consultation associated with the current redevelopment, if so, what issues pertinent to the community were raised and how were these resolved?

10. What do you think is the perception in the wider community of the CBD and Westfield-Liverpool, how does this effect the ways that these are used as public spaces?

11. Do you think that the Westfield-Liverpool impacts economically on other businesses in the area, in what ways?

12. Do you think that Westfield-Liverpool impacts on the community’s use of other public spaces in the area, in what ways?
A1. (cont.)

13. What contribution do you think the mall has made in Liverpool in terms of the wider public culture of the city?
A2. Centre Manager—Westfield-Liverpool

1. Can you outline what your role is at Westfield-Liverpool as well as within the wider Westfield Group?

2. How would you characterise the community that Westfield-Liverpool serves? [How wide a trading area does Westfield-Liverpool serve?]

3. Can you outline to me how Westfield-Liverpool serves the economic and social needs of this community?

4. What sections of the community are well represented in the mall in a usual trading week/month? [Are there any sections of the community that are not well represented in the mall, the homeless for example?]

5. How would you characterise the mall in comparison to other centers in the Sydney Metropolitan area in terms of size, tenant mix and layout? [What about in comparison to a centre such Bondi Junction?]

6. The mall serves the needs of both community and business/tenants interests is there ever a conflict between the needs of these two groups and how do you resolve these competing needs of community and business?

7. How would you characterise the mall as a public or community space, what sort of public activity does the space facilitate?

8. Can you outline any activities that may occur in other public spaces that are discouraged from happening in the mall, why is this the case? [What about public protests/political or religious leafleting?]

9. What role does security play in serving both community and businesses interests? [Is there ever a conflict between these competing interests?]

10. The mall also has CCTV or security cameras how do these interact with the role that security plays in serving the community and do you think there is ever a conflict between the community’s safety and their privacy?

11. What do you think is the perception in the wider community of Westfield-Liverpool particularly in comparison to other public or community spaces in the area? [How does this affect the ways that these are used as public spaces?]
A2. (cont.)

12. Do you think that the Westfield-Liverpool impacts upon the use of other public spaces in the area, in what ways?

13. Can you outline to me how mall has contributed to the economy of this LGA? [Can you outline to me in what ways you think the mall has impacted on other businesses in the area?]

14. What contribution do you think the mall has made in Liverpool in terms of the wider public culture of the city?

15. Are there any other issues related to the way in which Westfield-Liverpool serves the community as a public or community space that you have encountered in your role as the Centre Manager, which you think, would be important to mention?
A3. Community Development Worker (Aged and Disability)-Liverpool City Council

1. Can you outline what social role council aims for public spaces to fulfill, particularly for older people in this LGA?

2. Can you identify the major policy documents that pertain to the management of public spaces in this LGA, are there any that deal with older people in particular?

3. In what ways are these needs different from the needs of other members of the community?

4. Does the council have a set of key social roles that council aims for the mall to fulfill in this LGA?

5. How does council ensure that the mall is fulfilling its community/social obligations for seniors in this LGA?

6. Are the social regulations in the mall determined by the company, or is there a process of negotiation between the competing interests of the company, council and community?

7. Have there been any instances in which local seniors and the company’s interests have come into conflict, could you outline some specific instances?

8. In these instances what role has council played in resolving these issues?

9. Was there a period of consultation associated with the current redevelopment, if so, what issues pertinent to seniors were raised and how were these resolved?

10. Has the mall impacted on the use of other public spaces in the area, in what ways?

11. What contribution do you think the mall has made in Liverpool in terms of the wider public culture of the city?

12. Are there any other issues related to public space and/or the mall that you have encountered in your role as a Community Development Worker?
A4. **Community Development Worker (Youth)—Liverpool City Council**

1. Can you outline what social role council aims for public spaces to fulfill, particularly for young people in this LGA?

2. Can you identify the major policy documents that pertain to the management of public spaces in this LGA, are there any that deal with young people in particular?

3. In what ways are these needs different from the needs of other members of the community?

4. Does the council have a set of key social roles that council aims for the mall to fulfill in this LGA?

5. How does council ensure that the mall is fulfilling its community/social obligations for young people in this LGA?

6. Are the social regulations in the mall determined by the company, or is there a process of negotiation between the competing interests of the company, council and community?

7. Have there been any instances in which local youth and the company’s interests have come into conflict, could you outline some specific instances?

8. In these instances what role has council played in resolving these issues?

9. Was there a period of consultation associated with the current redevelopment, if so, what issues pertinent to local youth were raised and how were these resolved?

