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**MUNDANE MULTICULTURE:  
BELONGING AS SPATIAL PRACTICE IN SUBURBAN SYDNEY**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfillment of requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
The University of Sydney**

**2015**

## **Abstract**

Global cities are being reconfigured through multiple transformations. Cities are places of increasing heterogeneity as a result of heightened flows of human mobility, setting the stage for negotiations of strangerhood and intercultural encounter. They are epicentres for new registers of belonging, allegiance and citizenship arising in the context of these broader transitions. Drawing on relational theories of the city and critical readings of urban diversity, this thesis interrogates how multi-ethnic neighbourhoods shape experiences of belonging for migrant inhabitants. It argues that pluralist policies largely attempt to coordinate and contain urban diversity, often leaving yawning fissures between politicised rhetoric and the lived socio-materialities of the city. These processes are particularly evident in the city of Sydney, the preeminent global city in Australia, a ‘nation of immigration’.

This study and its analysis offers an alternative to conventional migration studies that privilege the ethnic lens, by applying a place-based approach and a Lefebvrian frame of analysis to residents’ place making practices in a highly diverse, transitional suburb. The research uses urban ethnographic methods, including observation and interviews with migrant residents and local ‘space managers’, to analyse the interactional and socio-spatial orders of three suburban public spaces. Drawing on this rich empirical data, the study not only argues that local space is produced at the intersection of spatial practices, regimes of urban governance, and multicultural discourses, but that it is fundamental to understanding migrants’ subjective experience of ‘being at home’ in both local and national space. This approach provides critical insight into the uneven integration of arrivals into collective urban culture, as well as possibilities for generating urban civilities in a unique study of Campsie, New South Wales. If new processes of exclusion are regulating human flows at sovereign borders, it is critically important to also understand how spatial marginalisation unfolds in the intimate spaces of the increasingly diverse and mobile city.

## **Acknowledgements**

I am profoundly grateful to the people who participated in the study, and generously shared their knowledge, experience and stories. I can only hope that the thesis in some small way honours your generosity and openness. Any errors are entirely my own. Thank you to those who facilitated the research in the community and showed an interest in the topic. Your work on the ‘frontline’ of these issues is incredibly valuable.

I am also very grateful to my supervisors, Professor Stephen Castles, Dr Laura Beth Bugg and Dr Robbie Peters, for their continued encouragement, engagement, feedback and invaluable guidance. A special thank you to the STIM group (Malena, Derya, Chulhyo and Elsa) for the fantastic team support, generosity, companionship and for stretching my intellectual horizons. I would like to extend my gratitude to the faculty and especially the postgraduate community in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Sydney, for some wonderful discussions, comradeship and support.

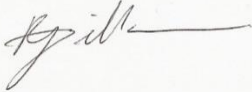
I would also like to thank the following people who gave me the gift of their time (in both small and large measures) to discuss my thesis topic and provide advice: Kurt Iveson, Jeannie Martin, Louise McKenzie, Ellie Vasta, and Rob Freestone (for feedback at the SOAC PhD workshop). I am grateful also to those who provided employment at various stages of the thesis, particularly Stephen Castles, Ellie Vasta, Terry Woronov and Neil McLean. Thanks also to Shé Hawke for her thorough and timely proofread of the thesis.

Thank you to my amazing friends and family – especially Paula and Adrie – for their support and patience. A special thank you to my wonderfully supportive partner Gavin for his constructive advice on early drafts, and for endlessly encouraging and believing in me. And to our baby Sylvie, who gave a new sense of urgency to the thesis deadline.

## Declaration

I declare that the research presented here is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree. The University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approved this study on 21 February 2012 (Protocol no. 14557).

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Pill', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Date: 31 April 2015

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## Chapter 1 / Introduction

*Look, you know what? We are a nation of migrants. That is Australia. And you've got the foundation stones of Aboriginal Australia, which are the oldest in the world. [...] I think that Australia is becoming more and more aware that we were built on the back of migration. But you don't have to scratch too hard to find terrible racism in this place. Just a little nick and it comes bubbling out [...] I still think that Australia has an awful long way to go in coming to terms with its history... And I think places like Campsie... I often say in speeches 'we have a lot to teach the rest of the world.' (Carole, local politician, July 2012)*

*Multiculturalism isn't working. It's really just a push for votes. This place is really just a community of separate communities [...] I think there is too much diversity. Just look at the shootings and things out West... (Serena, local business owner, April 2012)*

*I think Campsie is a fantastic place. I think there is really some sense of vibrancy [...] I feel comfortable. I mean, you see Channel Ten, and there is a different world. It's all Anglo-Australians speaking perfect English. But you see here, it's a different reality. How many non-English speakers and different looking people do you see on the street? This is my reality' (Connor, local community worker, January 2013)*

The three voices presented above highlight the different ideologies and experiences of multiculturalism in the diverse city. They speak from divergent socio-political positions in a specific multi-ethnic locality in suburban Sydney. Their statements reflect various representations of multiculturalism: as socially fragmenting excess, a comfortable, subaltern daily reality, and as a fragile membrane encasing histories of racialisation and nationhood. Each of these informants touch on wider questions of what it means to belong and participate in a multicultural nation. Yet they do so in a way that draws heavily on their everyday experience of place and how ethno-cultural difference is encountered there. The views articulated in these statements point to the contradictions

and conflicts circulating in the public sphere regarding multiculturalism in an age of international migration. They bring to the fore questions about what kinds of difference can legitimately occupy urban public space, and thus define the image of cities of immigration, like Sydney. The diversified streams of human mobility in such places have myriad impacts from the level of national policy agendas and global city image-makers, to the micro-dynamics between strangers on the street. This thesis addresses two fundamental queries arising from this contemporary condition: What social relations are emerging in the city reconstituted through migration? And how do urban configurations and politics modulate how migrant subjects move and dwell in the city?

The study interrogates several issues that emerge at the juncture of migrant incorporation and critical urban studies. Firstly, it investigates the contradictions arising from processes of global migration and the production of local multiculturalism, by probing the meaning of local belonging and ‘place’ in the context of cities that are caught up in processes of global human mobility and their associated transformations. Secondly, it examines the fluid and permeable boundaries of who constitutes ‘the public’ and ‘the community’ in multicultural societies. In particular, the research analyses how these constructions are mediated by the relationship between people and the built environment. These questions are addressed through a central query: how do migrants produce (or fail to produce) spaces of belonging in multi-ethnic, suburban locales? Given the potentially incendiary politics associated with growing global mobility, urban diversity and rising anti-immigration sentiment – in Australia and elsewhere – this research study and analysis represents a critical and original contribution to understanding the complexities of living together with difference. No prior study actively applies a Lefebvrian analytical frame to Campsie, or indeed in any spaces of multiculturalism in the Australian context.

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Unpacking the complexity of contemporary cities is made even more difficult when considering the endless flows that constitute them. Flows of people, goods, finance and ideas are involved in the formation of the city, and its patterns of continuous material and social change. As Australia’s business capital and a primary locus of service-economy

employment, Sydney is increasingly a transnational hub that sees a significant flow of international migrants across the range of migration categories, from temporary visitors to permanent migrants. Sydney was the primary place of settlement for international migrants for many years (Burnley, 1998). Indeed, by the end of the twentieth century, immigration had transformed the population of Sydney by increasing the number of overseas born residents to almost a quarter, and significantly increasing the ethno-cultural diversity of the city (Connell, 2000, p. 12; Hugo, 2008, p. 73). In addition, the urban population swells with incoming temporary migrants and in 2013,<sup>1</sup> over 5.5 million short-term visitors and tourists (Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2013). The flows of people to cities like Sydney are increasingly diverse, compared to the period of colonial settlement or post-war migration. A migrant's place in Australia is contingent upon many factors: their migration status, social, political and economic circumstances, migration trajectory (fleeing or electing to leave their countries of origin or transit), and their inclusion in the global knowledge economy. They bring with them a multiplicity of identities and experiences and comprise what Vertovec (2006) refers to as a new condition of 'super-diversity'. This concept refers to the fact that the population of many global cities of immigration is increasingly diversified through 'new conjunctions and interactions of variables', to the extent that this mixity surpasses conventional understandings of social and ethno-cultural diversity (Vertovec, 2006, p. 2).

Yet, as urban theorists have long pointed out, intersecting variables of difference are not equally accommodated in the urban realm, nor are they distributed evenly across the urban landscape (Harvey, 2006b; Harvey, 2012; Lefebvre, 2002; Whyte, 2009 [1988]). A relatively affluent urban agglomeration like Sydney is no exception. Patterns of residential exclusion and forms of post-colonial racism complicate any rosy pictures of unproblematic multicultural intermingling (such as those presented in staged spectacles like the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000). As much as cities try to either capitalise on, or

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<sup>1</sup> Contemporary figures show that there are more than a million temporary visa holders in Australia on any given day (this figure does not include New Zealanders) (Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2013), and approximately 166,000 temporary migrants arrived in Sydney in 2011 (based on Department of Immigration and Citizenship figures, personal communication).

securitise against, forms of difference and strangerhood, it is precisely this condition that defines the contemporary global city (Simmel, 2002 [1903]). Techniques for managing difference have in recent times been shaped by myriad discourses: multiculturalism and social cohesion rhetoric intersect with shifting forms of neoliberal governance and global city narratives (Harvey, 1989). But any attempts to manage diversity in urban space through rationalised interventions must also continuously contend with forms of global connectedness, mobility and multi-sited allegiances that are an essential part of the city's 'messiness' (Keith, 2005, p. 256).

While such flows undermine notions of the city as a bounded space of localised identities (an erroneous claim in any case) (Massey, 2004), they also produce deep-seated anxieties about social disintegration and a loss of spatial coherence (Massey, 1994). The rapid social and economic changes in contemporary urban life foster the potential for reactionary demands for a stable sense of place and identity. What is occurring on the ground is intertwined in complex ways with national, regional and global debates. Cities and their publics operate in a global climate of increased securitisation of national borders, control of certain forms of mobility, and fearful sentiments around terror threats and social unrest and fragmentation. These moral panics are articulated in many countries and have been no less powerful in shaping public discourse about migration and urban diversity in Australia. How are the intricacies and complexities of these global – local (or 'glocal') linkages understood? And how do they unfold on the ground in everyday life and in the ordinary spaces of the city? This situation calls for more research that 'relates the 'global city' to grounded multicultural living within the city' (Gow, 2005, p. 389; Hall, 2012; Lobo, 2010a; Wise & Velayutham, 2009b).

Despite these multi-scalar relations that shape life in the city, migration studies have demonstrated a bias towards favouring the nation-state as the primary referent for thinking about migrant incorporation and ethnic identities, and framing national space as a stable, bounded unit (Glick Schiller, 2009; Glick Schiller & Caglar, 2013; Massey, 1994). Migration is thus analysed in terms of the destination or end game; as a unilinear

movement from nation-container to nation-container. Privileging national boundaries in understanding ethnic and political identity claims, risks missing multiple and transnational registers of belonging that contemporary human mobility creates. Moreover, this approach overlooks the profound impacts on the everyday spaces of the city. Other spatial frames in the context of migration studies have received less attention; the notion of locality and space have traditionally been poorly developed in migration studies (Caglar, 2007, p. 1073). What is required, Anderson argues, is ‘work linking contested claims to space and place at the local level to the meanings and practices of national identity and belonging’ and vice versa (Anderson, 2002, p. 386; Holston & Appadurai, 1996). It is precisely these issues that the present research seeks to address.

Strategies for managing belonging in national and local space vary across country contexts. Australia has its own historical, post-colonial trajectory informing contemporary debates about migration and the entitlement of new settlers/arrivals. Moreover, geographies of migrant arrival are unevenly spread over the urban landscapes of Australian cities. For this reason, it is worth considering questions of migrant incorporation through the lens of specific spatialities and historicities of the city, although as Keith argues, these problems are common across ‘cities of the twenty-first century’ (2005, p. 251). It is necessary to consider issues of difference in the city in the Australian context, and understand how multiculturalism works as a policy framework, as a migrant incorporation discourse and as a lived everyday reality. The problematic aspects of Australian multiculturalism have been highlighted by critical research. These critiques include the extent to which discursive representations of multiculturalism incorporate lived dimensions of multiculturalism in everyday life (Gow, 2005; Lobo, 2010a; Wise & Velayutham, 2009a), as well as the extent to which it operates as a spatio-political discourse to govern migrants while maintaining an existing (Anglo-centric) status quo (Anderson & Taylor, 2005; Hage, 1998; Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009). This thesis argues that certain articulations of multiculturalism are built into and performed in a local, multi-ethnic suburban environment and has an important role in shaping people’s everyday lives. At the same time, city inhabitants have an agentive role in producing



multiculture through micro-spatial practices, which can ultimately shape institutional expressions of multiculturalism.

A central issue of this thesis is to explore how the immediate urban environment mediates processes of migrant settlement. Much attention has been given to ethnic identity formation as it relates to the imaginaries and procedures of the nation-state. But less attention has focused on very mundane urban or suburban settings where migrants arrive and must carve out sites of homeliness. I take my cue, in part, from recent moves to marry socio-spatial theory with migration and migrant incorporation theory (Brickell & Datta, 2011a; Caglar & Glick Schiller, 2011). This literature argues that the integration of mobile subjects into urban spaces is profoundly shaped by their experience of everyday life in the city as a material, social, economic, political and cultural assemblage of relations. This mode of spatial thinking draws on the basic premise, as Shirley Ardener (1993, p. 3) succinctly puts it, that space reflects social organisation – it ‘defines the people in it’ and ‘people define space’. Taking up the theme of space as socially produced – as articulated by Lefebvre (1991 (1974)) and many other theorists – the thesis analyses how the urban realm is constructed and shaped through migrant place and identity-making processes. To this end, the following discussions interrogate how identity and space come together in either coherent or incoherent ways, and how spaces of belonging and non-belonging are created and negotiated (Hall, 2013a; Noble & Poynting, 2010).

In the analysis that follows, the central question – how do mundane urban spaces shape multicultural belongings – is unpacked. When engaging with this question I am mindful that ‘everyday spaces’ involve thinking about space as both a material and a social construct, produced by the actions and intentions of many different, competing actors. Moreover, ‘belonging’ is a complex, nebulous concept that points to subjective dimensions of familiarity, comfort, security and a sense of entitlement and recognition (to a social group or place) (Hage, 1997), as well as more formal and legal conceptions of belonging articulated through discourses of citizenship and rights. Non-belonging points

to a lack of these embodied experiences of feeling at home that is profoundly spatial as well as affective; an out-of-placeness that is particularly relevant to the migrant experience (Cresswell, 1996; Probyn, 1996). How do formal and informal aspects of belonging come to be inscribed in city spaces? And how do shifting tides of public and political sentiment about belonging impact on the heterogeneous lived spaces of multicultural cities?

Understanding the changing contours of membership is highly pertinent in Australia, where anti-refugee rhetoric, the fear of the ‘terrorist’ Other and the desire for homogeneous national identities has already made its mark in (sub)urban spaces of the city. This is articulated through many different instances of the micro-politics of space: through the policing of urban and suburban public space (Gridneff, 2012; Maley & Stewart, 2012; Poynting et al., 2004; Robertson, 2013a), through protest against the establishment of Islamic places of worship (Bugg & Gurran, 2011; Dunn, 2005) and sometimes through host society discomfort relating to unintelligible signage and ‘foreign’ streetscapes (Wise, 2011). This study is motivated by a desire to examine the very heterogeneity that constitutes cities as vibrant sites of encounter, beyond the headlines. That is, to explore the messy reality of everyday multiculturalism in urban settings in a way that unsettles the fear-based narratives about migrants and belonging in more politically oriented debates. My focus is therefore on the familiar and routine enactments of multicultural urbanism – the ordinary negotiations and spatial expressions of ‘making home’ that do not appear in the newspapers.

Yet, despite what appears to be an increasingly divisive national discourse in Australia (and indeed in other post-industrialised, immigration destination countries), there remains a relative dearth of understanding about how and where lived multiculturalism might fruitfully intersect with the management of diversity in cities, and in particular, with local urban planning policy. While scholarly research on the subject is extremely insightful (e.g. Fincher & Iveson, 2008; Sandercock & Kligler, 1998), there appears to be little political will to more deeply incorporate alternative, empirically informed considerations

of diversity in the realm of urban policy and politics. Beyond city marketing discourses that promote Sydney as a multicultural mecca, or popular media accounts about the vicissitudes of ‘too much diversity’, there is little discussion in the public realm about the everyday mechanics of accommodating and promoting diversity as it relates to the urban realm and specifically migrant settlement practices. Moreover, there appears to be a general lack of public interest and sustained participation in (much less avenues for), asserting claims to the diverse city. Noticeable mobilisations give some hope – for example, in Sydney, the historical Green Ban movement (Iveson, 2014), and the more recent Occupy movement and organisations like the Sydney Alliance.<sup>2</sup> But, Lefebvre’s (2003 [1970], p. 181) concern (stated over forty years ago) about the ‘extraordinary passivity’ of urban inhabitants still has much resonance.

This kind of gap or gloss between urban space and migration-led diversity begs the question: how is multiculturalism made problematic in the city – and more specifically, in urban policy? When and where does difference become significant and in a way that reveals power relations (Keith, 2005)? If the world is indeed entering the age of urban society (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]), and processes of urbanisation will increase in the future along with concentrated patterns of cultural difference (Keith, 2005, p. 253), the need to understand these processes is urgent. Encountering strangers in the city is often presented and experienced as an uncomfortable and contradictory relation. But if, as Ash Amin (2012) argues, alternatives to the privatised and exclusionary city and its racially segregated populations are to be realised, there is a need to study the way that everyday civilities in diverse neighbourhoods occur and evolve. There is a need to reconsider what might constitute the ‘good city’ (Amin, 2006) in the age of intensified mobility. What are the opportunities for maximising the inclusion and democratic participation of all its inhabitants? Asking this question illuminates key issues relating to the operation of urban

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<sup>2</sup> The Sydney Alliance is a coalition of community organisations (migrant, youth and other social support agencies, trade unions, schools and religious organisations) which mobilises around grassroots urban issues, and is based on the traditions of community organising and citizen activism that have their origins in the United States in the 1930s.

democracy, the control of public culture and the kind of power structures that are built into the very spaces city-dwellers engage on a daily basis.

### **Key questions**

Drawing upon the conundrums outlined above, the following key questions were formulated and inform the core discussions in this thesis:

- How is belonging *spatially practiced* by migrant residents in everyday, multicultural locales?
- How does urban form and its management – particularly of prosaic public spaces – shape lived multiculturalism in ethno-culturally diverse suburbs?
- How do policies (or languages) of urbanism and multiculturalism intersect, and how do they promote or obscure ethnicity and discourses of difference in the city?
- How do these policies mediate migrants’ participation in the production of suburban public space, and by extension, experiences of belonging and citizenship in local and national space?
- How might the study of spatial practices of belonging in sites of suburban multiculturalism be *scaled up* to better understand public cultures of civility in cities of diversity?

The thesis posits that transitioning suburban locales provide a rich, micro-social context for understanding how the dynamics of urban politics and human mobility might be worked out. I argue that ordinary spatialities and mundane multiculturalism are crucial for understanding new spaces of belonging in the highly diverse city, and for illuminating pathways to more inclusive urban civilities.

### **Approach and method**

To engage these questions, I approach migration as a multifaceted phenomenon, and combine this with a place-based – rather than *place-bound* (McKay, 2006: 201) – approach based on relational notions of space; that is, understanding place as a *process*. I examine experiences of social and cultural membership as mediated by place, particularly

access to and use of local public spaces in a multi-ethnic suburb. Everyday dimensions of citizenship and belonging *as spatial practice* inevitably intersect with gender, age and life-stage, sexuality, religion, socio-economic status as well as ethnic identity. Space is produced through place-specific configurations of these factors, and must be part and parcel of the analysis of place-making strategies (Isin & Siemiatycki, 2002; Secor, 2004; Staeheli et al., 2012).

Interrogating these thematic issues involved researching the place-making experiences of local residents from migratory backgrounds (mainly first generation migrants) in a multi-ethnic suburban locality in Sydney. In selecting a residence-based criterion of participation, the study surveys how place attachment and belonging are experienced across different personal histories of mobility and ethno-cultural identities. Of particular interest in this study is ‘everyday space’ and what the minutiae of daily life reveals about how *space is made into place*; that is to say, how place is rendered into a site of subjective meaning and continuously negotiate social rules and boundaries. ‘Everyday space’ is clearly a broad term, referring to residential enclaves, commercial malls, stairwells, median strips, bus stops, deserted car parks, the pavement, a park; any type of spatiality that mutually constitutes the lived routines and micro-dynamics of routine social life. The research project narrows this to a particular type of everyday space – suburban public space – as a tool for examining migrant place-making practices. While the materially bounded nature of these spaces provided a starting point and focus for the purposes of conducting fieldwork, these sites are not treated as such in the analysis. Indeed, the everyday production of the pedestrian mall, park and public library are examined through their extensive social, political, economic and cultural relationalities. As such, the public spaces studied are better understood, in the final analysis, as constellations or processes rather than neatly enclosed and stable research sites.

I transpose this fascination with everyday space and processes of multicultural belonging onto a specific setting in Sydney, Australia: the suburb of Campsie. Campsie is a multi-ethnic suburb – one that captures the concentrated diversity of the city, but in its own

unique way. The case study suburb was chosen for many reasons, but its function as an ‘arrival city’ is an important factor. Also important is its locality within the urban dynamics of Sydney. Being relatively proximate to the city centre, it is also precariously balanced on the ‘urban margins’ (Hall, 2012, p. 32) in the sense that it straddles areas of sharply increasing gentrification and urban consolidation, as well as the geographies of the sprawling and aging western suburbs of Sydney. Such ‘in between’ suburbs have not typically been the focus of migration or urban planning scholars nor popular media in Australia, who have for the most part been drawn to ‘ethnic enclaves’ and precincts (e.g. Anderson, 1993; Collins, 2006; Collins & Kunz, 2009) or areas deemed problematic through their association with historically dominant migrant groups (e.g. Dunn, 1998; Dunn, 2006; Poynting et al., 2004). Moreover, there is a need for multicultural localities like Campsie – so often assigned a lowly or ‘non-place’ in Sydney’s spatial hierarchies – to be understood in a more nuanced way, and for their positionality in relation to national, regional and global spaces to be considered.

The research responds to the call for ethnographic studies dealing with highly diverse contexts without focusing on a specific group (Wessendorf, 2010, p. 11). It aims to unsettle the taken-for-granted geographies generally associated with places of arrival and multiculturalism. Moreover, given the extent of Australia’s migration history and current immigration programme, ethnographic data on prosaic neighbourhood spaces, mobility, diversity and belonging is relatively sparse in the context of its transforming urban landscapes, despite some important work (Dunn, 2010; Fincher and Shaw, 2009; Lobo, 2010a; Wise, 2010; Wise, 2011; Wise and Velayutham, 2009a). The present study is arguably relevant not only to neighbourhoods in other Australian cities – not least to provide comparative data – but also to other post-industrial cities of immigration more generally.

## **Structure**

The broader theoretical problematics underlying the research are examined in more depth in Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Two examines the conceptual frameworks that deal

with diversity and urban space, and that have informed the intellectual trajectory of the current study. The discussion explores current thinking in migration studies, sociology, anthropology and urban studies/human geography that conceptualises issues of transforming cities and mobile populations, and the repercussions this has for understanding place and identity. Chapter Three outlines how these frameworks were applied and problematised in relation to the specific space-time of a multi-ethnic suburb in Sydney and its inhabitants. This chapter examines how theories were translated into the fieldwork setting, and some of the methodological issues arising from this process. Chapter Four serves as a background chapter to the ethnographically focused chapters that ensue. It introduces Campsie as an urban locale, outlines its defining historical, social and spatial characteristics as well as the reasons it was chosen as the site of research. Chapter Four also positions Campsie within the social geographies of Sydney as a global city, and provides the reader with a sketch of the institutional landscape through which local multicultural policy is articulated and implemented.

The study's theoretical frames are further interrogated in the substantive chapters (Chapters Five to Seven). To thematically organise these chapters, I draw on Henri Lefebvre's discussion of the social production of space and his tripartite model of space to frame the analysis of the three public spaces studied – a pedestrianised mall, public library and public park. As an analytical approach, Lefebvre's three 'spatial moments' (perceived, conceived and lived space) illuminate the dialectics of urban space, and their intricate relation to networks of social, economic and political power. This analytical structure provides a holistic approach to studying these three micro-spaces and their social rhythms. The approach deconstructs Campsie's public spaces as material environments, as lived realities, as dominated domains and as sites of emergence and transformation. Ethnographic examples of everyday migrant place making practices and their negotiation of dominant spatial representations are used to flesh out and illustrate discussions of the multiple scales of belonging, the dynamics of intercultural encounter and the production of spaces of civility in contemporary city spaces. The conclusion draws out the key arguments expounded in the substantive, ethnographic sections of the

thesis. It further examines the implications of these findings for the dilemmas facing the multicultural city. The conclusion also opens up further questions about the potentials and pitfalls of managing urban diversity and achieving fully inclusive, democratic cities in the age of migration.



## Chapter 2 / City spaces and migrant incorporation: a review of the literature

*It is surprising how little is known about who, where, how and why people get on in multicultural suburbia, how diversity is lived on the ground, from below, in the borderlands. (Wise and Velayutham, 2009, p. 42)*

### Introduction

Recent scholarship has argued that studies of place, diversity and migration have been neglected by social scientific bias towards ‘metaphysical sedentarism’ (Cresswell, 2006) – the ontological assumption that society (indeed, civilisation) is, by default, static and bounded. The prevalence of sedentary logics can be seen in attempts to mythologize movement as ‘enabling fixity’ (Rapport & Dawson, 1998) in traditional anthropology, to the framing of elective mobility and nomadism as a primitive and anti-social state of being in urban sociology (Park, Burgess & McKenzie, 1925). This epistemological lens casts mobile subjects as antinomies, and cross-border movement as exception. North-centric development models frame migration as evidence of failed development policies in the ‘home’ countries in the Global South (Bakewell, 2008). But this approach fails to capture the very ‘emplaced mobilities’ that characterise contemporary global movements, and produce (and are produced by) contemporary global city spaces (Brickell & Datta, 2011b; Dunn, 2010; King, 2012; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 310). This bias provides little traction when asking questions such as: How can place and place-bound identities be understood in the context of migration? Can the rootedness and mobility of human subjects be reconciled? And what role does urban space play?

Somewhat ironically, migration research has been heavily influenced by a bias towards territorially fixed, national populations and social life (Castles, 2007).<sup>3</sup> ‘Methodological

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<sup>3</sup> Tim Cresswell has argued that the majority of migration theory – despite its focus on cross-border movement, is really based on the idea that ‘movement occurred because one place pushed people out and another place pulled people in. So, despite being about movement, it was really about places’ (Cresswell, 2010, p. 18).

nationalism' normalises the nation-state as the natural 'container of society'. Aligned with processes of imperialism and nation-building in Western societies, it has profoundly altered discourses about immigration and migrant incorporation (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Sedentary approaches to migration can be seen in push/pull or neoclassical economic models of migration that construct place of origin and arrival as spatially bounded, ahistorical entities. The social body is framed as a homogeneous entity demarcated by physical, political, economic, social and cultural boundaries; an ingrained 'national order of things' (Baumann, 2000; Malkki, 2009, p. 25; Papastergiadis, 2005; Rapport & Dawson, 1998; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). In sedentary models of society, migrants disrupt foundational myths about national sovereignty and citizenry, including ideas about singular loyalty, ethnic homogeneity and political solidarity. Drawing on metaphors of uprooting and transplanting, sedentary approaches have significantly informed policy and social research agendas, and have continued (sometimes inadvertently) to advocate an assimilationist approach in countries of immigration, in which the impetus is on the migrant subject to integrate into the existing, 'natural', national order of things (Bauder, 2012; Hage, 1998; Papastergiadis, 2005).

This bias underplays the extent to which migration is part and parcel of processes of social transformation (Castles, 2010), part of the reorganisation of space and time associated with heightened global flows of people, finance, ideas and technologies (Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 2010, p. 2744; Harvey, 2006b). In the context of greater global connectivity and mobility the idea that migration is unilinear, permanent and associated with singular national allegiances becomes less viable (Castles, Hugo & Vasta, 2013). Yet, this is not to say that space is no longer important. The movements of people, capital and knowledge continue to occur in material space, creating friction as these flows touch down in real space and time (Harvey, 2006b; Tsing, 2005). Places are transformed by these mobilities, but they also shape how global flows manifest in national territories – as well as in the everyday spaces of the city.

Amidst a fascination with flows there has been a re-enchantment with space in social research that challenges the notion of space as ‘the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile’ (Foucault & Gordon, 1980, p. 70). Places are instead understood as continuously constructed – as processual in nature. From this perspective, all social relations: ‘become real and concrete... only when they are spatially ‘inscribed’ – that is, concretely represented – in the social production of social space... *There is no unspatialized social reality*’ (Soja, 1996, p. 46). Translating this thinking into the urban realm means reconceptualising the relationship between global mobilities and local spaces, and illuminating the often highly unequal geographies that emerge (Harvey, 2006b; Sassen, 2001; Sassen, 2005). Global movements of people and their identity-making processes shape emerging geographies, just as these geographies shape the same processes (Massey, 2004). These mutual transformations have profound repercussions not only for the relationship between the state and its citizens, but also for the insertion of ‘immigrants’ into the urban environment (Sassen, 2002).

### **Thinking space/place relationally**

#### *The social production of space and a global sense of place*

Thinking about how ideas of mobility and rootedness are instantiated in the city is necessary for the study of the complex realities of negotiating urban diversity in contemporary cities of immigration. At its heart, it is indicative of how we conceive of our place or ‘home’ in a rapidly changing world (Rapport & Dawson, 1998). It involves analysing *how* people think about place and *who* they designate as belonging there. This approach supposes that urban inhabitants *actively participate* in the construction of place. I draw on several key theorists who have developed this point.

Conceiving of city space as a *process* can be, in part, attributed to Henri Lefebvre’s idea of the social production of space, which has been so formative in contemporary theorisation of the dialectics and politics of urban space (e.g. Harvey, 2006b; Harvey,

2012; McCann, 1999; Merrifield, 1993; Soja, 1996; Soja, 2010). Writing after the 1968 political uprising in Paris, Lefebvre drew on a Marxist historical analysis to assert that social space is produced by the sets of relations characterising modern capitalism. While asserting that the production of space is not new in itself, what is new, he asserts, is ‘the global and total production of social space’ (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 155). In other words, the world of commodities now affects not only objects in circulation but also everyday spaces:

... space itself has begun to be bought and sold. Not the earth, the soil, but social space, produced as such, with this purpose, this finality... Space is no longer only an indifferent medium, the sum of places where surplus value is created, realised, and distributed. It becomes the product of social labor, the very general object of production, and consequently of the formation of surplus value (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], pp. 154-155).

Lefebvre defined the social production of space as a dynamic between modern, abstract space and concrete, lived spaces of everyday life (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]; McCann, 1999). For Lefebvre abstract space is the space of the bourgeoisie and capitalism that seeks to both erase and exploit distinctions (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 49). It is bureaucratic, purportedly objective, homogenised, repressive and commodified space. Lived space, on the other hand, is subjective and re-imagined space that urban inhabitants seek to appropriate. The ‘totalising knowledge’ that abstract space seeks to achieve is never achieved; the process is always partial. And often, logics and strategies of abstract space conflict and clash. There are ‘cracks and crevices between them’ into which ‘desire insinuates itself through these fissures ... [without which] everydayness would become hopelessly uniform’ (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 86). These gaps and tensions produce ‘seeds of a new kind of space’ that Lefebvre refers to as ‘differential space’ (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]). Differential space both accentuates difference that is the nature of the city, while restoring ‘unity to what abstract space breaks up – to the functions, elements and moments of social practice’ (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 52). Differential space counters

the tendency for abstract space to *segregate* the city into different functions and categories.

Differential spaces are closely connected to what Lefebvre refers to as heterotopic spaces (which he defines in relation to utopic and isotopic spaces). Heterotopic spaces help to undermine attempts to separate parts of the city that do not fit with the utopias of the city's elite and powerful. In other words, heterotopias are spaces that include contradiction, conflict and complexity. They are spaces marked by difference.

Heterotopic spaces were originally the spaces outside the historical political city where trade occurred, like fairgrounds and somewhat ironically, suburbs; originally spaces associated with strangers to the city (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 9). Proposing the notion of heterotopic spaces in the contemporary city, Lefebvre stresses their role as sites of dissent against social norms. This recognises the transformational potential of the city, and puts the urban 'on the agenda as an explicit locus and target of political organising' (Smith, 2003, p. vii). Lefebvre argues that urban inhabitants make the city into an *oeuvre*, and through their passions and innovation continually contest the imposition of abstract space. In other words, urban space is contingent and emergent.

In addition to these broad conceptualisations of urban space, Lefebvre explains the dialectical, relational nature of social space using a spatial triad of three spatial 'moments': spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974)). The first, spatial practice, refers to *perceived* space: the practices that structure daily life and are shaped by people's perceptions of space, or the processes of materially producing social space. It is a spatiality that is empirically observable and measurable, and that 'embraces production and reproduction' (Soja, 1996, p. 66). The second – *representations of space* – refers to *conceived*, discursively constructed space. It is the space of 'scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 38). It is a space that comprises 'the various arcane signs, jargon, codifications, objectified representations used and produced by these agents' (Merrifield, 1993, p. 523), and corresponds with

abstract space, the dominant space of capital. Crucially, he argues that these representations are drawn ‘not from the significations perceived and lived by those who inhabit, but from their *interpretation of inhabiting*’ (Lefebvre, 2002, p. 370).

The third – representational space – refers to ‘directly lived space’. This is the space of everyday life... experienced through the complex symbols and images of its ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’ (Merrifield, 1993, p. 523). It is dominated, passive and less coherent space ‘which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate’ (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 39). Representational space has also been helpfully described through Soja’s (1996) notion of ‘Thirdspace’, as a space of radical difference that challenges hegemonic constructions of space. It refers to spaces of resistance and the possibility for the emergence of new ways of imagining and enacting urban space. Through this tripartite rendering of space, Lefebvre and subsequent theorists who take up his work, point to the multiplicity of spatial knowledges and practices that make up the city; the different way people inhabit and make meaning out of urban space.

Relational theories of place make room for *transformation*. Lefebvre (2003 [1970]) and Soja (1996; 2010) both highlight the potential for radical change that is inherent in the dynamics of urban space, a point expanded upon by later theorists (for example, Amin & Thrift, 2002). But what kinds of transformation might come about through the intensification of migration-led ethno-cultural diversity in cities? What new imaginaries, place making practices or representations of space might be emerging in this context? Extending Lefebvre’s idea of the city as a space of multiplicity, Massey (1994) proposed the notion of a ‘global sense of place’. She argues that places – like her own multi-ethnic neighbourhood in London – are heterogeneous, globally interpolated spaces. They are at once global and local, fixed and fluid (Massey, 2004, p. 5). Places are enmeshed within global power geographies. They are shaped by a politics of mobility that disrupts hegemonic ‘geographies of care and responsibility’ that associate loyalty, community and family with those who are spatially close (Massey, 2004, pp. 8-9). It is here, she argues,

that people come together in ‘a manifestation of the condition of ‘throwntogetherness’, a haphazard social and physical propinquity’ (Massey, 2005, p. 140).

Going beyond the container idea of space, Massey and other theorists of the relational city provide an expansive or ‘extroverted’ framework for place. Considering how transnational networks of migrants embed themselves in neighbourhood spaces over time complexifies how the relationship between migrants and the places they come from, pass through or settle in are analysed. For example, in their study of one multi-ethnic high street in London, Hall and Datta (2010) show how one street can host translocal connections with places in Ghana, Malaysia, Nigeria, Cyprus, Iran, Vietnam, China, Sudan, Pakistan, Turkey, India and Afghanistan. Local place is ‘representative of an agglomeration of entrenched, established and emerging migrant cultures, and a palimpsest of immigration histories’ (Hall & Datta, 2010, p. 72). Therefore, in considering how migration and processes of migrant incorporation shape cities, there is a need to ‘properly take into account situated histories of places (both visible and invisible) as well as their insertion and connection to transnational networks and subjectivities’ (Keith, 2005, p. 254).

What is highlighted by these theories of place is that place is multiscalar. Urban inhabitants construct their identities in relation to different scales and sites of belonging. That is to say, ‘the connectivities and contingencies that shape a place are not all limited to the scale of that place’ (Pierce, Martin & Murphy, 2011, p. 60). Migrant residents may orient their allegiance to a hometown or neighbourhood, to a particular ethnic group, to their country of origin, to their adopted country and city, to their local church or to a transnational religious community. They may prioritise one scale of belonging, draw equally on many different scales or sites of belonging, or these affective ties may change across situations (Noble, 2009a). Anderson and Taylor (2005) argue that claims to place are based on many scalar constructions of belonging – describing these as sets of ‘entangled’ geographies that unsettle any preeminence of the national frame. These perspectives shift the way in which local place is conventionally viewed – that is, as

subordinated and geographically nested space subject to national or global forces. With the growing power of the global city, the city scale is emerging as an important frame for understanding migration (Sassen, 2001). Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Caglar, for example, investigate how the global positioning of cities shape migrants' place in it, as well as the agency of migrants in this process (Glick Schiller & Caglar, 2011). Places – and indeed, migratory processes – are therefore produced by actors and forces operating at different sites and scales (Xiang, 2013).

It is this interplay between contextual and individual factors at multiple scales that has led to a significant body of research into multi-scalar dimensions of migration and the production of urban space (Bauder, 2012; Brickell & Datta, 2011b; Caglar & Glick Schiller, 2011; Glick Schiller, 2005; Glick Schiller & Caglar, 2009; Leitner, 1997; Levitt, 2012; Smith, 2005; Varsanyi, 2006; Xiang, 2013, p. 284). Some of this work is touched on below. What is arguably lacking however, are sufficient in-depth ethnographic studies of the multiple spatialities of migrant belonging in the diverse city. To better understand the everyday actions through which migrants shape urban space, I now turn briefly to outline the key concept of 'place making'.

#### *Place making and the production of locality*

To begin, it is important that I define how I understand and use the concept of 'place'. Lefebvre's social space discussed above, is akin to contemporary theories of 'place' – that is, space that is lived and meaningful (Cresswell, 2004, p. 10). As Merrifield asserts, place is not the same as Lefebvre's concept of abstract space – it is 'the terrain where basic social practices – consumption, enjoyment, tradition, self-identification, solidarity, social support and social reproduction, etc. – are lived out. Place is where everyday life is situated; it can be taken as *practiced space* (Merrifield, 1993, p. 522). For this reason, throughout the thesis I interchangeably use Lefebvre's social space and geographic definitions of place.



People and groups have different modes of inhabiting space. How people ‘make place’ depends upon many dimensions of difference: race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, disability etc. Ethno-cultural diversity represents but one of many intersectionalities (Yuval-Davis, 2007) when examining the transformation of cities through migration. The idea of ‘place making’ makes agency involved in processes of socially producing space more explicit. It refers simply to the ways groups try to assert their identities in relation to space (Cresswell, 2004, p. 5), or ‘make [local] spaces inhabitable by imprinting them with the patterns of their own local lives’ (Byrne & Goodall, 2013, p. 64). In other words, place making refers to ‘the set of social, political and material processes by which people iteratively create and recreate the experienced geographies in which they live’ (Pierce, Martin & Murphy, 2011, p. 54).

Several ethnographic studies of everyday migrant place making practices and the production of urban space have inspired this study (for example, Ehrkamp, 2005; Hall, 2012; Wise, 2009; Wise, 2011; Wise and Velayutham, 2009a). Ehrkamp’s (2005, p. 349) study of the place-based transnational identities of Turkish migrants in a town in Germany is an excellent example of how migrant place-making practices shape local neighbourhoods. She examines spaces like a mosque, teahouses and the home to investigate the multiple sites of attachment implicated in the social construction of local places, which stretch from a German town and its translocal micro-spaces to Turkey and Turkish home villages. In this sense, Ehrkamp demonstrates how ‘place provides the tools for considering the multiple scales that impinge on immigrants’ lives, while simultaneously enabling us to consider the ways in which immigrants use such ties in order to create places for themselves’ (Ehrkamp, 2005, p. 349). The author shows how these place making practices work to *engage* with the locality, its built environment and its residents, and to produce Turkish migrants as ‘locals’ rather than as a mechanism for segregation or for migrants to distance themselves from the local German population.