10. Has the mall impacted on the use of other public spaces in the area, in what ways?

11. What contribution do you think the mall has made in Liverpool in terms of the wider public culture of the city?

12. Are there any other issues related to public space and/or the mall that you have encountered in your role as a Community Development Worker?
A5. **Director of Tenancy Services—Australian Retailers Association**

1. Can you outline what your role entails within the Australian Retailers Association?

2. From your knowledge and experience how is tenancy process in shopping malls initiated for small-medium size retailers, is it matter of malls approaching businesses, visa versa or both?

3. Can you give me an outline of what is included in a typical leasing agreement entered into between a small-medium size retailer and a shopping mall?

4. Can you outline the methods of rental payment that you would usually expect in a lease agreement between a small-medium size retailer and a shopping mall?

5. How is the rental rate and type determined, is this typically the outcome of a process of negotiation between landlord and tenant?

6. Does the lessee usually have access to the amounts of rents payed by other mall tenants and/or the market rental prices when they are negotiating agreements?

7. How stringent is the requirement on small-medium size retailers to disclose their monthly sales turnovers and in your experience how is the information used in the relationship between retailers and Management?

8. What other charges additional to the rent due is likely to be included in a lease agreement between a small-medium size, and how is the level of these fees determined?

9. Does a lessee have access to the rate these additional costs are for other tenants to ensure that they are uniform across tenants/centres? How can they determine whether these costs are being used accountably?

10. Can you outline to me the types of mandated standards that are stipulated in lease agreement clauses between tenants and Shopping Centre Management?

11. Are these standards uniform across the mall industry or do different Retail Property Managers require different standards for different tenants and malls?
A5. (cont.)

12. Is there any compulsion legal or otherwise on the lessor to show a degree of goodwill to a small-medium size lessee on the termination or renewal of a lease agreement? Can you provide me with any examples of how this has played out practically?

13. At lease end is there any mechanism for retailers to recoup the capital investment made on fitting out the rental property to the mall’s standards during the life of their lease agreement?

14. Overall, in your opinion how transparent and equitable is the leasing process for small-medium size retailers?

15. How does the leasing process and the conditions of lease agreements differ for small-medium size retailers compared to a larger tenant such as a substantial retail chain or anchor tenant?

16. Can you identify the major legislations that regulate the retail tenancy market, particularly for retailers with businesses in large shopping malls? Do you think this is adequate, why?

17. Can you think of any other relevant issues related to the relationship between the retail property industry and tenants that you have encountered in your role as director of tenancy services that we have not touched on?
A6. Project Leasing Manager—Westfield-Liverpool

1. Can you outline what your role entails as the Project Leasing Manager at Westfield-Liverpool?

2. How would you characterise the community that Westfield-Liverpool serves?

3. Can you outline how the tenant mix at Westfield-Liverpool has been constructed to serve the community’s needs?

4. Are there any businesses that would be considered as inappropriate for tenancy in a mall like Westfield-Liverpool, why?

5. As well as containing private businesses, the mall includes a number of essential and/or public services such as Banks, post offices etc, how does the mall determine what service providers are appropriate for the centre?

6. From your knowledge and experience how is tenancy process in shopping malls initiated, is it matter of malls approaching businesses, visa versa, or both?

7. Can you give me an outline of what is included in a typical leasing agreement entered into between a retailer and a mall like Westfield-Liverpool?

8. Can you outline how the rental rate and type determined, is this typically the outcome of a process of negotiation between the leasing agent and tenant?

9. Does the lessee usually have access to the amounts of rents paid by other mall tenants and/or the market rental prices when they are negotiating agreements?

10. How stringent is the requirement on retailers to disclose their monthly sales turnovers and in your experience how is the information used in the relationship between retailers and Management?

11. What other charges additional to the rent due is likely to be included in a lease agreement between a small-medium size, and how is the level of these fees determined?

12. Does a lessee have access to the rate these additional costs are for other tenants to ensure that they are uniform across tenants/centres? How can they determine whether these costs are being used accountably?
A6.  (cont.)

13. Can you outline to me the types of mandated standards that are stipulated in lease agreement clauses between tenants and Shopping Centre Management?

14. Can you identify the major legislations that regulate the retail tenancy market in large shopping malls? How effective is the legislation for the needs and interests of landlords, why?