Embedded in this definition is the idea that ‘the local’ (as well as what constitutes a ‘neighbourhood’) is socially produced. Place is made through social labour; it is a kind of

social achievement. Appadurai (1996) captures this in his assertion that practices of producing locality are ‘complex social techniques’ that produce *local subjects*. Producing locality also functions to ‘locate bodies in socially and spatially defined communities’ (Appadurai, 1996, p. 179). In this way, place/locality is not a given nor is it apolitical. Rather, it is an ephemeral, fragile ‘structure of feeling’ that requires ‘hard and regular work... to produce and maintain its materiality’ (Appadurai, 1996, p. 181). This dialectical relationship not only involves producing local subjects, but also producing the environment that allows subjects to be recognised and organised (Appadurai, 1996, p. 181). These ways of thinking about place and subjectivity are critical to the meanings of belonging that are used in the forthcoming analysis. The spatial dimensions of belonging that I examine are based on these conceptions of place – as made, as felt and as contested. This is place-based belonging as it relates to migrants’ ‘affective experience of *locatedness*’ that is, the experience ‘of being *here*... [which is] iteratively created and recreated through social and political processes, which work to define and make specific places’ (Pierce, Martin & Murphy, 2011, p. 55).

### **Theorising migration, public space and migrant belonging**

Putting it in simple terms, multiple locales shape people across their life trajectories; people and their place-making practices in turn produce places. The concepts of place making, global sense of place and the production of locality all point to how this happens in a context of cities being transformed through globalisation and international migration. But how do we make sense of more micro-level, day-to-day dynamics that are going on in urban spaces? What might multiple scales of identity look like in suburban neighbourhoods in multicultural cities?

In what follows, I outline four theoretical threads that unfold practices of migrant belonging in the context of public space and urban diversity. Each has informed the theoretical framework of the present study. Firstly, I look at how migrant incorporation can be understood in relation to the normative terrain of the city. Secondly, I consider studies that further theorise the place of the migrant in the city through concepts of urban

citizenship. Thirdly, I focus more on the *where* of these processes, looking at theories about urban planning and the management of public space in cities of diversity. Finally, I review key theories that examine the intercultural relations in everyday urban life, and how this shapes migrant belonging. These theories provide the groundwork for exploring the registers of belonging mediated by multiculturalism in Australian cities, which I consider at the end of this chapter.

### *Migration, diversity and the normative landscapes of the city*

In Australia – as in many settler nations – the dominant ‘place’ or spatial frame for arrival has tended to correlate with a broadly homogeneous, White political community mapped onto a singular geographical territory (Anderson, 2002; Anderson & Taylor, 2005; Hage, 1998). This spatial frame is intimately bound up with histories of British imperialism and a dominant Anglo-Celtic, Judeo-Christian identity. It informs contemporary discourses of citizenship and pluralism and circumscribes who counts as ‘Other’ in relation to the space of the imagined national community (Anderson, 2002; Anderson & Taylor, 2005; Castles, 2000; Hage, 1998; Razack, 2002). What is important to highlight here is that nation-building processes, with their attendant spatial and racial hierarchies, are manifest at many scales, including the local level of everyday life (Anderson & Taylor, 2005).

The urban has long been associated with morality and exclusion; the idea that the physical spaces of the city correspond with aspects of human nature. Early urban theorists were interested in how the city is a site of the coming together of strangers moving through urban space (e.g. Simmel, 2002 [1903]). Formalised in the work of the Chicago School of human ecology in the early twentieth century, the city was analysed as a place where traditional, agrarian social structures and institutions were disrupted by new social contracts and forms of indifference. Immigrants constituted an additional problematic, alien element to be assimilated into the existing ecology of the city (Park, Burgess & McKenzie, 1925). Urban inclusion for immigrant populations was framed through a binary of ghettoisation or assimilation in relation to the ‘moral regions’ that sorted the

city into more or less ‘civilised’ area. The idea that social mix in cities has intrinsic value has gained traction in relation to the management of cities since the 1960s. The work of Jane Jacobs and others saw the promotion of density, diversity and encounter as critical for creating social solidarity in ‘urban villages’ (Jacobs, 1961). These ideas criticised the modernist planning of the time that sought to homogenise city spaces. They are an important precursor to contemporary critical theories addressing the social impacts of neoliberal restructuring of cities.

An immigrant therefore arrives in a locality that is already shaped by dominant narratives of who can belong. Newcomers encounter an existing cultural landscape that is a ‘material manifestation of an ongoing relationship between people and place’ (Mitchell, 2000: 102). Migrant inclusion in cities involves continual negotiation over notions of the stranger and appropriate forms of difference (Ahmed, 2000; Marotta, 2012; Simmel, 2002 [1903]). The figure of the stranger is, as Ahmed argues, part of an already existing relationship, someone who has been encountered before. By this she means that strangers are people (often migrants who are deemed to be visibly different) who are ‘in their very proximity, already recognised as not belonging, as being out of place’ (Ahmed, 2000, p. 21). The migrant thus experiences a sense of ‘outside belonging’ (Probyn, 1996) characterised by a blurred positionality in which they stand between ‘the inside and the outside, order and chaos, friend and enemy’ (Hawke, 2010; Sarup, 1994, p. 102). These forms of ‘othering’ serve as a mechanism for working out who is ‘in place’ and ‘out of place’ (Cresswell, 1996) and for enforcing the prevailing hegemonic ordering of space. Indeed, the recognition of strangers is essential to the definition of neighbourhoods as meaningful spaces, ‘not simply as the place or locality of residence, but as the very living form of a community’ (Ahmed, 2000, p. 22). Who counts as part of ‘the community’ is key to unpacking how the figure of the migrant subject is created and accommodated in urban space.

The process of ‘othering’ in city spaces takes many forms. Markers of difference and strangerhood are generally organised around visible physical or symbolic criteria that are

deemed to be significant or indicative of racial, cultural or religious identity that is constructed as distinct from the mainstream. Racial and ethnic constructs are one dimension that is used to produce the boundaries of social space. Discourses of racial difference as they are mapped onto space have bodily resonances. As Noble and Poynting (2010) show in relation to Arab-speaking, Muslim Australians, such markers inscribe ideas of national (or ethnic or gendered etc) belonging onto the body, and order its movements or behaviours in urban public space. There is thus a need to empirically examine how, where and when racialisation processes are ‘directly *experienced as spatial*’ (Razack, 2002, pp. 6, 16). Without going into the biopolitical dimensions of processes of racialisation (Amin, 2012; Gilroy, 2004), it is worth noting that techniques for excluding the migrant subject from city spaces are ingrained and powerful. They constitute ‘a biopolitical machinery organised to name and shame certain subjects as dangerous or ill-fitting, tapping into obdurate vernacular legacies of bodily evaluation and judgment that return the same types of stranger as undesirable’ (Amin, 2012, pp. 2-3). Identifying and problematising ethno-cultural difference in cities like Sydney, therefore, is essentially a boundary making exercise, which can have far-reaching impacts on everyday place-making practices of migrants.

### *Cities, migrant belonging and urban citizenship*

The theorisation of belonging in the city has also crossed over with concepts of citizenship as a form of spatial membership, that is, urban citizenship. Yuval-Davis (2007) has posited that citizenship is a multi-layered phenomenon, made up of multiple intersections of differentiated power relations that impact on a subject, and include local, ethnic, faith-based, national, regional, transnational and international forms of membership. Indeed, recent literature has focused increasingly on urban citizenships. This draws in part on the pluralisation of identities, place attachments and ‘senses of belonging’ in the global era, and take national, formal citizenship as but one scale of belonging (Carruthers, 2013; Castles, Hugo & Vasta, 2013; Nagel & Staeheli, 2004; Staeheli, 2003; Varsanyi, 2006; Vasta, 2013). Urban citizenship also draws on assertions

that the city is ‘the strategic arena for the development of citizenship’ (Holston & Appadurai, 1996, p. 188), or more dramatically, the ‘battleground *through which* groups define their identities, stake their claims, wage their battles and articulate citizenship rights and obligations’ (Isin, 2002, p. 50). Moreover, membership forged through the urban may offer something beyond legal categories of citizenship: ‘it may even be... that there is something irreducible and non-transferable, necessary but not quite sufficient, about the city’s public street and square for the realisation of a meaningfully democratic citizenship’ (Holston & Appadurai, 1996, p. 202).

There is an important point about the difference between citizenship and belonging that is highlighted in this body of work, based on a difference between formal citizenship and ‘de facto’ or ‘substantive’ citizenships. According to Holston and Appadurai, substantive citizenship refers to the ‘civil, political, socio-economic and cultural rights people possess and exercise’ (1996, p. 190). This is contrasted to formal citizenship, which refers to the legal status of membership to a polity, associated with a set of rights, responsibilities and protections supported through legal, procedural and institutional systems<sup>4</sup>. According to Nagel and Staeheli (2004, p. 7) substantive citizenship is the extent to which one’s legal status is aligned with one’s ability to realise the rights and privileges of societal membership. Staeheli et al (2012) also put forward the idea of ‘ordinary citizenship’ to ground this in the prosaic spaces of the city. Ordinary citizenship refers to:

The ways in which the spatiality of laws and social norms are entwined with daily life [and]... fuses legal structures, normative orders and the experience of individuals, social groups and communities, making citizenship both a general category and a contingent resource for political life (Staeheli et al., 2012, p. 628).

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<sup>4</sup> Underlying such reconfigurations of citizenship are fundamental tensions inherent in liberal forms of citizenship in relation to ideas of equality, in which forms of socio-economic inequality can still emerge in the context of ‘equal rights’ (Holston & Appadurai, 1996, p. 194).

Belonging is experienced in relation to multiple spheres (material, symbolic and institutional); it is multi-local and polyvalent (Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2006). People can claim identity as a citizen of a country, without ‘claiming an identity as ‘belonging to’ or ‘being of’ that country’ (Nagel & Staeheli, 2004, p. 3). In other words, people have divergent forms of political identification and territorial attachment (Nagel & Staeheli, 2004, p. 3). What this means is that notions of urban citizenship indicate that formal memberships are not sufficient for the realisation of full societal membership and participation in the everyday life of the city, or for a sense of belonging in an affective, ontological sense. In this theoretical framing, belonging – as I use it – refers to the subjective realisation of dimensions of citizenship.

Urban citizenship as I examine it, is therefore a kind of *grounded belonging* that prioritises *inhabitation* over an *a priori* membership to a political community, thus allowing for more marginal, insurgent or everyday claims to urban space. These approaches draw inspiration, in part, from Henri Lefebvre’s (2002) right to the city: that is, a ‘transformed and *renewed right to urban life*’ (Lefebvre, 2002, p. 374) that refers not only to the right to basic urban services (like housing and education) but to a right to appropriate the spaces of the city and right to participate in the decision-making processes organise social space. Lefebvre’s ‘right to the city’ is also, conversely, ‘the right not to be excluded from the spaces of the city centre and segregated in residential neighbourhoods’ (McCann, 1999, p. 181). This infers a right to difference: ‘the right to be free from externally imposed, pre-established classifications of identity’ (McCann, 1999, p. 181).<sup>5</sup> These theories of urban citizenship and rights valuably highlight the

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<sup>5</sup> Such a formulation would, from a radical perspective, fundamentally challenge the current capitalist order and liberal democratic model of citizenship by challenging the centrality of property ownership and the primacy of exchange-value in the logic shaping global cities (Purcell, 2003). It would ‘create new kinds of rights outside of the normative and institutional definitions of the state and its legal codes’ (Holston & Appadurai, 1996, p. 197). And while this offers an idealistic vision of the transformative effect of urban citizenship, others have highlighted the problematic and contested nature of how urban citizenship are practiced ‘on the ground’. Ryan Centner’s study of emergent forms of ‘micro-citizenships’ in post-neoliberal Buenos Aires points to how highly self-interested and divisive these quasi-citizenships can be, finding that: ‘amid inclusionary rhetoric, ironically there are microcitizenships that embody spatio-temporally circumscribed, precarious and especially fractious forms of belonging in the city’ (Centner, 2011, p. 336).

social, cultural and affective dimensions of membership that shape the lives of city dwellers. It is these dimensions of everyday life in multi-ethnic suburbs that I examine through the concept of belonging.

*Managing diverse publics: planning and urban public space*

Urban public spaces are the quintessential sites for performing and claiming citizenship. Public space has been associated, and sometimes conflated, with liberal definitions of the public sphere and collective civic culture. The idea of the inclusive, agonistic public sphere frame it as a space of debate, and ‘of private people come together as a public’ (Habermas, 1991, p. 27). While it is clear that the physical manifestation of the democratic public sphere – as in the notion of the agora in ancient Greece – was far from inclusive (excluding certain classes and women, for example), nonetheless imaginaries of public space, citizenship and belonging to a collective civic culture remain intertwined (Low & Smith, 2006, p. 6).

While a comprehensive discussion of the definition of public space is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to note that public space emerges through the contested relationship between the market, civil society and the state. It is differentiated from private space through conditions of access, the source and control over entry, the rules of use and the behaviour deemed appropriate in specific spaces (Low & Smith, 2006)<sup>6</sup>. The dialectical relationship between public and private space appears increasingly blurred in the era of urban revanchism, privatisation, deregulation; that is, in the age of neoliberal encroachment on public space (Harvey, 2012; Low & Smith, 2006, p. 4; Mitchell, 1995). A mix of semi-public, highly regulated and variously controlled public spaces have become the norm in global cities (McCann, 1999). Encompassing a range of social locations, from the street, a park and shopping mall, to the media, the Internet, the United Nations (Low & Smith, 2006, pp. 3-4), public space is therefore not necessarily

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<sup>6</sup> See also Shepard and Smithsimon (2011) on typologies of public space in contemporary cities, depending on degrees of exclusion and control.



geographically circumscribed as concrete sites and may also exist in virtual forms (Iveson, 2007; Low & Smith, 2006, pp. 3-4). In addition to its physical and virtual dimensions, there are multiple meanings of ‘publicness’: it can refer to a context for action, a collective and a mode of public address which demands a more processual account of public space (Iveson, 2007). It would be better to ask, Iveson argues, what are the ‘spatialities of publicness’ in contemporary cities? And how do the material structures of these various publics enable or hinder political action or opportunities (Iveson, 2007, p. 9)?

This contemporary reading of public space thus takes into account both the *collective, processual* nature of public making as well as *visible, emplaced* dimensions of what is considered to be public space. Generally, public making in cities like Sydney are based on particular western, humanist conceptions of public space as a place that is automatically open to all, within certain prescribed guidelines for appropriate behaviour. While I examine some of these socio-spatial norms in more depth throughout the thesis, it is critical to highlight the fact that these understandings of public space are not universal; there are ‘multiple publics and privates’ both within and across cultural and historical contexts (Iveson, 2007; Sheller & Urry, 2003, p. 108). The daily production of both public and domestic spaces are profoundly influenced by different embodied experiences and expectations of dwelling, which do not always reflect the strict industrial and post-industrial division of the domestic and public sphere, particularly in the context of immigration and diversity.<sup>7</sup> In Islamic societies, for example, ‘the street, square and park are not necessarily “public”; nor is the home exclusively a “private space”’ (Datta, 2009; Whitten & Thompson, 2005, p. 4).

Who is designated as belonging to the ‘public’ body is socially patterned and often complicated by different ethnic, classed, gendered, generational, religious and cultural

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<sup>7</sup> As Pierre Bourdieu (2003) demonstrated with his classic study of the Berber house, ordering space in any society – in this case through architecture – manifests and reinscribes cultural conceptions of time, space and cosmology; drawing together the micro and the macro. The connection between the psychological, social and spatial is also amply explicated through his conception of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990).

ideas about public space use. Thus, public spaces – and their urban design, planning and management – cannot be separately understood from the social and racial geographies of the city. This point has been ably demonstrated in a significant body of literature that examines the interplay between urban planning and discourses of diversity and/or multiculturalism (Beynon, 2007; Bugg & Gurran, 2011; Fincher & Iveson, 2008; Hall, 2012; Mitchell, 1993; Sandercock, 2000; Sandercock & Klinger, 1998; Soja, 2010; Trudeau, 2006; Whitten & Thompson, 2005). What this research shows is firstly, that there are many different forms of spatial knowledge that coalesce in city, exurban and rural spaces, and secondly, that contemporary systems of spatial management struggle to adequately respond to this array of spatial norms and uses. Many of these studies find that legal and regulatory frameworks for managing public and residential space (for example, zoning laws and design guidelines) can have unanticipated outcomes for particular groups in the community, and offer ample evidence of this. Mitchell, for example, demonstrates how the regulation of ‘monster houses’ in upper class neighbourhoods in Vancouver addresses middle-class, White anxieties about the influx of Hong Kong elites into the city and their participation in the democratic public sphere (Mitchell, 1993; 1997). Trudeau explores the selective application of zoning classifications in the rural US to show their inordinate impact on low-income minority groups (Trudeau, 2006). In doing so, he argues that planning decisions effectively institutionalise ‘spatial categories of acceptable social behaviour and visual aesthetic’ that define what constitutes a ‘good lifestyle’ (and who can access it) (Trudeau, 2006, p. 422).

Beynon’s examination of the marginal positioning of religious and ethnic buildings in Melbourne suggested that residential areas of Australian cities are highly resistant to architectures that show overt symbolism and distinctive forms that orient towards cultures and beliefs deemed ‘Other’ (Beynon, 2007). In other words, there is a dominant idea that rather than transforming urban landscapes, immigrant cultures should be integrated into ‘a pre-existing and presumably homogeneous society’ and its urban forms, although in some localities of high ethno-cultural diversity (e.g. Dandenong in Melbourne), heterogeneous landscapes are emerging (Beynon, 2007, p. 5). In their study

of development applications for Islamic schools in suburban Sydney, Bugg and Gurran (2011) find that bounded notions of community, local aesthetics and moral panics about Islam are mobilised by members of the community resistant to social change and moreover, are accommodated in urban planning processes regardless of Australia's multicultural principles relating to the right to worship. They warn that languages of technical rationality in urban planning practices can become 'a screen for preventing socio-spatial 'intrusion' by particular cultural or ethnic groups' (Bugg & Gurran, 2011, p. 289; Dunn, 2005).

How space is managed through institutions of urban planning projects a veneer of scientific neutrality and 'common sense'. But there are particular notions of the 'public good' and rights of use of public space that underpin these 'apolitical' regulations, which do not necessarily include everyone (Blomley, 2011; Valverde, 2012). But, it is worth noting that this is far from monolithic. A range of bureaucratic and governmental perspectives is exercised upon urban space. Indeed, decision-making practices 'on the ground' – particularly by local and municipal governments – can be highly subjective and locally contingent (Valverde, 2007; Valverde, 2011; Valverde, 2012). Rather, the management of urban space is based on abstractions or 'interpretations of inhabiting' rather than lived experience (Lefebvre, 2002, p. 370). And as this research discovers, discourses of diversity are unevenly implemented across time and space by different urban stakeholders (Thompson & Dunn, 2002). This raises some key questions for the present study. How are discourses of diversity – of a harmonious and inclusive multicultural Sydney (and Australia) – articulated through the spatial management of public spaces? And, how does this then shape everyday practices of place making for local migrant residents? To put it in another way, what are the 'spatialities of publicness' in Campsie and how do they cohere with official articulations of multicultural belonging?

#### *Urban civilities and encounter*

Making place in urban context thus depends on many factors, not least migrants' existing spatial knowledge and migration trajectories, and the dominant socio-spatial logics of the

places they come to inhabit. These dynamics shape how people navigate through their everyday material environment and how they encounter one another in local spaces (Williamson, Forthcoming). These ‘small achievements in the good city’ (Amin, 2006, p. 1012) could be anything from passing greetings between neighbours, exchanges with shopkeepers, chatting in queues or moving over on a park bench for someone to sit down. Working out how to negotiate physical proximity and social contact with people perceived as different demands a set of intercultural skills that are part of the place making process. Here I outline some of the theories that consider the micro-interactional sphere of urban space as a key to spatial claims in the diverse city. In particular I discuss theories relating to ordinary difference, public spaces and the intersubjective labour of intercultural encounters.

A focus on the study of micro-social exchanges in the city – using ethnographic and phenomenological techniques – has long shown that the very social fabric of the city is constituted through the minutiae of mundane encounters and place making practices, such as walking and dwelling in public space (de Certeau, 1984; Whyte, 2009 [1988]). As scholars like Erving Goffman (1963) would suggest, public life is embodied in the ‘ordinary human traffic’ of habituated face-to-face encounters and forms of civil inattention that pattern local interactions. Indeed, the right to encounter has been identified as an important component of the right to the city: people having a right to ‘their own spatiality – a life path peculiarly circumscribed for them by the spaces, places and governance structures of the city’ (Fincher & Iveson, 2008, p. 13). It also involves ‘parity of participation’; the right of residents ‘to become someone else’ through exploratory encounters with the strangers with whom they share the city (Fincher & Iveson, 2008, p. 13).

The mere fact of social and spatial proximity does not necessarily foster cosmopolitan civic culture. Indeed, it can exacerbate perceptions of threat and discontent – as examples of urban unrest in the northern cities of England in 2001 or the Parisian *banlieue* areas have shown (Amin, 2002; Wacquant, 1999). But forms of conflict do not necessarily

always signify an inherent tendency towards increasing ethnic segregation, resulting in a ‘crisis in multiculturalism’ (Neal et al., 2013; Phillips, 2006). Economic and political conditions, local histories and scarce local resources are critical factors, along with dominant racial ideologies and their inscription in local and national space. Therefore, the question can be asked: What kinds of socio-spatial encounters are likely to encourage civility and inclusion and which are likely to enable conflict between different parts of a community? When do ethnic or racial markers lose their meaning in urban settings and become ‘ordinary’?

The ‘work’ and conditions that enable spontaneous encounter across difference have been central to theories of ordinary, vernacular and working class cosmopolitanisms (Binnie, 2006; Noble, 2009b; Werbner, 2006; Wessendorf, 2010), everyday, routine and competent multiculturalism (Kesten et al., 2011; Neal et al., 2013; Wise, 2009; Wise & Velayutham, 2009a) and forms of conviviality (Gilroy, 2004). These theories direct attention to the ‘run of the mill’ connections and their spatialities that bridge difference on a daily basis. Their focus is on the ‘micro-geographies of interaction’ that look at relationship building in practice, rather than on ‘set piece conflicts’ or spectacles (Kesten et al., 2011, p. 136).

An issue for many of these theorists is the conditions that create ‘commonplace cosmopolitanisms’ (Wessendorf, 2010) – that is, a condition of super-diverse neighbourhoods in which difference is so prevalent and often non-categorisable, that it becomes ordinary and unremarkable. Here intercultural encounter is not necessarily organised around formal, positive *recognition* of ethno-cultural difference (Taylor, 1992) as expounded in conventional liberal multiculturalism. While broader structures of recognition may exist in that society – e.g. in multicultural policy – this perspective highlights that substantive belonging is often more directly produced through mundane, pragmatic and spontaneous intercultural relations that rely on forms of non-recognition. This is, in other words, an ‘ethics of indifference’ which Tonkiss (drawing on Young (1990)) explains as ‘the capacity to be unseen, to be unexceptional, to be impersonal in a

social field where ‘differences remain unassimilated’ (Tonkiss, 2003, p. 299). Others have scaled this up to speak of a progressive urban politics that involves ‘civilities of indifference to difference’ (Amin, 2012).

This theoretical perspective posits that recognition can have negative impacts, particularly in the form of misrecognition or over-recognition. Explicit recognition may actually delimit a person’s ability to engage in a certain social situation, or may fail to acknowledge other aspects of their identity (Noble, 2009a). This reflects the basic point that, in some cases, ‘spatial proximity can actually breed defensiveness and the bounding of identities and communities’ (Valentine, 2014, p. 78). In other words, there is a need to recognise *other* dimensions of affinity or similarity; for example, shared identities as residents of a neighbourhood or users of shared local space, to disrupt stereotyping. This approach thus provides an important frame for understanding how urban citizens recognise the right of other near-dwellers to inhabit urban space (Amin, 2002; Fincher & Iveson, 2008; Fincher & Jacobs, 1998; Keith, 2005; Sandercock, 2000).

The concept of everyday multiculturalism captures these prosaic interpersonal exchanges. It is ‘a grounded approach to looking at the everyday practice and lived experience of diversity in specific situations and spaces of encounter’ (Wise & Velayutham, 2009b, p. 3). This approach thus goes beyond the analysis of multiculturalism as solely a set of national policies around managing and containing diversity. Instead, it is argued that multiculturalism is, in part, constituted through inter- and intra-subjective dimensions of encounter, including migrants’ experiences of encountering external imaginaries of their status as Other. Everyday multiculturalism acknowledges the multiplicity and situatedness of ‘migrant’ identities (Noble, 2009b; Wise & Velayutham, 2009b) and that encounters are ‘messy’ and situated in a particular set of conditions. For example, Lobo (2010a; 2010b) found that in the highly diverse and disadvantaged areas of Dandenong in Melbourne – a suburb that bears some resemblance to Campsie – quotidian encounters with difference through neighbourly interactions or exchanges in the local market work to blur interethnic boundaries. In turn, ‘seemingly inconsequential social interactions shape

everyday experiences of citizenship’ as well as a sense of homeliness (Lobo, 2010b, p. 11). Similarly, Wise’s study of Ashfield, a multicultural suburb in Sydney, found that unremarkable interethnic exchanges – for example, exchanging homegrown vegetables across the garden fence – constitute a form of reciprocal relations of caring that is at the very foundation of everyday multiculturalism. As such, how people live together in diverse cities *at the micro-social level* may be more fruitfully analysed by examining forms of mutual acknowledgement in exchanges, how people are made to feel legitimate or illegitimate in local spaces, and degrees of competency in navigating these situations (Noble, 2009a; Noble & Poynting, 2010).

Drawing on research in the UK, Ash Amin argues that these kinds of transversal encounters and indifferent civilities can be fostered in multi-ethnic urban space. He identifies banal sites such as workplaces, schools, shops or public spaces such as libraries as potential ‘micro-publics’ (Amin, 2002). These are spaces that are conducive to the forms of ‘prosaic negotiation and banal transgression’ which engender ‘moments of cultural destabilisation, offering individuals the chance out break out of fixed relations and fixed notions, and through this, to learn to become different through new patterns of social interaction’ (Amin, 2002, p. 15). In his later work, Amin scales up these spatial moments of civility and transgression to outline pathways towards an everyday politics of civility (2008; 2012). Public spaces are key to this formulation of civility by fostering ‘urban commons’. Despite the dispersal of public space in a virtual age, physical public spaces still, in Amin’s words, ‘underpin cultures of sociality and civic sensibility’ that offer a context for producing ‘sparks of civic and political citizenship’ (Amin, 2008, p. 8).

In painting a picture of the potential of urban public spaces for a new politics of belonging, Amin focuses on the ‘total dynamic – the human and non-human’ elements of urban space (2008, p. 8). That is to say, he takes into account the material aspects of public space and their mutual interaction with human behaviour and forms of social contact. He expresses these assembled interplays using the concept of ‘situated

multiplicity’ – which he defines, drawing on Massey, as the condition of ‘thrown togetherness of bodies, mass and matter, and of many uses and needs in a shared physical space’ (Amin, 2008, p. 8). This embodies, he argues, the potential for new types of conviviality to emerge. In doing so, he echoes the sentiments of Lefebvre (2003 [1970]) who posited that it was from such intensity, juxtaposition and the passion of urban dwellers that the reclamation of the city could take place. Thus, in contexts of super-diverse neighbourhoods, these ideas provide a hopeful way of interpreting the generative potential of multi-ethnic concentration and intercultural encounter, and the prospect of new spaces of belonging opening up in the most mundane, everyday spaces.

### **Australian discourses of belonging: migration, national identity and the everyday**

The theories discussed so far set out approaches to theorising and analysing migrant belonging in everyday urban spaces. They point to the multi-scalar, relational nature of belonging. These theories also highlight the historical, social and economic processes of making place that must be considered. I now turn to look specifically at registers of belonging in Australia, through the lens of multiculturalism. As stressed above, experiences of place are influenced not only by interpersonal encounters, but also by wider discursive frameworks about who has the right to urban space, and how this is reproduced through institutional structures. Multiculturalism – Australia’s policy of dealing with diversity resulting from immigration – is key to unlocking how difference is incorporated into Australian society, and thus migrant experiences of place and emplacement in Sydney.

#### *The principles of multiculturalism*

The basic premise of multiculturalism in western democratic societies is that all people should have equal access to participate in society (universal individual rights), and that all citizens should be free to practice their culture and religion, within the parameters set out by the legal system. In other words, all citizens should be able to exercise equal rights as



individuals, and also have their different needs as members of collectivities (cultural, religious and other) recognised.

In terms of spatial citizenship these rights translate into an assumption that everyone should have 'equitable access to and enjoyment of public spaces' and at the same time, be free to practice their culture and religion. But, in reality, these prescribed rights can be difficult to maintain (Whitten & Thompson, 2005, p. 1). I take the perspective that this paradox is continuously negotiated, and its negotiation depends upon different articulations of multiculturalism across time and place. In other words, different iterations of multicultural discourse and policy have had a bearing on how these principles are socio-spatially inscribed in everyday city spaces.

Multiculturalism is a highly socially and historically situated form of knowledge (Gunew, 2004; Keith, 2005; Werbner, 2005). The variable meanings of multiculturalism are partially explained through the distinction between multiculturalism as a set of policies for managing diversity, and the 'multicultural' as a descriptor and 'floating signifier' that captures the 'unsettled meanings of cultural differences in relation to multiculturalism' (Bhabha, 1998; Hall, 2000; Hesse, 2000, p. 2). The flexibility of 'multicultural' as a signifier enables it to be deployed in public and political discourse in many contradictory and overlapping ways. In Australia, multiculturalism has evolved as a bundle of policy knowledge over time and in response to a range of social, political and economic realities, and serves many purposes. Multiculturalism is a political template for articulating the rights and obligations for membership to an idealised national community and a policy for social unity (or social division and exceptionalism, depending on your view). It is also a policy for 'managing and containing diversity' (Wise, 2009) and a justification for the distribution of public resources. It is a descriptor of the 'de facto' socio-cultural diversities that constitute cities, and a grassroots claim for a place for migrant identities in 'mainstream' society. Others see it as an economic resource for promoting cosmopolitan cities.

In these various articulations of multiculturalism, the ‘multicultural’ can highlight the inherent multiplicity of social identities in society. But it can also be mobilised to fix and essentialise identities based on culture and ethnic identity (Modood, 2007). A key criticism is that multiculturalism is too easily deployed as a means of fixating on ‘culture’ (or a cultural group) as defined as a bounded, ‘whole’ social collective with identifiable, shared values; a proposition that negates the partiality, fluidity and multiplicity of cultural constructs (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 473; Werbner, 2005). This can be seen in the development of multicultural policy in Australia, which has long been based on ‘the enfranchising of differences along cultural lines’ (Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 476).

### *The development of Australian multiculturalism*

As a former British colony, this Australian multiculturalism builds upon an already existing ‘racialised structure of citizenship’ (Perera, 2005; Razack, 2002, p. 5), most clearly articulated in the White Australia immigration policy that favoured British and European-born migrants from the time of Federation until the early 1970s. Indeed, multiculturalism policy in Australia has always been firmly linked to immigration and the arrival of ‘cultural Others’ (compared to the Canadian model of biculturalism, for example). As a social policy, the development of multiculturalism cannot be separated from early settler anxieties that stem from the fact that Australia was ‘a very thinly populated society isolated from its origins in the British Isles, [and] deeply conscious of its potential vulnerability’ (Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009, p. 89).

Yet, access to citizenship in Australia has been a key aspect of its migrant settlement policy. Citizenship is based on the principles of *ius soli* (law of soil) and residency, rather than *ius sanguinis* (law of blood). There is an assumption that formal and substantive citizenship, that is, the bundle of legal, social, economic and political rights associated with citizenship, are neatly tied together. However, as many scholars have argued, multicultural citizenship is an aspirational model of belonging; formal citizenship does not necessarily guarantee real social and political equality (Castles, 2000).

There have been several marked phases of Australian multiculturalism that speak to the different arenas in which multiculturalism is put to work (Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 474). Drawing on Stuart Hall's modalities of multiculturalism, Murphy et al (2003, p. 476) argue that the history of Australian multiculturalism can be broadly framed as starting with conservative multiculturalism until liberal multiculturalism was adopted in the 1960s. A shift towards a pluralist multiculturalism in the 1970s was then followed by commercial multiculturalism in the 1980s and 1990s (Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 476).<sup>8</sup> This general sketch of the development of Australian multiculturalism fits with a more detailed overview of the historical progression of these policies. I look (necessarily briefly) at what these developmental stages of multiculturalism have meant for the rhetoric of Australian belonging in the discussion that follows.

A new political consensus emerged in 1966 promoting multiculturalism over the White Australia policy. But it was not until Al Grassby (Minister for Immigration under the Gough Whitlam Labor government of 1972-1975, often referred to as the 'father of multiculturalism') ushered in *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future* in 1973, that the principles of cultural pluralism, participation, social cohesion, cultural identity and equality of opportunity were identified as core foundations of Australian society. More generally, this period of multiculturalism has been identified as one characterised by an emphasis on welfare and social justice. This was followed by the Galbally Report of 1978 (under the Liberal-National Coalition government of Fraser (1975-1983)), which 'laid the foundation for a significant change in the official construction of national identity' (Thompson & Dunn, 2002, p. 267). This period was framed around an ethnic group model of multiculturalism, and was a decisive shift away from assimilationist policies and was accompanied by an awareness of the growing migrant vote (Castles, 2000; Ho, 2013; Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009).

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<sup>8</sup> Stuart Hall (2000) identifies six modalities of multiculturalism that are always partially employed in any one country context: conservative multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism, pluralist multiculturalism, commercial multiculturalism, corporate multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism.

During the 1980s this political consensus held and all nine Australian governments (except for Queensland) took up multiculturalism regardless of the political party. During this time, ethnic community councils, an Office of Multicultural Affairs, and migrant resource centers were created, and naturalisation was made increasingly easy (Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009, p. 91). The earlier ethnic group model – based on an emphasis on equality of opportunity, migrant disadvantage and ethnic welfare, and on establishing ‘relationships of patronage between governments and ethnic communities’ (Ho, 2013, p. 34) – changed with the Labor Hawke-Keating government (1983-1996) to focus on a social policy and citizenship model laid down in the *1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* and in the Access and Equity policy. The notion of ‘productive diversity’ was introduced by the Keating Government (1992-96) and sought to ‘capitalise on the linguistic and cultural skills, business networks and market knowledge of Australia’s diverse population’ (Ho, 2013, p. 36). The notion of diversity as an economic asset was one aspect of the wider multicultural model at this time.

Yet, the parameters and conditionalities of multicultural citizenship were, and remain, a highly contested arena in Australia. In 1996, John Howard’s Liberal-National Coalition government (1996-2007) broke the consensus and capitalised on discontent from sectors of the population who had little exposure to the realities of multiculturalism, and who saw it as directly and only serving immigrant minorities. Howard’s government drew on the idea of a commonly shared, Anglo-Celtic, Judeo-Christian model of Australian ‘culture’ – essentially privileging white settler identities over indigenous and non-Anglo identities. It was in relation to this model of cultural belonging that notions of ‘integration’ and ‘social cohesion’ were mobilised, resulting in what critics have referred to as a resurgence in assimilationist and anti-multiculturalism rhetoric; a brand of ‘new integrationism’ (Poynting and Mason, 2008). The idea of ‘common core values’ drew on more widely circulating global discourses, such as the ‘clash of civilisations’, which posited that there are irreconcilable cultural differences inherent in immigrant populations that can lead to conflict within the borders of a nation state (Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009, p. 98). The right-wing One Nation Party took this theme up in the 1990s, and

gained significant support. This period of government not only saw the dismantling of many multicultural institutions, but also the mandatory detention of asylum seekers and the harsh treatment of irregular entrants, as well as a more restrictive approach to citizenship (Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014, p. 269; Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009, p. 99).

While ostensibly recommitting to multiculturalism, aspects of these priorities were taken up in different ways by the Labor-led Rudd and Gillard governments (2007-2013), with a continued emphasis on offshore processing and a deterrence-based approach to the treatment of asylum seekers. The recent shift back to a Liberal-National Coalition government under Tony Abbott has seen a renewed emphasis, since 2013, on security and harmony concerns (Castles, 2000; Ho, 2013; Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009).

#### *Contemporary multiculturalism in Australian cities: productive diversity*

Throughout the history of Australian multiculturalism, multiple versions have existed simultaneously; sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflicting. While not negating the importance of these various formulations of multicultural principles in Australia, I wish to consider in the following discussion two articulations of multiculturalism that are most useful for grasping how difference is predominantly framed in contemporary urban diversity management strategies. While other versions of multiculturalism are also relevant to the subsequent discussion – and are discussed in Chapters Five to Seven – it is the economic narratives of diversity and social cohesion/harmony discourses that arguably most clearly articulate how ethno-cultural factors intersect with neoliberal urban space in Sydney.

‘Entrepreneurial multiculturalism’ (Murphy, O’Brien & Watson, 2003) or the ‘corporatisation of multiculturalism’ has remained a key component of Australian discourses of diversity since the 1980s. Indeed, Australia has been ‘unapologetic about linking multiculturalism with business’ (Fleras, 2009). Clearly, a narrative of productive diversity cannot be separated from neoliberal political agendas. Indeed, as Mitchell

(1993, p. 288) argues in relation to the construction of diversity discourses in Canada (specifically Vancouver) during the early 1990s, reworked multiculturalism can operate as ‘part of a much broader strategy of hegemonic production in the interests of multinational capitalism’. Here economic imperatives merge with migrant settlement and immigration policy.

A general concern in social and economic policy with economic efficiency is highlighted in the reworking of the notion of multiculturalism as an economic asset ‘for all Australians’, an idea that has been around since the beginning of Australian multiculturalism (Ho, 2013). By advocating the idea that immigration and the resulting cultural diversity brings economic growth and improved living standards that benefit everyone, successive political parties have distanced themselves from public and political hostility towards the special treatment of migrants and ethnic minority groups. It was deployed by the Hawke government as a way of promoting the ‘multicultural dividend’ (Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009, p. 95). The multicultural dividend and productive diversity<sup>9</sup> posit that migration (particularly skilled migration) and the resulting ethno-cultural diversity in cities boosts the national economy and encourages economic growth in cities and neighbourhoods. This relates not only to the facilitation of transnational corporate activity in global cities, but also forms of ethnic entrepreneurialism, urban regeneration and the social and cultural capital that migrants bring – all of which are valuable commodities of the ‘creative city’ (Florida, 2003).

Since 2000, iterations of the multiculturalism ‘for all Australians’ discourse have been deployed in tandem with a ‘rights and obligations’ discourse that more closely merges the productive and unifying dimensions of multiculturalism (Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 483). The Howard Government launched *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness* in 1999 in an effort to argue that ‘linguistic and cultural skills would prove an invaluable economic resource for Australia as international

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<sup>9</sup> Ho also notes that the notion of ‘productive diversity’ was based on the notion of ‘managing diversity’ drawn from US organisational behaviour literature, ‘which has connotations of containing or avoiding cultural conflict, as well as capitalising on the benefits of a diverse workforce’ (Ho, 2013, p. 36).

economic exchanges gathered pace' (Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 482). It was a strategy for promoting skilled migration and clearly separated it from other forms of migration (particularly refugee and asylum seekers movements). This rationale has continued to be applied in the context of contemporary temporary migration regimes.

The merging of economic and social cohesion priorities in the justification and implementation of multicultural policy has drawn substantial critique. One aspect that has drawn particular critique is the pairing of economic imperatives with superficial representations of cultural difference that fit with (or at least, do not challenge) majority culture. This latter feature of Australian multiculturalism assumed that the 'quaint, amusing and enjoyable aspects of other cultures – such as dance, music, national dress and, above all, food – could be preserved for the entertainment of the majority population, while other aspects, such as different politics, religion, family structures, gender relations and lifestyles, would wither (Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009, p. 96).<sup>10</sup> Hage (1997; 1998) has coined the term 'cosmo-multiculturalism' to capture this brand of multiculturalism and its propensity to commodify diversity and tailor it to middle-class consumption habits. This 'boutique' version of multiculturalism (Carruthers, 2004) valorises and appropriates aesthetically pleasing ethnic and cultural differences, and simulates cross-cultural encounter that, Hage argues, is largely absent of migrants themselves and their everyday home-building practices (Carruthers, 2004; Hage, 1997).

Such multicultural imaginaries have been integral to Sydney's marketing as a global city, and are woven into projects of urban redevelopment and civic boosterism, particularly in areas of high ethno-cultural diversity (as explored in Chapter Four). To the extent that cosmo-multiculturalism comes to dominate intercultural interactions in the city, Hage contends that such a discourse undermines legitimate migrant claims upon the city, and indeed, upon the nation. It becomes a 'subjectless multiculturalism' in which the unequal

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<sup>10</sup> This form of tokenist multiculturalism was also contested in the UK context, with reactions from both side of the political field against 'saris, samosas and steel bands syndrome' (Donald & Rattansi, 1992).

power relations between the Anglo-Australian majority and ethnic or migrant minorities, remain unchallenged (Carruthers, 2004; Hage, 1997).