15. Can you think of any other relevant issues related to the relationship between a malls tenant mix and community needs that you have encountered in your role as Project Leasing Manager that we have not touched on?
A7. Westfield Liverpool Focus Group—Seniors

1. Let me begin by asking you as a group, what sorts of activities do you do at the shopping mall?

2. Does this change according to different times of the day or week? Can you give me some examples?

3. Do you use different parts of the mall in different ways? Can you give me some examples?

4. Can you explain to me if there is anything that you are discouraged from doing in the mall? Can you give me some examples? (What about other members of the community)

5. Let us say you are at the mall with a group of friends and one of them (insert example of behaviour likely to be regulated) what would usually happen next?

6. Do staff or security ever give you a reason for not being allowed to (insert action used in answer above)?

7. Has anybody here witnessed public behaviour being controlled in the mall or someone being escorted from the mall? Can you explain to us what happened?

8. Do you think that some behaviour should be discouraged from occurring in shopping malls, if so what types of behaviour do you think should be excluded from the space?

9. Is there anything you would like to do in the mall that you are discouraged from doing?

10. Now we are all probably aware that the Westfield-Liverpool uses security cameras. Does the existence of these cameras change the way you use the mall compared to places that do not have security cameras such as Macquarie Mall for instance?

11. What sorts of things can you do in these other places that can’t in the mall because of the cameras?

12. Do you think the mall is a safe place?
A7.  (cont.)

13. How safe do feel at the mall on a *(insert popular time see question 2)* compared with how you would feel at Macquarie Mall or Bigge Park?

14. What does/ doesn’t make it a safe place?

15. What are the most popular stores and facilities (i.e. cinemas, game parlours) in the mall with senior citizens? Is this different for females and males?

16. Are there any stores or facilities that you like but are outside of the mall?

17. What do you think of when you think of public places?

18. What other places are there in Liverpool where seniors gather?

19. How is the Westfield-Liverpool different from other public places you know of?

20. When you are in other public places such as Bigge Park and Macquarie Mall are there any people you would expect to see that you don’t in the mall?

21. Do you think Westfield-Liverpool has changed what it means to be ‘in-public’ for both yourselves and other groups such as young people, how?

22. Is there anything about Westfield-Liverpool or the mall in general, we have not discussed today, that you think is important?
A8. **Westfield-Liverpool Focus Group—Youth**

1. Let me begin by asking you as a group, what do young people usually do at the shopping mall?

2. Does this change according to different times of the day or week? Can you give me some examples?

3. Do you use different parts of the mall in different ways? Can you give me some examples?

4. Can you explain to me the sorts of things you are discouraged from doing in the mall? Can you give me some examples?

5. Let us say you are at the mall with a group of friends and one of them *(insert example of behaviour likely to be regulated)* what would usually happen next?

6. Does staff or security ever give you a reason for not being allowed to *(insert action used in answer above)*?

7. Has anybody here witnessed public behaviour being controlled in the mall or someone being escorted from the mall? Can you explain to us what happened?

8. Is there anything you would like to do in the mall that you are discouraged from doing?

9. Now we are all probably aware that the Westfield-Liverpool uses security cameras

10. Does the existence of these cameras change the way you use the mall compared to places that do not have security cameras such as Macquarie Mall for instance?

11. What sorts of things can you do in these other places that can’t in the mall because of the cameras?

12. Do you think the mall is a safe place?

13. How safe do feel at the mall on a *(insert popular time see question 2)* compared with how you would feel at Macquarie Mall or Bigge Park? What does/ doesn’t make it a safe place?
14. What are the most popular stores and facilities (i.e. cinemas, game parlours) in the mall with people your age? What about for females and males?

15. Are there any stores or facilities that you like but are outside of the mall?

16. What do you think would be the ‘best’ things about the mall for young people?

17. What do think would be the ‘worst’ things about the mall for young people?

18. What do you think of when you think of public places?

19. What other places are there in Liverpool where young people hang out?

20. How is the Westfield-Liverpool different from other public places you know of?

21. When you are in other public places such as Bigge Park and Macquarie Mall are there any people you would expect to see that you don’t in the mall?

22. Is there anything about Westfield-Liverpool or the mall in general, we have not discussed today, that you think is important?
Appendix B

Auburn Gallipoli Mosque Indicative Interview and Focus Group Schedules
B1. Secretary Auburn Gallipoli Mosque

1. Can you outline what your role is as secretary of Auburn Gallipoli Mosque?

2. Can you outline to me how the Mosque serves the local community as an urban public space?

3. Does this change according to different times of the day, week and year?

4. How is the space organised for the purposes of community use? Do spaces within the Mosque serve a different purpose for different users?