### *Cohesive and harmonious diversity*

From the mid-1990s, global events saw a (re)politicisation of multiculturalism in Australia (as in other liberal democratic societies). In the context of global conflicts and terrorist attacks, an emerging neo-conservative political rhetoric identified migrants (particularly from the Global South) as potential national security threats. This, in turn, was evoked to justify the tightening of migration regulations and increased border security. At the local level, the purported ‘retreat from multiculturalism’ was more rhetorical than substantive (Banting & Kymlicka, 2006). However, it did shift public opinion on the integration of diversity in urban space. In the United Kingdom, this emerged in response to riots in cities in northern England in 2001 and the emergence of assertions that ethnic minorities were living ‘parallel lives’ (Phillips, 2006; Vasta, 2007b). In Australia, terror discourses after the Bali bombing and 9/11 augmented already simmering racial discrimination against Arabic-speaking, Muslim migrants (and asylum seekers more generally), as did domestic events such as the Cronulla riots and ethnicised gang rapes in the early 2000s (Grewal, 2012). This led to the displacement of narratives of fear – built on the figure of the homegrown terrorist – into (sub)urban spaces. Poynting et al.’s (2004) book analysing the racialisation and criminalisation of Arab-Australians, entitled *Bin Laden in the Suburbs*, captures this emerging populist sentiment.

A social cohesion narrative emerged in Australia as elsewhere, which placed the burden of integration squarely on migrants, rather than ‘host’ communities. According to this logic, immigrants were easily blamed for disruption to social cohesion (Vasta, 2007a; Vasta, 2007b; Yuval-Davis, 2007, p. 569). Indeed, in Australia, John Howard’s (1996-2007) conservative government argued that multiculturalism worked against social cohesion. A more assimilationist rhetoric was introduced based on a ‘singular vision of Australian cultural belonging’, which effectively excluded a significant number of new



and existing citizens (Voloder, 2011, pp. 112, 115). The changes to the Australian Citizenship Act in 2007 – including extending the waiting period to apply for citizenship, and the implementation of a citizenship test – narrowed the symbolic meanings associated with national belonging. This discourse drew the symbolic boundaries of citizenship and belonging around Anglo-Australian ‘culture’ and ‘values’ based on a mythically homogenous Anglo-Celtic heritage and, as argued by critics, characterised by a collective amnesia of colonisation (Hall, 2000, p. 218; Perera, 2005). This ‘neo-monocultural’ model of Australian belonging created a hierarchy of attachments, loyalties and duties (Fleras, 2009). In this context, multiculturalism (and non-white immigrant bodies, particularly asylum seekers) became a scapegoat for more generalised anxieties relating to economic restructuring, high levels of unemployment, reduction in job security, and significant loss of jobs from blue-collar sectors (Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 478). The return to a Liberal-Coalition in 2013 appears to have heightened the discursive employment of this more reactionary rhetoric of multiculturalism.

At the local level, social cohesion discourses were articulated through an associated rhetoric of community harmony, promoting ‘cultural diversity as a productive and unifying force in Australian society’ (Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 483). While shaping the celebratory aspects of multiculturalism (e.g. the promotion of Harmony Day), community harmony discourses have focused mainly on channeling funding to local communities to support counter-radicalisation measures. This discourse draws heavily on fears of ‘disharmony’ and social fragmentation, and focuses on migrant communities’ role in integration – thus arguably denying the wider context of race relations in Australia (Jakubowicz, 2015). Indeed, critical theorists have increasingly questioned whether these new priorities of social stability and homogeneous national belonging are able to address social justice issues (Boese & Phillips, 2011; Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 487). As noted above, Muslim-Australians in particular were the subject of processes of racialisation and Othering through these narratives, and had to ‘prove’ their Australian-

ness to justify their place in national and indeed, everyday urban spaces (Noble & Poynting, 2010; Poynting et al., 2004).

The ideological premise underpinning these recent trends shaping multiculturalism has been long theorised by Australian critical theorists. Hage (1998) argues that Australian multiculturalism is based on narratives of tolerance and national sovereignty based on ‘white fantasies’ that claim the right to govern and manage national space. Central to this narrative is a fundamental imaginary of the nation as a territorialised space, and immigrants and others as ‘impacting a spatialised body from without’ (Anderson & Taylor, 2005, p. 461). This generates what Ang refers to as the ‘spatial anxiety’ of white, settler Australian society (2003). This discourse in turn objectifies cultural Others (e.g. migrants and asylum seekers), actively positions them within, and frames them as incomers into, an exclusive national space, all the while disguising the very mechanisms through which they are excluded (Anderson & Taylor, 2005; Hage, 1998). It is a model of belonging that is continuously reiterated through contemporary political constructions of ‘illegal’ asylum seekers arriving in Australia as irregular maritime arrivals.

But these spatial imaginaries are also highly germane to the study of contestations over the place of diversity in the everyday spaces of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. The dominance of political and economic agendas means that Australian multicultural discourse often fails to account for the lived, urban dimensions of *multiculture*. But these scales, as Doreen Massey and other have argued, are intimately connected. As Anderson (2002, p. 387) posits, ‘intercultural exclusions, inclusions and exchanges in everyday life – far from being ‘only local’ – are produced out of the much wider geocultural relations ... and are also microarticulations of macronegotiations over national belonging.’ In continuing to frame diversity as something to be contained, assimilated or economically exploited, contemporary Australian multicultural discourse not only fails to address the negotiated domain of mundane multiculturalism, but also the multiple and transnational modes of belonging that are emerging (Carruthers, 2013; Castles, 2013; Collins, 2013b).

This thesis explores some of these problematics in the forthcoming chapters interrogating suburban public spaces in our case study locality of Campsie.

### **Concluding remarks**

There are many ways to analyse how migration transforms the city, and how urban inhabitants from migrant backgrounds participate in the production of the city. In the preceding discussion I have traced the theoretical thinking that has informed the formulation of this research project. The conceptual groundwork for the fieldwork stage of the project draws on relational theories of space and critical approaches to concepts of belonging, as well as critical theories of Australian multiculturalism. This theoretical lens reveals how the migrant is constructed as an ‘object of ejection, domestication or tolerance’ through the spaces of the city (Amin, 2012, p. 2). Yet, theories are essentially abstractions and generalisations from the empirical world. They signpost and inform how people see and analyse what occurs in everyday life and how it is interrelated with other social phenomena. This chapter presents, in a sense, the epistemological landscape in which I positioned my research questions. Taking these provocations into the field, in the following chapters I interrogate how everyday life fleshes out the theoretical bones framing the analysis of the diverse city and its terrains of belonging.

## Chapter 3 / Methodology

*Places... are best thought of not so much as enduring sites but as moments of encounter, not so much as 'presents' fixed in time and space, but as variable events; twists and fluxes of interrelation. (Amin and Thrift, 2002, p. 30)*

### Introduction

If the city and its multitude of urban locales are 'moments' or 'events' as Amin and Thrift (2002) contend, how can they be studied? How can places as 'fluxes of interrelation' between built form, social relations and power structures be analysed and documented in the course of research? If the boundaries of place are porous, how do inhabitants define their place-based belonging and render them 'local'? As developed in the previous chapter, the relational approach to the city argues that places are processes. They are evolving 'collections of stories so far' (Neal et al., 2013, p. 312) that are produced through and reflect social organisation and complex social and political histories. But, some kind of bounding processes is necessary to enable decisions about who and what to include in the study. Conceptually then, this approach problematises a fixed and stable definition of place, but it also raises several methodological issues. In this chapter I discuss how I worked through these questions.

Qualitative research is inevitably a mutual process of taking certain assumptions into the field and finding them challenged, complicated and turned upside-down by the 'realities' of everyday life. The research draws on a social constructivist, qualitative research tradition with a particular emphasis on ethnographic methods, in which the researcher 'builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting' (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). In doing so, it draws on some of the methodological approaches employed in the literature discussed above, which focus on the study of micro-level, urban experience while also acknowledging

macro-level structures. This chapter outlines the research methods utilised in the study, including participant observation in the area, semi-structured in-depth interviews with residents from migrant backgrounds living in, or near to, the area and semi-structured in-depth interviews with community representatives, real estate agents, local authorities and migrant support services. Supplementary methods included photography, participatory mapping, and document and policy analysis. Quantitative data was used in the research to provide background information that further illuminates processes of social and urban change in the case study suburb, as well as an overall picture of demographic patterns that shape migrant incorporation and diversity management in Sydney (and Australia). Through this mix of methods I attempted to get a sense of the socially embedded, locally contingent and subjective dimensions of migrant incorporation.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of prominent methodological dilemmas associated with the study of migrant incorporation as it relates to urban space. The next section outlines the justification for selecting both the research site and research subjects. The qualitative and quantitative research methods employed in the study are discussed in the third section. Finally, the methodological challenges arising in the course of the fieldwork are considered.

### **Researching migrant incorporation in the city: taking a place-based approach**

The review of theoretical frameworks in Chapter Two argued for the need to extend conventional models of migrant incorporation in cities to account for the dynamism of place and of migrant identity. I have already touched on the issue of methodological nationalism and the need to think about migrant belonging across multiple scales. In this study I focus on the scale<sup>11</sup> of the ‘local’ and the neighbourhood in relation to migrant

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<sup>11</sup> Critical theorists have increasingly highlighted the extent to which scale is profoundly political. Scale is not only part of an everyday geographical vernacular used to convey social distance or refer to different densities of interconnectedness (extending out from the body, the home, neighbourhood, city, to larger regional scales (Soja, 2005). It is also a *political concept* used to create and justify social distance and reinforce certain power relations. In this way, scale is a socio-political construction. This leads us to study what Neil Smith (2000) has termed ‘the production of scale’ which highlights how concepts of scale order social relations and allow the building of ‘geographical totalities’ such as the ‘nation-state’ and ‘the global’

belonging and place making. But this spatial frame is intimately connected to a range of scalar relations oriented around the city, region (state), nation and globe. While studying migration from a multi-scalar approach has been relatively well developed in the social sciences,<sup>12</sup> this study does not engage a multi-scalar methodology per se.<sup>13</sup> Rather, a multi-scalar perspective is drawn upon to contextualise the case study locality within wider migration flows and urban transformations. It is a means through which to understand Campsie and the everyday practices of its inhabitants as a co-constituted through global, national and local socio-spatialities.

The study primarily takes an urban ethnographic approach, as the best means of understanding lived diversity in the city. This approach – as outlined in the theoretical discussion previously – aims to examine the processes of inhabiting urban space. Lefebvre (2003 [1970]) argued that these urban dynamics are critical for understanding the politics and potentialities of urban space in an age of advanced capitalism. He contends that ‘habiting should no longer be approached as a residue, as a trace or result of so-called superior levels. It should, it can already, be considered as a source or foundation ... [this involves] a reverse decoding of the habitual situation, but taking habiting rather than the monumental ... as the point of departure’ (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 85).

However, it is challenging to translate theories of ‘being-in-the-city’ into a clear set of methods. Studies examining migrant belonging in the city tend to bring together methods from a range of disciplines, including migration studies, urban anthropology, urban

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(Marston, 2000). This has profound implications for the way we think about migration processes and migrant incorporation. Scale can be conceived of as an *analytical category* used to examine different ‘socio-spatial levels’ at which phenomena occur.

<sup>12</sup> For example, through global ethnography (Burawoy, 2000; 2009) and ‘cosmopolitan ethnography’ (Appadurai, 1996, p. 52) and discussions of the ‘awkwardness of scale’ in relation to ethnographic research in an era of globalisation (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2003). Multi-sited ethnography also deals with the issue of bringing ‘both international and domestic migration into the same framework’ (Fitzgerald, 2010). There is some debate as to whether multi-sited ethnography does actually refer to multiple sites as opposed to one ‘non-contiguous’ social field (Hage, 2005; Hannerz, 2003; Marcus, 1995). Also, multi-sited ethnography – while useful for studying forms of transnationalism – does not necessarily engage any more deeply with the ‘politics of scale’ than do other ‘single-sited’ ethnographies.

<sup>13</sup> I have discussed the utility of applying a multi-scalar approach in migration studies in more depth in Williamson (2015b).

sociology and human geography (Amin, 2002; Binnie, 2006; Blunt, 2007; Brah, 1996; Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996; Silvey & Lawson, 1999). Methods in these studies include macro and micro-level statistical analyses, geographical methodologies (such as mapping), ethnographic, visual and sociological methods (such as participant observation, time-space diaries, interviews and photography). The methodological angle of these studies varies, but includes and may combine a focus on: ethnic or religious groups (Doonan & Werbner, 1991; Glick Schiller, Caglar & Guldbrandsen, 2006), migration streams or categories (e.g. undocumented migrants) (Collins, 2010b; Varsanyi, 2006), networks (Conradson & Latham, 2005; Featherstone, Phillips & Waters, 2007), gender (Secor, 2004), neighbourhood (Baumann, 1996; Hall, 2012), urban transects (Elsheshtawy, 2013; Hall, 2013b; Williamson, 2015a), the city (Caglar, 2007; Caglar & Glick Schiller, 2011; Glick Schiller & Caglar, 2009), or events (Salzbrunn, 2011). As the present study takes a place-based approach, I explain the rationale behind this before moving on to detail research methods.

A place-based study was chosen because it addresses the key research questions. If, as Appadurai suggests, social and cultural reproduction and group identity have become 'unstuck' from locality (Appadurai, 1996, p. 49) how then, is locality produced? And if place is truly better conceived of as a 'global sense of place' (Massey, 1994, p. 7) what does this mean for the way migrants 'make place', particularly in relation to the everyday production of public space? Several studies have analysed migration and urban diversity through the lens of place. Glick Schiller and colleagues (2006) argue that there is a need to go beyond the ethnic lens in migration research and highlight the under-researched role of locality as a means of understanding migrant social networks. They posit that locality is one of many 'modes of incorporation' for migrants that 'connect migrants in social relationships built on factors other than the claims to common culture, descent, or history that stem from ethnic forms of categorisation or self-identification' (Glick Schiller, Caglar & Guldbrandsen, 2006, p. 33). In later work, they emphasise the importance of foregrounding place as a culmination of rescaling practices, not least by migrants who reshape places through transnational practices (2013). Similarly, Geilis (2009) argues that

a place lens is useful for augmenting traditional network-based approaches to transnational migration, to the extent that migrant places highlight how social networks are spatialised, but also how places become translocal sites in themselves.

I take my methodological cue from migration and urban studies looking at place-attachment and transnational identities in places of settlement (Brickell & Datta, 2011b; Ehrkamp, 2005; Geilis, 2009; Hall, 2012; Hall & Datta, 2010; Massey, 1994; Rishbeth & Powell, 2013; Wessendorft, 2010; Wise, 2010; Wise, 2011). Ehrkamp (2005, p. 349) for example, argues that ‘place provides the tools for considering the multiple scales that impinge on immigrants’ lives, while simultaneously enabling us to consider the ways in which immigrants use such ties in order to create places for themselves’. She used ethnographic methods and participant observation (as well as the researcher residing in the locality herself) to explore the creation of geographies of connectedness in a German town. Hall’s (2009; 2012) ethnography of Walworth Road (discussed in the previous chapter) used sustained participant observation in sites along the road. Interviews with street residents and business owners are combined with innovative mapping techniques, photography and archival research on the history of the area, to provide a rich glimpse into the everyday forms of citizenship and belonging that are inscribed in and along the street. Innovative techniques to map everyday mobilities and place making practices are also offered in Setha Low’s pioneering research on urban public plazas in South America. Her time-space mapping methods were a useful tool for ‘seeing’ the public spaces that I studied in a new light (these will be described in the section research methods below).

### **Selecting the research site**

Why Campsie? Several reasons identify it as a viable site for examining my research questions, which are fully explained in the next chapter. They included its highly diverse demography and histories of migration, the role diversity plays in Campsie’s place identity, and its marginal position in relation to Sydney’s social geographies. But from a more practical perspective, Campsie was also a convenient research site: it is the



administrative centre within the local government area, facilitating access to the local council and other key institutions and service providers. I was able to find accommodation in the area, and lived there for seven months of the twelve-month fieldwork period.

However, one of the major, ongoing methodological challenges was defining the 'boundaries' of the area of study. Is it more useful to begin the study with a pre-defined geographical area, and study the forms of migrant spatialities that exist within it? Or, take the starting point to be the assemblage of migrants' socio-spatial practices and relationships, and then map these connectivities? As my fieldwork unfolded, I went back and forth between both perspectives. This was a necessity to understand the interplay between migrants' social networks and everyday geographies and how they are mapped onto and continually produce local public space. As Collins (2012) argues, methodological flexibility and experimentation are important in studying everyday life in the city, that is, employing a research design that can 'embrace the particularity of research participants and site(s) of encounter' (Collins, 2012, p. 303). This involves, as Latham (2003, p. 2012) suggests, a degree of playfulness and 'curiosity about the ways that social life is ordered and carried through'.

The study began by focusing on the administrative boundaries of the suburb defined as Campsie-Clemtown Park in relation to the local government area. This was useful to the extent that it provided a definable geographic area to 'centre' the study and to source demographic statistics. It also made it possible, during the course of the research, to examine the extent to which social networks and practices flowed across, problematised or mapped onto these boundaries, and what local boundaries meant to local residents. It thus functioned as an initial 'sketch' of what is meant by 'local', which was then tested by examining the routine trajectories and mental maps that pattern migrants' daily lives in the suburb.

As I gradually got to know Campsie through formal fieldwork and through my own trajectories as a resident in the area, several public spaces became prominent. The three specific study sites – the local park, square (pedestrian mall) and public library – were situated in the main commercial district. They were chosen for several reasons. During conversations with interviewees about navigating Campsie, the three sites were repeatedly highlighted. The main street was also a key site of local place identity, but it was beyond the time and resource constraints of the research to undertake a full ethnography of the street that did justice to the multiple layers of place making occurring there, including the history of ethnic businesses along the street. The extent to which the three selected sites were woven into migrants' everyday geographies would suggest that they constituted important nodes orienting everyday life and local identity. This was corroborated through observation in these areas, which confirmed that these spaces had relatively high pedestrian traffic and were patterned by myriad modes of dwelling.

Secondly, the park, library and pedestrian mall were all clearly spaces in which diversity was negotiated on a daily basis. But their different functions, physical layout, and 'rhythms' indicated that they presented different articulations of how public space and everyday multiculturalism come together. Thirdly, the three sites offered different degrees of spatial management and control. The library was an indoor, closely monitored site, while the two open-air spaces of the park and pedestrian mall represented a different degree of 'publicness' and accessibility, to the extent that they were open and outdoor. In this sense, the three sites provided a spectrum of types of public space (Shepard & Smithsimon, 2011). Finally, international and national research have identified these types of prosaic public space – for example, squares, parks, streets and libraries that combine the monumental and mundane dimensions of citizenship – as important flashpoints for the everyday negotiation of difference in urban space (Fincher & Iveson, 2008; Hall, 2012; Hall & Datta, 2010; Iveson, 2007; Koch & Latham, 2012a; Koch & Latham, 2012b; Law, 2002; Low, 2000; Low, Tapli & Scheld, 2005; Mitchell, 1995). This literature also provides a useful point of comparison when analysing how the

findings from one small suburb in south-west Sydney might be scaled up to speak to trends in urban transformation in diverse cities.

## Research methods

### *Qualitative methods*

Semi-structured interviews were a central part of the ethnographic component of the research. A total of 41 interviews were conducted with three groups of participants (see Table 1). The first group of residents consisted of those who had been born overseas and currently resided in (or very near) Campsie (16 interviews). The second consisted of residents who had been born in Australia, and either identified as Anglo-Australian or as second generation migrants (three interviews). The third group was comprised of local government officials (including councilors) and community service providers (including those working migrant, ethnic, youth and housing support) and business owners/real estate agents (22 interviews). Interviews were conducted from February 2012 to February 2013. I draw on interview data throughout the thesis, mainly in the form of direct quotes from research participants, and use pseudonyms to protect the privacy and anonymity of participants.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 1: Participant groups**

Group 1: Residents born overseas		16
Group 2: Residents born in Australia		3
Group 3:	Community service providers	8
	Local and State government workers	8

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<sup>14</sup> Ethics approval for the research was sought from and awarded by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) on 21 February 2012 (Protocol no. 14557). The HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), NHMRC and Universities Australia Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and the CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice.

	Community representatives	4
	Business owners/real estate agents	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b>

In the initial stages of the research I sought to recruit ‘new migrants’ for the first group of participants. The official definition of ‘new arrivals’ or ‘recent arrivals’ according to the Australian government immigration service is those who have arrived in Australia in the last five years, which is the cut-off point for eligibility for migrant settlement services (these services are available to migrants who have arrived on the Family Reunion or Humanitarian migration streams).<sup>15</sup> However, this temporal criterion was gradually extended during the course of the research for three reasons: 1) it became clear that it would be difficult to attract sufficient numbers of participants who fitted into this category, 2) it would be useful to include a broader range of temporal experiences of migrant residents to understand different phases of the place making process, and migrants’ experiences under different phases of Australian migration policy, and 3) a number of service providers suggested that there was a need to understand migrants’ needs and place making practices across a range of settlement periods beyond the bureaucratically-defined five-year timeframe for accessing settlement services, which was considered to many in the community as unrealistic for achieving ‘successful integration’ into Australian society.

Participants were identified and contacted through community, ethnic organisations and personal contacts. While most organisations contacted were supportive of the project, some were understandably reluctant to facilitate the recruitment of clients because many were recently arrived, lower-income migrants (arriving through Family Reunion or Humanitarian streams) who were under significant financial, housing and other stress. In many cases, service providers felt that any additional demands on migrants’ and refugees’ time and language skills was not in their best interest. Thus, in the initial stages,

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<sup>15</sup> The Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Australian Bureau of Statistics define ‘new’ or ‘recent arrivals’ as those who have entered Australian within the last five years (Department of Immigration and Citizenship & Australian Survey Research, 2011).

recruiting participants was a challenge. Language barriers, lack of time and resources, and reluctance of residents to speak to someone relatively unknown to them were important factors<sup>16</sup>. Several ethnic and migrant support organisations were consulted and assisted in recruiting participants, by approaching clients and volunteers with information about the study. Participants could then elect to participate in the study if they were interested. Identifying potential interviewees through word of mouth and ‘gatekeeper’ contacts<sup>17</sup> – i.e. snowball sampling – enabled me to invite additional residents to participate in the study through existing contacts.

Interviews took place in a range of venues, including local cafes, the public library, participants’ homes and offices. On a few occasions it was possible for participants and I to incorporate a stroll through local public spaces during the interview. The immediacy of this emplaced experience helped participants to articulate experiences of local spaces that were less likely to be triggered in the interview situation or through mapping exercises. A shop façade, a group of people or a sign acted as mnemonic devices for jogging participants’ memories of experiences, interactions or impressions of place. This resonates with de Certeau’s (1984) notion of walking as a way of ‘reading’ places or city-scapes as texts<sup>18</sup>. This technique emerged out of the fieldwork process but its systematic use was hampered by the practicalities of the interview process – in which more often than not, participants preferred to conduct interviews in a specific locality, or for various reasons (child minding, issues with mobility, inclement weather) it was difficult to

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<sup>16</sup> All participants could speak at least a basic level of English. Information was provided in English, and by reviewing the form together at the start of interviews, I made sure that participants could understand the information and their rights as research participants. Information was also translated into Korean and Mandarin languages, for those who requested them.

<sup>17</sup> For example, people who volunteered in the local community and had wide social networks.

<sup>18</sup> Recently, attention has been focused on the use of quotidian mobilities as a part of the research process, particularly for engaging in novel ways with research participants and their experiences of space. This might include, for example, conducting research and interviews while walking (Urry, 2007) or travelling on public transport (Bissell, 2010). This approach entails a form of ‘co-present immersion’ – a ‘walking/travelling with’ (Urry, 2007) – that replaces the stasis traditionally associated with the ethnographic subject with embodied and reflexive movement. The dairy-photo and diary-interview method (Latham, 2004) can also provide additional information on the subjective experiences of dwelling in and documenting everyday life in the city. Interdisciplinary research that draws on new technologies also provides innovative means of capturing data on everyday life in the city, for example, new research methods that combine biometric data with people’s embodied experiences and emotions of being in the city (Nold, 2005).

conduct the interview in motion. However, triangulating this data with participants' descriptions of local spaces during interviews provided richer data, and offers a promising method for future study.

Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. Interviews were relatively open-ended and questions probed participants' migration trajectories, their initial impressions of Campsie and experiences of settling into the suburb, how it compared to their hometown, their perceptions of Campsie as a place, its local services and its public amenities. I also asked participants to describe their daily trajectories around the neighbourhood and their use of key public spaces. In addition, migrant residents were asked about their sense of local belonging and their feelings about identifying as Australian. Follow up interviews were conducted with four residents. Participants were invited to participate in another interview if there had been insufficient time to address all the questions in the interview schedule, if they had requested further discussion and those who I re-contacted after I had reviewed the interview notes and found that they elicited additional questions or points of clarification.

The length of time that participant residents born overseas had lived in Australia varied from four months to thirty-four years. I conducted sixteen semi-structured interviews with residents who were overseas-born. This included six male and ten female participants. Ages ranged from 25 to 80 years old. The countries of origin of resident participants from a migrant background are summarised in Table 2 (sourced from interview data).

**Table 2: Country of origin of resident participants born overseas**

Country of origin	Number of participants
Nepal	4
China	3
China (Hong Kong)	2

South Korea	2
Vietnam	2
New Zealand/Cook Islands	1
Venezuela	1
Afghanistan	1
Total	16

In terms of employment, eight of my participants were engaged in paid employment. Table 3 summarises their sectors of work, based on information gathered from participants during interviews. Of the remaining participants, three were retired, two were engaged in unpaid domestic work, three were studying and seeking employment. Of this latter group, four were also undertaking volunteer work in the community (including at the local hospital, library, ethnic community organisations and local churches).

**Table 3: Sector of employment of participants**

Employment sector	Number of participants
Hospitality	3
Retail	1
Health and aged care	2
Community worker	2
Total	8

It is worth noting that through the recruitment process I was more likely to attract participants who had the time to meet for interviews, thus overall, my sample had greater representation from residents who were retired, engaged in unpaid work and caring roles, studying or seeking employment. Clearly this segment of the population tend to be more localised in their daily trajectories around the suburb and to be more likely to have the time to access public amenities like public spaces. This observation is integrated into the analysis of the three public spaces later in the thesis, but an effort is also made throughout

the thesis to also include the voices of others (for example those working, with families and generally under greater time pressure) in the local population.

In terms of visa status, five participants had arrived on student visas, and several had gone on to apply for Permanent Residence. Two entered as part of the General Skilled Migration programme and one as part of the Temporary Business (Long Stay) visa programme (457 visa). Four arrived as part of the sponsored Family Migration stream – either as spouses or parents. Three entered Australia under the Humanitarian Programme, while one entered with a Special Category Visa (available to New Zealand residents), and one participant did not specify their visa status. Of the sixteen, nine confirmed that they were citizens of Australia, while six were either in the process of applying for, or intended to apply for permanent residence. One participant had entered as an asylum seeker and was awaiting a decision on his application for refugee status. Overall, the *intention* of the majority of people I spoke to was to remain in Australia long-term, and only three of the participants held a temporary status (a student and two 457 visa holders).<sup>19</sup>

In addition to interviews, I used participatory map drawing in five interviews with residents. The aim was to interrogate in more detail their everyday spatialities in the neighbourhood. This method was used when there was sufficient time, and when the respondent agreed to undertake the task. Participatory mapping is inspired by methods in human geography and the application of GIS technologies for social scientific ends. It also demonstrates an inversion of top-down conventions of cartography and mapping, and thus attempts to ‘democratise’ these spatial technologies.<sup>20</sup> On a blank piece of paper, respondents were asked to draw a map of the local places that were significant to them, in terms of their regular activities around the suburb. Participants interpreted the mapping task differently. The resulting visual representations varied significantly: some were

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<sup>19</sup> Several participants were unclear or seemed reluctant to respond to questions about visa status, so the following break down is approximate based on their responses.

<sup>20</sup> Mapping has been increasingly applied to studies ranging from community engagement (Perkins, 2007), grassroots urban design practices (Armstrong & Shumack, 2011), critical geographies of home (Brickell, 2012) or as an alternative way of illustrating the relationship between place and affect (Nold, 2005).



based on star-diagram maps centered on the home, while others attempted to approximate an aerial, cartographic map of the suburb, and to trace their movements in relation to key localities. This participatory method thus sought to visually articulate the mental maps (Tuan, 1975) that guided daily life, and by extension, to map residents' spaces of familiarity and sociality and their intersection with the neighbourhood's public spaces. While this method illuminated participants' everyday cognitive maps and perceptions of space, its application in the analysis stage of the research was limited by the fact that only a few respondents generated hand-drawn maps. Nonetheless, I use these maps in the analytical chapters where they provide points of insight.

I also conducted three interviews with residents who were not first generation migrants: one second generation Greek resident, one resident of Lebanese ancestry, and one resident who identified as being of Anglo-Australian heritage. One of these participants was employed, and two were retired. Their ages ranged from 45 – 80 years old and included two males and two females. While this set of interviews was not initially planned as a major part of the study, they emerged through informal connections and word of mouth, and provided a point of comparison to the place making narratives of residents born overseas. These participants were better positioned to comment on the changing political climate in Australia in relation to immigration over time, and the different treatment of migrants arriving in Campsie several decades ago. Moreover, this group of residents had each lived in Campsie for significant periods of time, and could describe the social, demographic and physical changes that had occurred in the suburb.

The third group of participants consisted of eight community service providers, eight local (across the areas of urban and social planning and service delivery) and state government workers (including one representative of the police), two local councillors and one state politician<sup>21</sup>, and two real estate agents (see Table 1 above). Recruiting

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<sup>21</sup> Both councillors were long-term Australian residents – one was a first generation migrant and the second interviewee identified as having ethnic ancestry. During the time of my research, council representation included two councillors with Greek ancestry, two councillors from Lebanese backgrounds and one councillor from a South Korea background.

participants in this group combined purposive sampling with snowball sampling. Interview questions examined the role of the individual and their organisation in the local area, migrant settlement patterns, the content, implementation and effectiveness of local urban and social policy (including multicultural policy) and changes in the community over time. This group of participants provided a useful overview of the institutional landscape in Campsie, the needs of local ethno-cultural and migrant groups, and insight into the question of how diversity is *spatially managed* in Campsie and its public spaces. Indeed, several of these participants played critical roles in directly and indirectly managing public spaces in the neighbourhood. For this reason, I refer to this group as 'spatial managers' in the analytical chapters of the thesis. Follow up interviews were conducted with four community workers/local government officials. Towards the end of the study I met with community and local government participants who had expressed an interest, to update them on research findings and discuss possible means for the study findings to be disseminated to their organisations.

In addition to interviews and mapping, participant observation was a key research method used in the study. As a fundamental tool of the ethnographic method, it is a means through which the researcher engages in both observational roles (as an 'outsider') while also participating in the life worlds of the site or community of study (as an 'insider'). As Cook and Crang (1995, p. 21) argue, it 'implies an immersion of the researcher's self into the everyday rhythms and routines of the community, a development of relationships with people who can show and tell the researcher what is 'going on' there and, through this, an experience of a whole range of relationships and emotional states that such a process must inevitably involve'. Participant observation was facilitated by my residence in the suburb for a portion of the fieldwork period, and enabled me to more fully immerse myself more fully in Campsie's rhythms. After moving from the suburb, I continued to visit 2-4 times a week on average, to conduct interviews and engage in participant observation.

During the fieldwork period I attended a number of local events in the area. These included: the local annual food festival, a Reconciliation Day march organised by the local council, Refugee Day and International Women's Day celebrations at the public library, a community safety consultation, a number of local events (such as author talks and cultural festival days) at the public library, cultural festivals celebrated in the neighbourhood such as the Moon Festival, citizenship ceremonies at the local community event centre, a local Rotary Club dinner, meetings of local migrant service providers and ethnic community groups, and the opening of a community hub in a neighbouring suburb. At one event I volunteered at the information desk for one of the local migrant support services.

In terms of observing everyday spatial practices in the selected research sites, for several weeks I participated in sessions of early morning tai chi in the local park, and then subsequently, in a more formalised tai chi group who practiced in the park in the weekends.<sup>22</sup> Regardless, it was invaluable for several reasons, not only for the personal enjoyment in learning a new martial art, but also for engaging in spontaneous, informal conversations that often touched on Campsie, local change and the patterns of sociality in the park that had not arisen in more formalised interview settings. Moreover, through this embodied activity I participated in the daily rhythms of the park, which gave me a more nuanced appreciation of the patterns of spatial use enacted there. Overall, participant observation through community events fleshed out individual perspectives on place garnered through interviews. It was a way of making contacts in the community and observing the interactions between residents, local community and local government groups. It was also a method to observe how multicultural discourse was activated through local events, to gauge levels of community participation, and more generally, to get an affective impression of the way people came together in local spaces.

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<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately my participation in this activity was, unfortunately, short-lived due to my relocation to another city.

I also engaged in less formal or event-focused participation in the daily life of the suburb. My own everyday trajectories through and forms of dwelling in the suburb – to consume, use public transport, spend time in and walk through the public spaces of the local town centre, socialise in local cafes and restaurants, and use local public transport – were opportunities to observe and participate in the multi-sensory life of the neighbourhood; to gather experiential knowledge of the more intangible aesthetics and rhythms of the locality. In a sense this was a form of mobile ethnography, where walking is perceived as an embodied ‘tactile gaze’ (Saeter, 2011) that allows for both objective and subjective engagement into the flows of the street (see Williamson, 2015a). Traversing a street, observing and documenting the patterns of movement and activity of other bodies in shared urban space is a methodology with a long history in the social sciences, as seen in the figure of the *flaneur*. It is akin to Lefebvre’s exaltation for urban researchers to be ‘captured by’ and ‘abandon oneself to’ city rhythms in order to study them; to be part of the production of urban dynamics (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 219).

An additional method was to undertake more systematic observations in the library, pedestrian mall and park, structured around an observation guide. The guide outlined a number of cues for observing the socio-spatiality of these places: for example, the density, flow and pace of pedestrians, the forms of social interaction occurring, the observable characteristics of inhabitants, the interaction between people and the materiality of the space (the road, cars, shops, street furniture, interior furniture, signage) etc. In doing so, I used an approximate schedule that meant I had conducted observations in each of these sites in the morning/midday and afternoon/evening across seven days. Informing this approach was Low’s (2000) work on methods of social mapping and structured ethnographic observation in her spatial and historical analysis of two public plazas in Costa Rica. Her approach involved observing activities, social interactions, and movements in these locales through behavioural and movement maps to recording activities and pathways in certain segments of the plazas over different temporal periods. She combined this with demographic information about plaza inhabitants (e.g. age or gender) and informal, unstructured interviews. While my approach was somewhat less

structured, Low's work provided an invaluable guide to *seeing* and tracing the complex web of activities in public space, as well as analysing it as a socially constructed landscape.

I also attempted to note variations according to other temporalities, including annual rhythms (for example, school holidays). I was thus able to record patterns of use across diurnal, weekly and to a certain degree, seasonal timeframes.<sup>23</sup> The majority of the observations in these spaces were recorded in the form of field notes, supplemented by my own hand-drawn maps and diagrams, and photographs. Photographs were a useful method to capture the materiality of each site. It was most effective for recording moments of activity, the spatial layout of public spaces and their material infrastructure, streetscapes and street media. They were also useful as a comparative tool, visually representing for example, the differing densities of use of spaces over the course of a day, or minor changes to the built environment over the course of the fieldwork period. As well as data in themselves, photographs provided an important *aide memoire* during the analysis of the data.<sup>24</sup> Selected images are also used to illustrate the discussion in the following chapters.

### *Secondary research methods*

Quantitative data provided a demographic snapshot of the area with which I could contextualise the perceptions of Campsie and its diversity expressed by local inhabitants and spatial managers. Local level data (focusing on Campsie and the local government area of Canterbury) illustrated changes in migration flows, the proportion of overseas-born in the local population, and other social and economic indices.<sup>25</sup> The data was

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<sup>23</sup> While informal encounters and discussions did occur during these sessions of observation (particularly through participation in activities such as tai chi) and were recorded in my field notes, the design and ethics compliance guiding the research did not allow for direct recruitment of residents in public spaces, which would arguably have provided a richer data set and greater opportunities for comparison between the interview data and spatial observations.

<sup>24</sup> In all cases in which I was photographing people, I requested their permission before doing so.

<sup>25</sup> The Australian census does not have a direct question on ethnicity. What is deemed to be 'ethnicity' in terms of Australian demography must be understood as an estimate based on country of birth, indigenous

gathered from the Australian Bureau of Statistics – in particular, the Basic Community Profile for Campsie from the 2011 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a), the Canterbury City Community Atlas<sup>26</sup> and the Canterbury City Community Profile.<sup>27</sup> This data enabled a wider comparison with the Greater Sydney Region, the Local Government Area (LGA) and other LGAs within Sydney. National-level statistics on migration flows were also reviewed, particularly to give context to the historical waves of migration demonstrated in the case study area.

This information was combined with a review of sources documenting the social history of Campsie and Canterbury. Local history books, online migration archives<sup>28</sup> and publications produced by the council give a sense of how the meaning of place and the identity of its residents have changed over time. Conducting this kind of (necessarily brief) study of place enabled me to historically situate contemporary urban transformations, and in the broader socio-historical geographies of Sydney. Little qualitative research was available on the social impacts of migration in the last three decades on the local areas, and representations of Campsie in local government and historical research tended to focus mainly on its colonial history. Insights on this topic were predominantly extracted from narratives of long-term residents, council staff, business owners and service providers. I also regularly read local newspapers for general information about local news, events and opinions (the *Bankstown-Canterbury Torch* and the *Cooks River Valley Times*).

Policy and planning documents from the local government authority were another source of information. I reviewed several documents relating to the management of public

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status, religious affiliation, ancestry, and language variables.

<sup>26</sup> The data in the Atlas is based on Census Collector Districts, which provide the most detailed level of analysis for spatial trends over time. This statistical information was available from the Local Government of Canterbury's website.

<sup>27</sup> The data contained in the Canterbury City Community Profile is based on 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011 Census of Population and Housing data, Australian Bureau of Statistics, and is also available from the Local Government of Canterbury's website.

<sup>28</sup> Online sources included the Dictionary of Sydney, the NSW Migration Heritage website and the 'Canterbury Commons' online encyclopaedia (<http://www.canterburycommons.net/>).

spaces where they were publically available, for example, the proposed plan to redevelop the pedestrian mall and library policy documents. I also reviewed integrated planning documents relating to the council's work in the wider local government area, to examine how discourses of multiculturalism were being discursively represented and concretely implemented through the council's planning processes.<sup>29</sup> In addition, I regularly reviewed the council and library's e-newsletters and announcements. This exercise provided insight into dominant narratives of Campsie employed by local 'spatial managers' as a community and as a place.

### *Analysis*

Interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed using NVivo software. Field notes from participant observation exercises were also coded and analysed in NVivo. Thematic files (with a series of sub-themes) were compiled based on the core topics of the research project, such as migration variables, perceptions of place, multiculturalism and belonging, everyday mobilities and the policy and planning context. Information from the thematic files were then integrated with secondary data, photographs and mapping exercises.

### **Methodological challenges and researching urban diversity**

Several methodological dilemmas arose during the study that were part and parcel of taking a place-based approach to questions of migration, urban diversity and belonging. They point to the pitfalls of analysing a complex social reality within the bounds of a single, time-constrained study. I examine them briefly here to clarify the parameters of

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<sup>29</sup> Documents consulted during the course of the research included: State of the City 2012; Community Strategic Plan 2014-2023; Imagine Canterbury: Community Strategic Plan; City of Canterbury Annual Report 2012-13; Connecting Canterbury City: Canterbury Road Master Plan; Aging Strategy 2011-2015; Canterbury Development Control Plan 2012; Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan (2012); Environmental Management Plan 2102-2015; Council Delivery Plan 2012-15; Anzac Mall Place Management Strategy (2011).

the study as they were negotiated in the process of the research, and to reflect on the challenges posed by studies of urban diversity in general.

### *Community and the question of ethnicity*

While the research excavates what local place and ‘community’ mean to the people living in Campsie, the study is not a community study per se. The notion of community has a long and fraught history in the social sciences, not least for its tendency for it to be ill defined, reified and appropriated for normative ends. Zygmunt Bauman (2000, p. 92) argues that concepts of community are ‘the last relic of the old-time utopias of the good society; it stands for whatever has been left of the dreams of a better life shared with better neighbours all following better rules of cohabitation’. Drawing on Bauman, Amin (2012, p. 14) contends, that community is a keyword in sedentarist thinking – in the world of liquid modernity it revives ‘yearning for social unity based on strong ties between known people and places (against the society of strangers that exists mainly in the public sphere).’ As well as evoking sedentarist logics, concepts of community are deployed for various progressive and conservative ends. Tonkiss argues that ‘the mutable politics of community’ can serve many purposes; as ‘an idiom for the gathering together or identity, for fantasies of collective personality or for the marking of difference’ (Tonkiss, 2003, pp. 298-299).