5. How does the Mosque interact with the range of public spaces in the Auburn LGA?

6. What are the ways that local government regulates the development and ongoing use of Auburn Gallipoli Mosque?

7. Does this impact on the role the Mosque plays as a public space for the local community?

8. How important do you think the Mosque is as a place for the local community? Why?

9. What contribution do you think the Mosque has made in Auburn in terms of the public culture of the city?

10. Are there any other issues related to Auburn Gallipoli Mosque and or public space, that you have encountered in your role as the [insert position] that we have not discussed today?
B2. Strategic Planner Department of Planning and the Environment—
Auburn City Council

1. Can you outline what your role is within Auburn City Council?

2. What role do public and community spaces play in the strategic planning of Auburn LGA?

3. Can you identify the major policy documents that pertain to the planning and development of the LGA’s public spaces? Are there any that deal with, or have implications for the LGA’s religious spaces?

4. What are the ways in which council regulates public spaces in the LGA? Are there any that deal with, or have implications for Auburn Gallipoli Mosque?

5. Are the LGA’s religious spaces exempt from any regulations which are applicable to other public spaces?

6. How do spaces like Auburn Gallipoli Mosque contribute to the LGA’s approach to social and cultural planning?

7. In what way do spaces like Auburn Gallipoli Mosque serve a different function to other public and community spaces in the Auburn LGA?

8. How does a space like Auburn Gallipoli Mosque contribute to the public culture of Auburn LGA and the city more broadly?

9. Are there any other issues related to Auburn Gallipoli Mosque, that you have encountered in your role as a Strategic Planner that we have not discussed today?
B3. Focus Group Auburn Gallipoli Mosque

1. Let me begin by asking you as a group, how important is the Mosque as a place for the local community? For what reasons is it important?

2. Can you outline to me how you typically use the Mosque? How does it work as a community space?

3. Does this change according to different times of the day, week, year? Can you give me some examples?

4. Do you use different parts of the Mosque in different ways? Can you give me some examples?

5. Are there different expectations depending on the person/s involved? Can you give some examples?

6. Are there any activities which wouldn’t be appropriate in the Mosque but may be OK in other public spaces such as Auburn Park or the main street? Can you give me some examples?

7. Do you think of the Mosque as a public space, why or why not?

8. In Auburn, what other community and public spaces do people gather in?

9. Are these spaces any different from the Mosque in terms of the types of activities that take place and how they work?

10. Is there anything about the Mosque or public space in general, we have not discussed today, that you think is important?
Appendix C

Martin Place Indicative Interview Schedules
C1. Communications and Events Manager—City of Sydney Council

1. Can you outline what your role is within council, particularly in relation to the LGA’s public spaces?

2. Can you identify the major policy documents that pertain to the organisation and promotion of community events in this LGA? Are there any that deal with Macquarie Mall and/or Westfield-Liverpool in particular?

3. Can you provide me with some examples of the types of public events that council has organised and where these events have taken place?

4. How are these events organised, do these tend to be initiatives of Council or community groups, or private sector organisations?

5. What economic and social roles does council perceive that these events fulfil within the wider LGA?

6. How do the public spaces in the LGA, in particular mall spaces, facilitate the staging of these events?

7. Do different public spaces within Liverpool lend themselves to particular types of events, how?

8. What do you think is the perception in the wider community of Macquarie Mall and Westfield-Liverpool, how does this effect the ways that these are used as public spaces?

9. Does Council consciously try to manage the public’s perceptions of these spaces?

10. Do you think that the Westfield-Liverpool impacts upon the use of other public spaces in the area, in what ways?
C1.  (cont.)

11. Have you ever approached Westfield-Liverpool about staging a community event and if so, how did they respond?

12. Are there any other issues related to public space, Westfield-Liverpool and/or the Macquarie mall that you have encountered in your role as the council’s Communications and Events manager?
C2. **Head of Production—Sydney Festival**

1. Can you outline what your role is as Head of Production for the Sydney Festival?

2. What was the rationale for opening the Sydney Festival with the Festival First Night events this year?

3. How did the Festival First Night event which took place in Martin Place fit into this rationale?

4. Can you outline the process involved in holding an event such as this in Martin Place?

5. What sorts of liaisons did you have to have with external organisations such as Local Government and Police etc?

6. What was the rationale behind making The Festival First Night events open to the public free of charge?

7. What role did the major sponsors play in enabling these events to happen?

8. What ‘public’ did you have in mind when you planned the event for Martin Place?

9. What do you think were the community’s expectations were for the event planned in Martin Place?

10. Do you think these expectations influenced the type of ‘public’ that was drawn to the event?

11. By what measure do you gauge the success or otherwise of such an event?

12. By this measure was the event held in Martin Place a success, why or why not?

13. What contribution do you think the Festival First Night events make the wider public culture of the City of Sydney?

14. Are there any other issues related to this event, that you have encountered in your role as Head of Production that we have not discussed today which you think are relevant to this research?
C3. Public Events and Film Liaison Manager—City of Sydney Council

1. Can you outline what your role is within council, in relation to external public events?

2. Can you identify the major policy documents that pertain to the LGA’s public spaces? Are there any that deal with holding public events in Martin Place?