I was interested in how participants articulated belonging to various communities and how these identities crossed over with everyday local spaces. Thus, throughout the thesis it is approached not as an empirical category, but as a discursive frame that has multiple and multilayered meanings, and is at best, imprecisely mapped onto the public spaces of the suburb. Underlying this approach is a critical deconstruction of diverse communities as associated with a single identity (e.g. ethnic, religious or national), which problematises the dominant link between community, culture and ethnicity, with its associated issues of ethnic reductionism, particularly when focusing on migrants (Baumann, 1996; Glick Schiller, Caglar & Guldbrandsen, 2006). This has particular



resonance where migration and urban research has come together. Studies of migrant incorporation in the city have largely focused on ethnic institutions in gateway cities, and the prevalence of ‘ethnic segregation’ and ‘ethnic enclaves’ (Glick Schiller, Caglar & Guldbrandsen, 2006).

In the present study I foreground participants’ locality of residence and the fact that they have engaged in international migration. In focusing on place-based identities, I made an explicit decision to avoid focusing on one particular group of residents based on ethnicity or country of origin. In part, this approach foregrounds situated processes of identity-making, without conflating processes of migrant incorporation with exclusively ethnic or cultural identifiers. However, by choosing to focus on place-based registers of belonging across a wide range of ethnic and migrant groups, I was somewhat constrained in my ability to deeply engage and build rapport with specific communities and their complex migration histories, as would be possible using an ethnic lens.

#### *Problematizing the ‘migrant’ label*

As with any social labeling, identifying a particular group of residents as ‘migrants’ runs the risk of homogenising or misrepresenting peoples’ experiences, identity or mode of belonging, by choosing to highlight this one dimension of (transnational) mobility (Hage, 2005; Noble, 2009a; Phillips, 2011). In the study I consciously avoided the term ‘immigrants’ for the reason that it is loaded with certain negative connotations in contemporary political and public debate, and also because ‘migrants’ recognises a broader category of potential mobility. In identifying participants as ‘residents from migrant backgrounds’ there is a danger of assuming that the migration experience or trajectory is somehow definitive of their experiences of inhabiting suburban space. Hage (2005) has argued that not all people who move across borders consider such movement as highly significant in their personal biographies, nor necessarily identify as migrants. Moreover, these terms can also not be separated from a significant history of political and social discourse around categorising the migrant ‘Other’. He posits that it is more

important to understand how human mobility across borders is understood in relation to wider experiences of existential, physical and social mobility.

Indeed, I found that in the initial stages of research, using terminology such as ‘new migrant’ was highly ambiguous as an identifier. When I questioned participants’ about their sense of identification with ‘migrant’ and ‘new/recent migrant’ it became clear that it meant very different things to different people. The somewhat more neutral ‘residents from migrant backgrounds’ was employed for the remainder of the study. Speaking to participants about their migration histories as well as their mobilities around Australia or Sydney was one method for contextualising – or decentering – the transnational dimension of their mobilities, although this was clearly important too. As discussed in the theoretical discussion in Chapter Two, this involves considering multiple scales of mobility – transnational, everyday, inter-suburban etc – as being integral to understanding how urban place making practices unfold.

Identifying residents of migrant background through interviews was clearly more straightforward than when I was conducting observations of the use of public space. While I did receive some clues about the backgrounds and identities of people dwelling in public space through informal encounters and participant observation, it is important to also acknowledge the extent to which observation relies on visible signs and assumptions about who is and who is not classed as a ‘migrant’. A concession of the research is that observations and social mapping in public spaces had to, to some extent, rely on visible (or ‘hearable’)<sup>30</sup> difference as a marker for residents from migrant backgrounds or those who had recently arrived. This is clearly problematic as it conflates visible difference<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> That is, identifying people from migrant backgrounds based on audible language spoken (Wessendorf, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007, p. 61) define people of ‘visible difference’ as those who are ‘recognisable as different from the white, Western-clad, and English-speaking Australian majority in various ways: by their non-English speaking background and therefore ‘accent’ when they speak English; by skin colour and bodily and facial features; by dress and attire, often connotative of religious denomination; or by a combination of these ‘visibilities’, together with various degrees of cultural difference’. However, in Campsie, this was not necessarily a case of identifying people who were ‘non-white’ or appeared to be in a minority. Indeed, in Campsie, there is no obvious ethno-cultural ‘majority’. Indeed, several participants joked that the visible minority are people from Anglo-Australian backgrounds

with immigrant status. To a certain extent this was a pragmatic consideration given the scope of the research design. And, taking into account the demographic reality of Campsie – that is, the majority of the local population is overseas-born (61% at the 2011 Census) from non-English speaking backgrounds – this assumption served as an approximation that was then triangulated with other statistical information, secondary sources and interview data – for example, residents self-reporting on the use of public spaces.

*Researching the everyday: spatial knowledge and the mundane*

The sociological and anthropological challenge of making everyday spaces sites of the ethnographic gaze – making the familiar ‘exotic’ – is somewhat more pronounced when combining mundane social life with spatial knowledge. Asking participants about phenomena that seem highly ordinary – things that were a regular part of their daily encounters and local spatialities – was made more difficult by the fact that their familiarity rendered them ‘unseen’. As a number of scholars have argued, space in social research has been relegated, until recently, to a mere ‘background’ dimension of social life (Soja, 1996; Soja, 2010). This translates, I would argue, into the folk knowledge of everyday life. Becoming familiar with and *knowing* a place involves the formation of habitus, as Bourdieu (1990) has theorised, which involves possessing ‘maximal spatial knowledge: knowing almost unthinkingly where one is, where one needs to go for specific purposes, and how one gets there... [implying] spatial and practical control’ (Hage, 1997, p. 103). That places become passive settings that are ‘un-thought’ or ‘second nature’ for most residents is only brought into relief when an element of the physical environment changes; when the familiar text is disrupted.

More often, public spaces and the interstitial, banal spaces between, fade into the background of consciousness, which made talking to residents and people working in the area about their perceptions of Campsie and its public spaces a tricky task. It involved a

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who are more likely to stand out.

process of experimentation. Approaches included asking participants to explain their daily and weekly routines, and to identify places that they like or dislike and visited frequently. I also identified specific places in the neighbourhood – the main street, pedestrian mall, park, library, local shopping centre, train station – and asked them to speak about their use, perception and experience of such places. In doing so, I aimed to highlight other spaces in the neighbourhood that residents use or transverse as part of their daily routes, but are less ‘visible’ in terms of their own recollections and ‘mental maps’ (Tuan, 1975), and as destinations in themselves.<sup>32</sup> The issue of articulating everyday spatiality was present but less pronounced for those working in the area. The place perceptions of spatial managers, real estate agents and other workers were either given critical distance by the fact that they lived elsewhere, or by the fact that their business or job was to reflect on the spatial order of the suburb.

The fact that there are challenges to talking about ordinary, multicultural space highlights several key points when researching diverse cities. Firstly, it suggests that there is a continued perception that urban space is neutral, passive and non-remarkable. That is, it functions as a physical setting that has little bearing on belonging or daily practices of citizenship. Or, it suggests that even if space is noteworthy for any reason – for example, when space is transformed through new developments, events, protests or festivals – it is something that is outside of the control of ordinary residents. Either way, it points to a lack of public discourse about the role of residents in the everyday production of urban space – particularly newly arrived residents. There are many reactive public debates that contest how migrants have negatively transformed or invaded urban space, as noted in Chapter Two above, which tend to frame migrant as introducing incompatible ‘alien’ elements into the environment that are against the ‘character’ of a place (Bugg & Gurrán, 2011). Much of this is framed through ideas about belonging and entitlement to both local and national space (Dunn, 2006; Mitchell, 1997; Wise, 2011). The lack of ‘language’ and critical spatial knowledge is one potential factor contributing to limited

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<sup>32</sup> Through the lens of mobility studies, Bissell (2013) usefully refers to these geographies as produced through ‘pointless mobilities’ rather than the ‘pointed’ movements through neighbourhood spaces that are based on nodal imaginaries of place.

public debate about active role of inhabitants (whether from migrant backgrounds or not) in producing everyday spaces in the city.

### **Concluding remarks**

The present study interviews a small sample of participants, and thus cannot be used to generalise about the experience of all local residents in Campsie, nor city dwellers in Sydney. The research focuses on one neighbourhood in Sydney and thus does not aim to distil a representative model of the way in which suburban localities respond to and are transformed by processes of migration. However, it does aim to examine a number of key processes or dynamics associated with migrant incorporation and urban space, which may be used as illustrative evidence or counterevidence to explore socio-spatial dynamics in other multi-ethnic city localities.

The research methodology evolved over the course of the study as I responded to the complexities and multiplicities of life in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood, as well as the exigencies of doctoral fieldwork and thesis deadlines. As Collins (2012) argues, being able to respond to the field and engage in experimentation are important qualities of methodology in urban settings. My involvement in the daily life of the suburb was multiple and fluid over time. I was variously a researcher, observer, fellow tai chi-practitioner, volunteer, resident, consumer, pedestrian, library user, etc. There was always more to do: more people to speak to, sources to follow up, and more participant observation to undertake. Returning to Campsie in the year following fieldwork both reiterated how fast urban environments change but also how much remains the same. This work is then, necessarily a snapshot in time of a transitioning multicultural suburb and its inhabitants.

## Chapter 4 / Landscapes of belonging in an Australian multicultural city

*The city appears so solid until we look for its boundaries ... until we find the beach beneath the cobblestones, the secret narratives of the hidden spaces of private lives, and alternative public spheres of both association and dissent. When history is the voice of the powerful, geography is the prerogative of both the explorer and the mapmakers. We do not always wish to take such voices and such cartographies for granted. (Keith, 2005, p. 254)*

### Introduction

The story of Campsie and the migrant belongings that have shaped it over time can be thought of as sedimented strata. The weaving together over time of transnational movements within the fabric of what was once a working-class, manufacturing suburb has created a unique local landscape into which migrants continue to arrive and make place. The meanings and materialities of place that constitute Campsie are inextricably connected into the social, economic and political geographies of Sydney. This is Sydney in its many guises: as a global city, a city of beachside leisure, city of uneven development, city of migration and diversity. As Michael Keith argues above, the city is essentially layered – if we look hard enough it yields alternative geographies to those stamped upon its surfaces.

Achieving a more nuanced picture of Campsie involves unpacking the often reductionist views of multicultural suburbia in Sydney. This exercise is important because imaginaries of the suburb are at the very foundation of the spatial hierarchies that constitute Sydney and organise its inhabitants in different ways. Indeed, the majority of Australia's population lives in suburbs<sup>33</sup>. According to Harris and Larkham (1999, p. 8), suburbia is generally associated with several key dimensions: peripherality (in relation to a dominant

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<sup>33</sup> Harris and Larkham (1999) note that this is because Australians classify almost all residential areas as 'suburbs' compared to the US, for example.

urban centre), residential character, low densities, high levels of owner-occupation, a distinctive culture and separate community identities (often embodied in local governments). The suburbs have also been associated with a desire for privacy, a shift towards individualism, and a conservative moral imperative towards the nuclear/single-family dwelling,<sup>34</sup> with its traditional gender roles. But suburban expansion has quite distinct economic and political trajectories in different countries (Harris & Larkham, 1999). Australia's suburban development, as discussed above, is intimately connected to the built environment and the dream of home ownership, which is also 'bound up with a national self-image' (Dingle, 1999; Gleeson, 2006; Harris & Larkham, 1999, p. 12). Moreover, as discussed below, suburbanisation in Australia has historically gone hand in hand with immigration policies and programmes, particularly since the post-war era. While the post-war social compact upon which significant suburban development in Australia was based, along with a relative lack of power of local governments, has led to an assumption that suburban residents are politically 'docile', the idea that Australia has created 'suburbs of acquiescence' has been challenged (Dingle, 1999; Gleeson, 2006; Troy, 2000). These assumptions about suburban populations in turn raise questions about the forms of power and resistance – and their spatial articulations – in the contemporary multicultural suburb.

This chapter functions as a scene-setting exercise. It allows us to 'un-map' Campsie and Sydney and excavate the processes of 'bordering' that produce them as cultural landscapes. To unmap means to 'denaturalise geography by asking how spaces come to be but also to undermine world views that rest upon it' (Razack, 2002, p. 5). I begin by sketching Campsie as a multi-ethnic suburb, before locating it within the myriad processes that have produced Sydney as a global immigrant city, and shaped its capacity to welcome and integrate new arrivals. Studying Campsie necessarily involves engaging with the whole assemblage of the city. Hall has argued (2013b, p. 3) that this endeavour involves a 'trans-ethnography' of city spaces. This involves an analysis of the multiple

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<sup>34</sup> In this historical imaginary, flats and apartments were considered to house the 'wrong kind of family' (Troy, 2000, p. 723).

‘scalings’ of a place, which Hall conceives of as three nested realms: the symbolic city (the global city), the collective city (the case study locality) and the intimate city (the spaces of encounter). While these scalings are inextricably connected, this chapter focuses on sketching the global and collective city, which sets us up for a more comprehensive consideration of the intimate realms of encounter in the forthcoming, empirically-focused chapters.

I start with an overview of Campsie’s demographic diversity, its function as a ‘gateway suburb’ and the general characteristics of its urban geography and built environment. I then explore the history of migration in Campsie and its impact on the economic and urban transformations shaping this locality over time. The uneasy position Campsie occupies in Sydney’s contemporary social geographies is then examined. In the following section, I focus on Campsie’s place identity in the context of Sydney’s urban symbolic economy, to better understand the connection between multicultural diversity, cultural capital and urban transformation. In the final section, I examine local multicultural policies that influence how place and people are governed and represented.

### **Campsie: the social and geographic contours of a multi-ethnic suburb**

Campsie is a highly diverse suburb that functions as the commercial and administrative centre for the local government area of the City of Canterbury. It is an established residential area located approximately seventeen kilometers from Sydney city centre, but is considered to be relatively affordable compared to the inner suburbs. It has a popular town centre oriented around Beamish Street, a mix of low-rise retail premises housing a range of businesses including those aimed at a particular ethnic demographic, that forms the social and commercial heart of the suburb. These include older Greek, Italian, Anglo-Australian and Lebanese businesses interposed with more recently established Indian, Bangladeshi, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Korean and Chinese shops (see Figure 1). Businesses range from hair and beauty salons, butchers, bakeries, fabric shops, medical and holistic health centres, discount pharmacies, Asian DVD shops, shoe and clothing



shops, banks, to several older style pubs. As such, a range of migrant cultures are visible – some more prominent than others – and they coalesce in a layered, multi-sensory and mildly disordered streetscape of shop signs, ethnic products, multi-lingual street and print media, diverse spoken languages, modes of interaction, exotic smells and migrant bodies.<sup>35</sup>



Figure 1: Beamish Street’s kaleidoscopic, ageing streetscape (Photo: the Author)

A number of community and ethnic welfare organisations are located in the suburb, particularly those working with migrants and refugees. There are also several government agencies (such as Centerlink, Australia’s social welfare agency). The suburb boasts four childcare centres and three primary schools. Local amenities within the area more generally include an RSL club (Returned Serviceman’s League), an ice-skating rink, recreational facility and pool, Canterbury Hospital, and nine churches of different denominations.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> See Williamson (2015) for a more detailed description of the urban rhythms of Beamish Street.

<sup>36</sup> Denominations include Catholic, Pentecostal, Anglican, Baptist and Jehovah’s Witness. Many cater to the non-English speaking population. The Anglican Church for example, declares (on a large wall mural) that it is ‘the church of all nations’. The closest mosque is located in the neighbouring suburb of Lakemba.



Figure 2: 'Welcome to Campsie' sign on the main street (Source: Author)

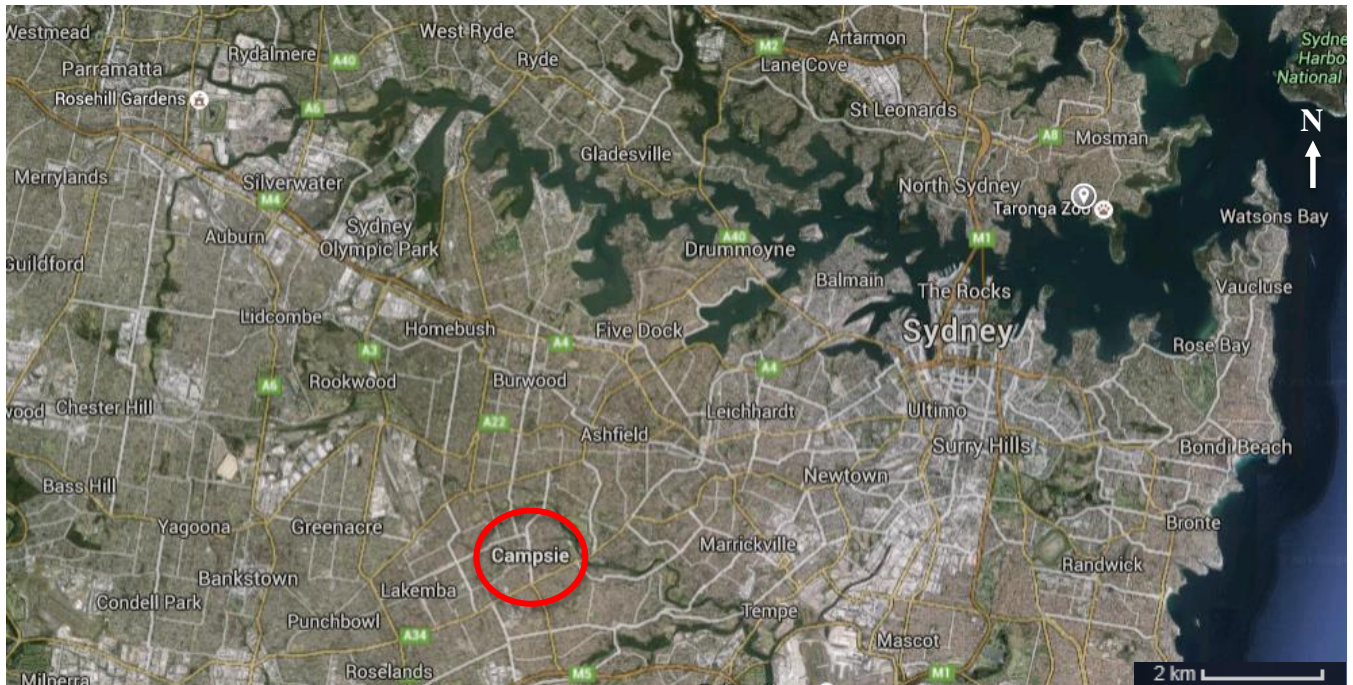


Figure 3: Campsie's location in Sydney (Source: Google Maps)

There is a Korean Zen Buddhist temple and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia in the neighbouring suburbs of Belfield and Belmore.