3. Is there any legislation which needs to be considered when assessing the appropriateness of an ‘external public event’?

4. Can you outline the process involved in holding a public event in the LGA’s public space?

5. Have there been instances where a request to hold a public event has been rejected?

6. In what ways does council regulate public events, in particular events held in Martin Place? [How does council ensure its expectations are met?]

7. How does this differ from regulations which would be placed on an event of this nature in other public or community spaces?

8. Have there been any issues related to a public event which has been allowed to proceed in Martin Place. If so, what were these and how (if at all) were they overcome?

9. What contribution do you think public events make to the wider public culture of Sydney City?

10. Are there any other related issues, that you have encountered in your role as Public Events and Film Liaison Manager that we have not discussed today?
C4. Spokesperson NSW Council of Civil Liberties

1. Can you outline what your role is with the NSW Council of Civil Liberties?

2. Can you explain to me how the APEC Police Powers Bill 2007 extended the powers of authorities to restrict and/or prohibit the movement of citizens? [More specifically I’m referring to the construction of restricted and declared areas, the powers to search, the power exclude citizens].

3. Can you explain to me the concept of the Excluded Persons List which was part of the APEC Police Powers Bill 2007 and the types of restrictions being on this list placed on the movement of particular citizens? How where people placed on this list? Was this information public?

4. Can you explain to me what powers the bill gave to detain citizens? In particular I’m referring to the powers under Clause 31 (2-3)

5. Can you describe for me the court proceedings which involved the NSW CCL?

6. In his final judgement what rationale did Justice Michael Adam provide for upholding the powers given to authorities?

7. How were the powers given to authorities under the APEC Police Powers Bill applied during the Protest March of 8th September? Can you give me an example?

8. Were the powers given to authorities used as a means of predetermining the Protest route which initially planned to take in Martin Place? Was there any rationale given for this exclusion?

9. Can you explain the details of the World Youth Day Act in terms of the powers it gave authorities in their relations with the public? Did this build upon the powers of APEC Police Powers Bill? Did it extend beyond these powers?

10. Can you describe for me the court proceedings which involved the NSW CCL?

11. What were the ultimate outcomes of this and what justification did Justices French, Branson and Stone provide for their decision? Does this mean that if the law was more precise it would have been upheld?
C4.  (cont.)

12. Do you think that the extension of authorities powers given under the APEC Police Powers Bill 2007 and regulations associated with World Youth Day have become part of holding large public events in NSW? Why? Under what rationale?

13. In your opinion what type of public culture do these types of legislation and regulation create?

14. Are there any other issues related to this event that we have not discussed today which you think are important to consider?
C5. **Spokesperson Stop Bush Coalition**

1. Can you outline what your role was within the Stop Bush Coalition in particular in relation to the September 8 Protest?

2. How did you go about recruiting and including different organisations into the event such as the MUA, the Greens, Amnesty International etc?

3. What was the rationale for the protest march to include a route which encompassed Martin Place?

4. Can you describe for me the process of negotiation undertaken with authorities surrounding the event, in particular with regards to the protest route?

5. Are you able to describe for me the events which led to the protest being excluded from Martin Place?

6. What was the rationale provided by police for the march being excluded from Martin Place?

7. What arguments were made on your behalf for protest to be able to proceed along its original route?

8. In his final judgement what rationale did Justice Michael Adam provide for the march being prohibited from Martin Place and the declared zone more broadly?

9. Was the route taken by protestors on September 8 the outcome of negotiation or was it a prescribed route given to protestors by police?

10. In your opinion what is the significance of the event not being able to take place in Martin Place?

11. What do you think the perception in the wider community was of the Protest? Both before and after the march.

12. How did this influence the type of ‘public’ that was drawn to this event?

13. What was the central message that you wanted the September 8 March to convey?

14. In your estimation was the event a success? Why or why not?
15. In your opinion what impact did the Protest march have on attitudes in the wider community?

16. In your opinion what role do events like the September 8 March play in the public culture of Sydney?

17. Are there any other issues related to this event, that you have encountered in your role as the event organiser/spokesperson that we have not discussed today?