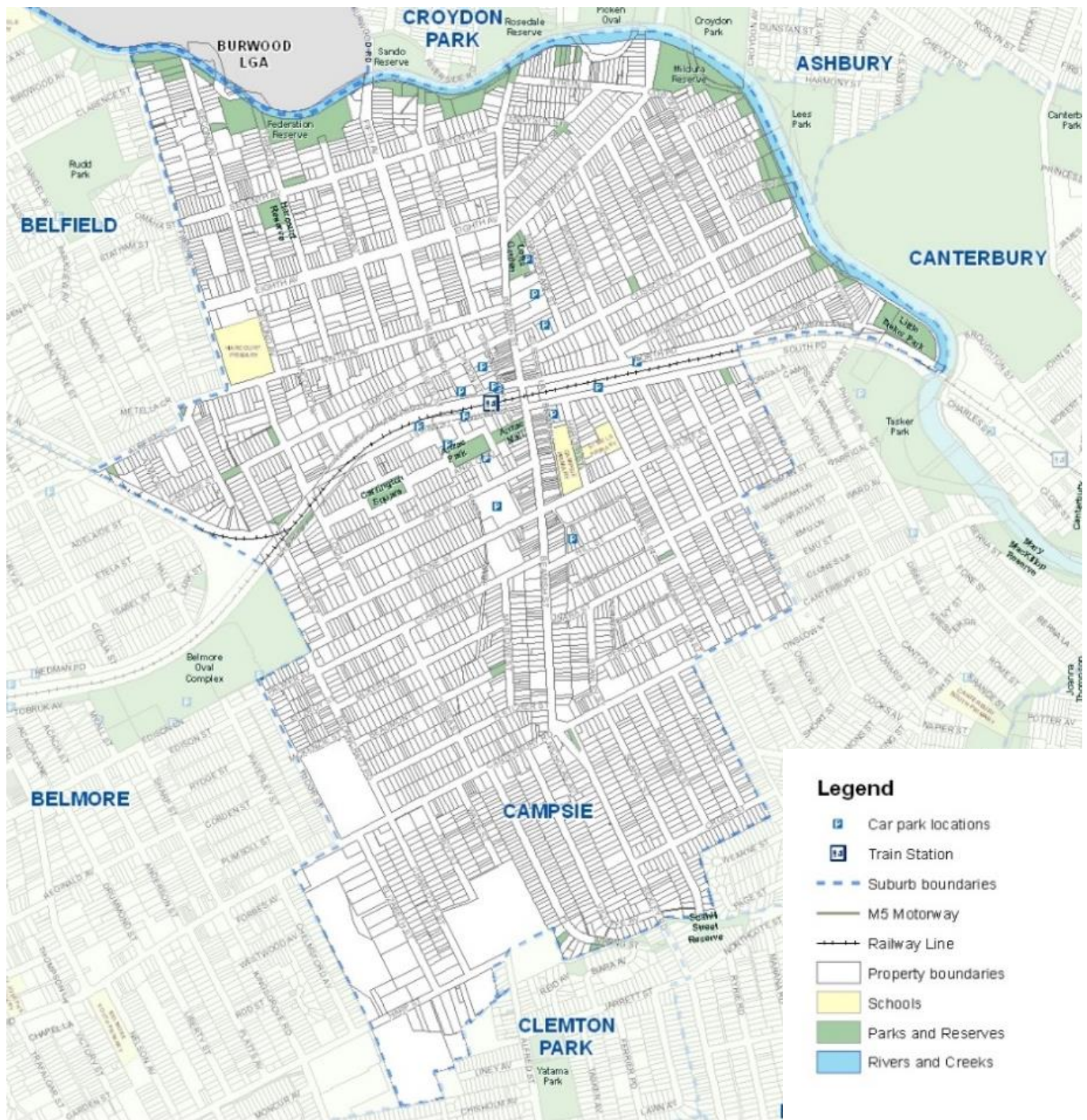
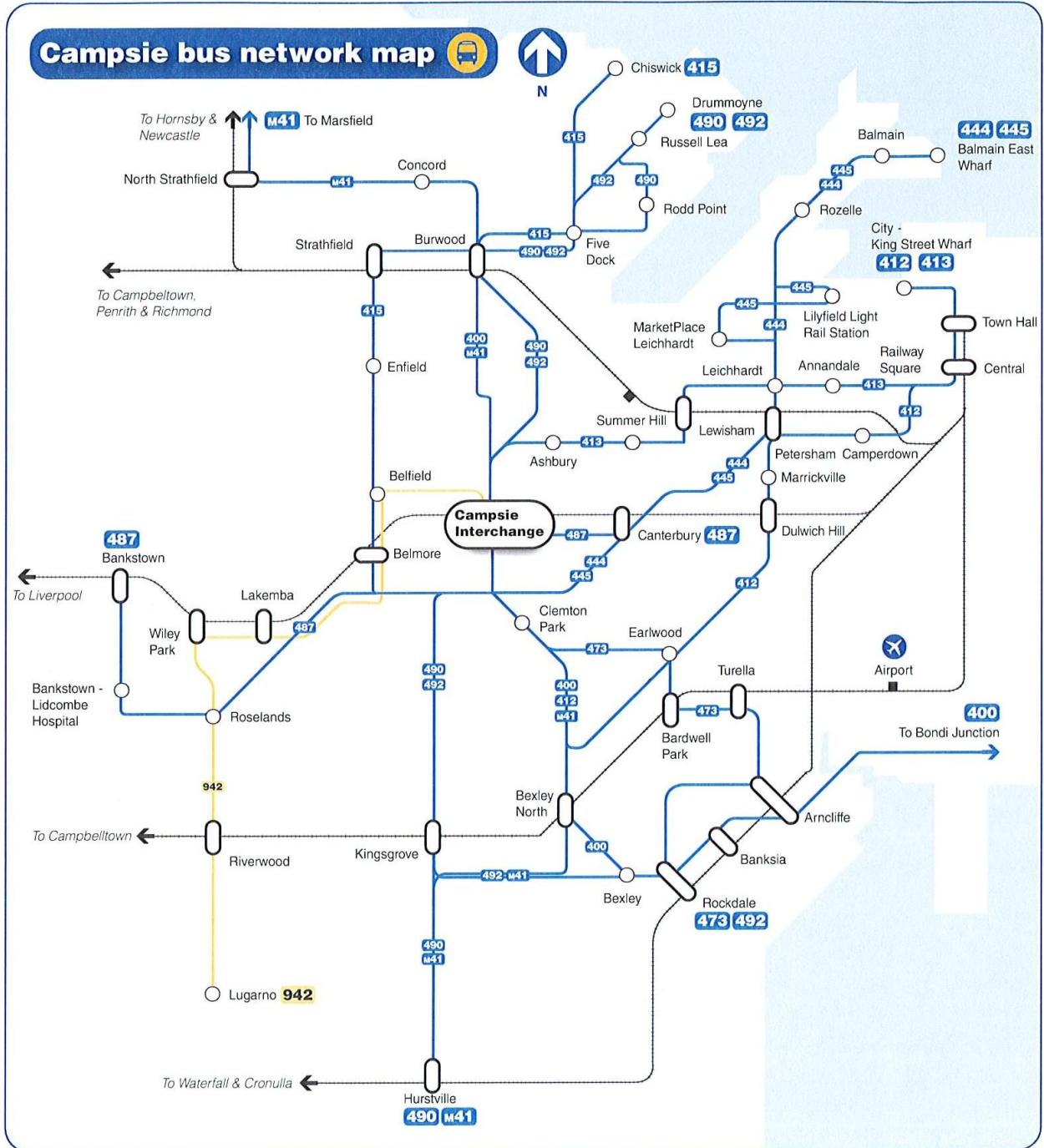


Figure 4: Map of Campsie (Source: City of Canterbury)



**Legend**

- Sydney Buses routes
- Punchbowl Bus Co routes
- Diagrammatic Map - Not to Scale
- Rail line
- Railway station
- Bus route/suburb
- ◻ Bus/Rail interchange

Figure 5: Main (bus) transport routes through Campsie (Source: City of Canterbury)



The suburb is part of the Canterbury-Bankstown region, which sits between the largely gentrified Inner West and on the edge of the South West and West Sydney regions of Sydney (see Figure 3). These areas are a mixture of gentrified and ageing middle-ring suburbs. Sometimes the neighbourhood is defined as an ‘inner suburb’, and sometimes it is defined as part of Sydney’s South West region. A curve in the Cooks River provides a physical and symbolic boundary to the north and east of the suburb (see Figure 4). The boundaries to the west are more porous; participants living in what is administratively defined as Croydon and Belmore tended to identify themselves as living in Campsie, or on its edge.<sup>37</sup> The train line directly connects Campsie to Sydney’s central business district and inner west suburbs to the east, and to the larger suburban centres of Bankstown and Liverpool to the west. Bus routes facilitate movement to and from southern suburbs (to the slightly larger commercial centres of Hurstville, Rockdale and the industrial area around the airport) and to suburbs further north (the shopping centres of Burwood and Strathfield and the business hubs of Ryde and Macquarie Park) (see Figure 5). Symbolically, Campsie is represented in myriad ways depending on the observer’s position and mobility in Sydney’s geography. For some, it represents an (sub)urban margin or a marginal area ‘in between’ bigger centres; for others, it is a highly connected Inner West suburb within a stone’s throw of Sydney’s CBD.

### *Demographic snapshot*

Sydney is among the most highly diverse cities in the world and has the largest concentration of immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds of all Australian

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<sup>37</sup> For administrative and statistical purposes, the suburb is designated as Campsie-Clemon Park Statistical Area Level 1. For the 2011 Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) implemented a new geographic standard, which uses the base unit of the SA1 (Statistical Area Level 1), rather than the previous Census Collector District. The division of local government areas into small areas is based on aggregating Statistical Area Level 1 units. The SA1s do not fit exactly into a suburb or locality boundary. Local government statistics published on Canterbury Council website are drawn from independent statistics company Profile ID, which creates an estimate of the suburb based on SA1s, but estimate the number of additional dwellings to be included to match the suburb/locality boundary. Thus the ABS data and Profile ID data differ slightly.

cities (Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009, p. xvii; Noble, 2009b).<sup>38</sup> Sydney's role as an established immigrant gateway has been expanded through its development as a 'global city', business capital and locus of employment associated with the new service-driven economy. Approximately forty per cent of Sydney's residents were born overseas.<sup>39</sup> Adding the number of people with one or more parents born overseas to the foreign born population, increases Sydney's migrant population migration to 61.3 per cent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013b). Like many multi-ethnic suburbs in Sydney, Campsie offers a microcosm of that cultural diversity, albeit with its own particular local flavour and historical configuration.

The population of the suburb is highly ethno-culturally diverse. Of just over 21,000 people, 64 per cent were born overseas and 89 per cent of people living in Campsie have parents who were born overseas<sup>40</sup> (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a). These figures rank Campsie behind the nearby suburbs of Lakemba and Wiley Park, but are much higher than the average percentage of overseas born for the Greater Sydney region (20.1 per cent). Indeed, they are high for the local government area; Figure 6 clearly shows the concentration of people born overseas in Campsie and the surrounding suburbs of the Canterbury LGA (the darkly shaded areas represent higher concentrations of people born overseas).

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<sup>38</sup> It has been labelled a 'hyperdiverse' city and is compared to cities like Toronto and Singapore for levels of foreign-born and overall measures of diversity. The index of 'hyperdiversity' is based on the criteria that it is considered a global city, with a population over one million, with at least 9.5% foreign born and no one country accounts for 25% of the immigration stock (Price & Benton-Short, 2007).

<sup>39</sup> The most common countries of birth in Sydney were England (3.5%), China (excluding SARs and Taiwan) (3.4%), India (2.0%), New Zealand (1.9%) and Vietnam (1.6%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013b).

<sup>40</sup> Country of birth was not stated by 7% of the respondents.

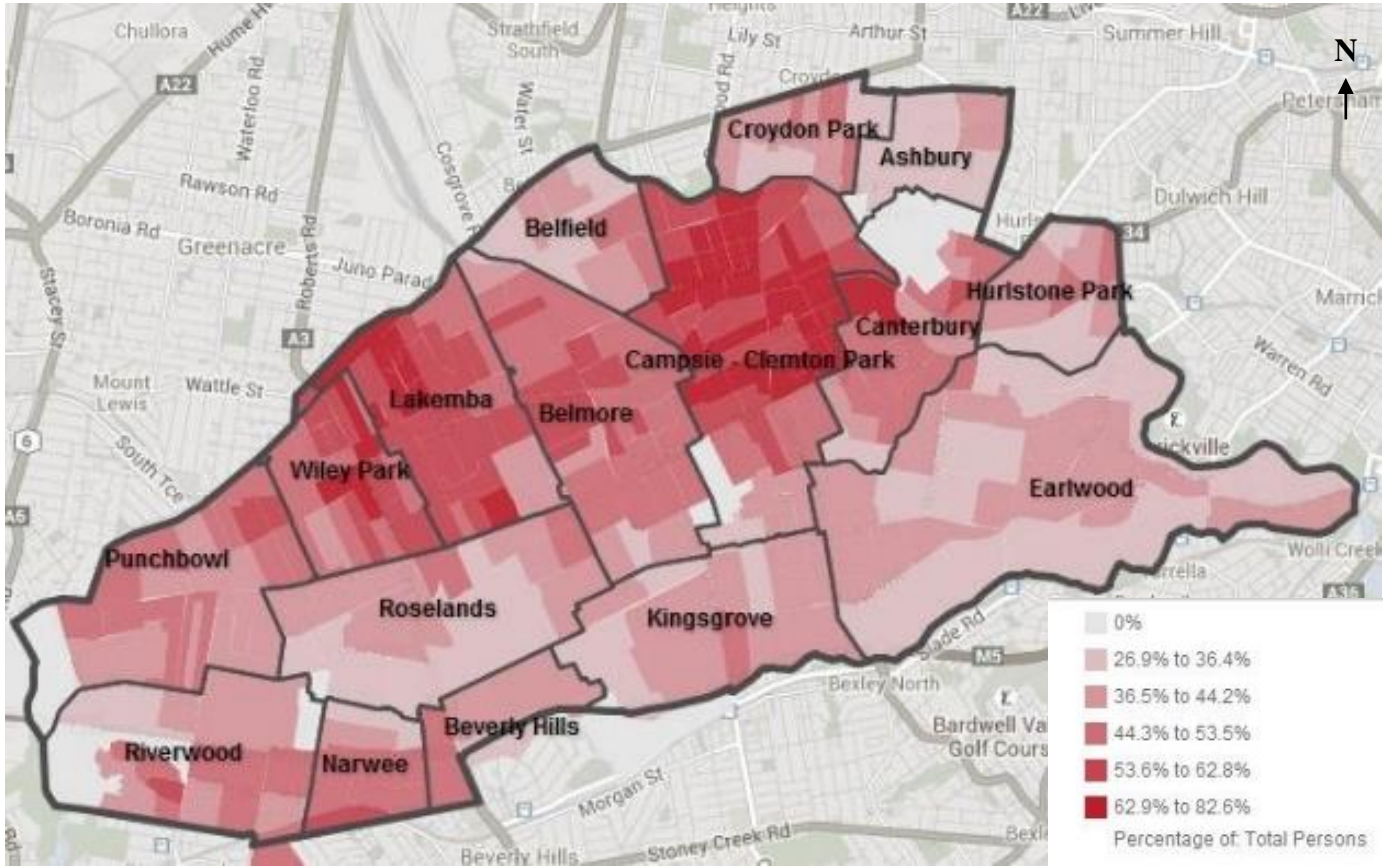


Figure 6: Spatial distribution of people born overseas-born in the City of Canterbury, 2011 (Source: Profile ID)<sup>41</sup>

The most common birth countries were China (excludes SARs and Taiwan), South Korea, India, Vietnam and Lebanon (see Figure 7) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a). Only 17 per cent of residents spoke English at home, with 64 per cent speaking a language other than English at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a). The ethnic mix of the suburb has changed significantly over time, as Table 4 shows. The most common ancestries in Campsie are Chinese (30.4%), Lebanese (7.5%), Korean (5.6%), English (5.5%) and Australian (5.5%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a). The City of Canterbury local government area has received over 1500 refugees in the last 10 years (members of the Uyghur community from China, refugees from Sierra Leone, Iraq, the

<sup>41</sup> Figure sourced from Profile ID & Canterbury City Council (2014) *Social Atlas: City of Canterbury*, viewed 4 March 2014, <http://atlas.id.com.au/canterbury/>

Burmese-Rohingya community, Sudan, Egypt, Indonesia, Palestine, Bangladesh, Guinea and Ethiopia). While some have settled in Campsie, local service providers indicated that the majority settles in suburbs to the west where housing is more affordable.

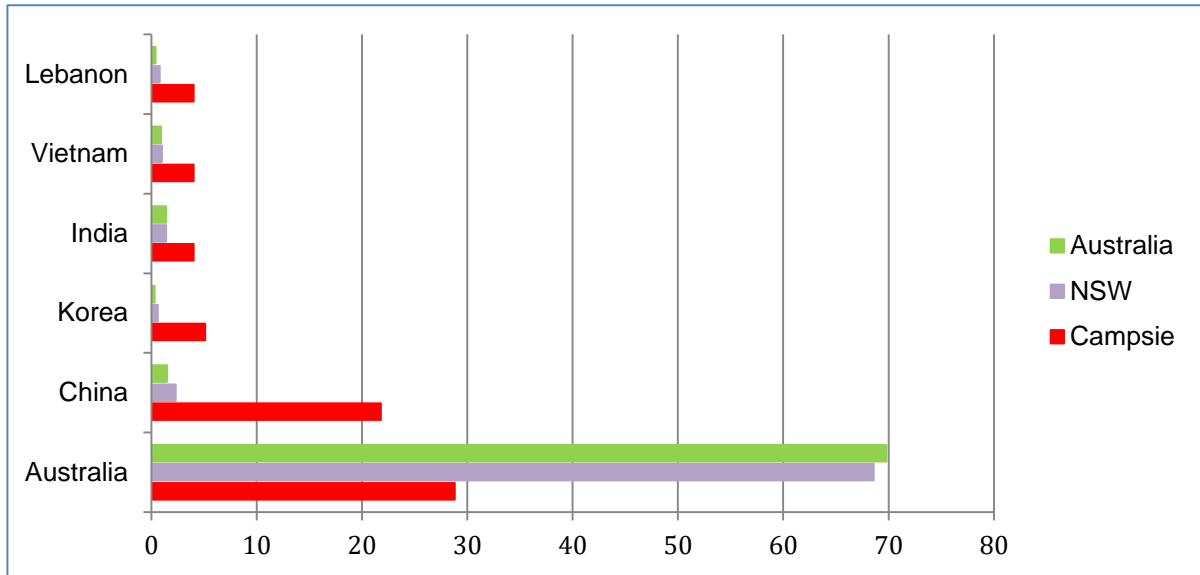


Figure 7: Campsie's population by country of birth (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a)



**Table 4: Campsie's population by country of birth (%), change over time<sup>42</sup>**

Country of Birth	2011	2006	2001	1996	1991
China <sup>43</sup>	21.4	19.1	16.4	13.3	6.9
South Korea	5.0	6.0	7.7	-	-
Lebanon	4.0	5.0	5.8	7.8	10.2
India	3.9	2.9	1.8	1.9	-
Vietnam	4.0	4.0	4.5	5.0	4.8
Philippines	2.6	2.2	2.3	2.9	2.9
Indonesia	1.9	1.3	1.3	0.9	-
Greece	1.5	1.9	2.4	2.7	3.8
Hong Kong	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	-

In terms of religious affiliation, the majority of the population (42 per cent) is of Christian denomination (significant denominations are, in order, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Presbyterian and Uniting Church). Almost a quarter of the population identified as having no religion (23 per cent) or did not state their religion (9 per cent), while the remainder of the population identified as Buddhist (12 per cent), Hindu (7 per cent) and Muslim (5 per cent) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a). Campsie represents something of an anomaly in the wider context of Canterbury-Bankstown area's religious demographics, where a significant proportion of the city's Muslim population resides (in the nearby suburb of Lakemba 52 per cent of the population identify as Muslim).

According to local government figures based on the 2011 Census, resident occupations reflect a somewhat bifurcated range, including professionals (16 per cent) (the largest growth as an occupation type), technicians and trade workers (15.2 per cent) and

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<sup>42</sup> Figures were unavailable for some years. Figures were sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics, Basic Community Profile Catalogue No. 2020.0 (1996-2011).

<sup>43</sup> Excludes SARs and Taiwan.

labourers (14.1 per cent). These occupations overall represented 45 per cent of the population, and represent a significant change in occupation sectors given the manufacturing history of the area. Indeed, manufacturing saw the largest decline in the period between 2006 and 2011, while growth areas were retail trade, accommodation and food services and health care and social assistance.

In terms of socio-economic diversity, the suburb is characterised by relatively high deprivation and precarity, measured by household variables such as low income and educational attainment, high unemployment, poor English language skills, and unskilled jobs. It is an area of relatively low household incomes (the medium household weekly income is \$945, compared to the Australian average of \$1,234). There is a relatively high unemployment of 9.7 per cent compared to the Australian average of 5.6 per cent. SEIFA Index figures rank Campsie-Clemtun Park the fifth most socio-economically disadvantaged out of the sixteen small areas in the City of Canterbury LGA, and the City of Canterbury itself is one of the most disadvantaged local government areas in New South Wales (132<sup>nd</sup> out of 153 local government areas) (Profile ID & Canterbury City Council, 2012).<sup>44</sup>

### *Housing, gentrification and the built environment*

Affordable housing is a major draw card attracting new arrivals to the area. Campsie has a mix of low-density and medium-density housing (mainly two- to three-storey units). Sixty per cent of its housing stock is made up of relatively affordable redbrick walk-up, multi-unit blocks constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. The remainder is low-density housing that typifies the traditional suburban sprawl that has characterised Sydney's post-war housing boom and rapid suburbanisation, with single-family detached homes on large blocks. The suburb is also characterised by relatively high infill and dual occupancy housing, which has transformed many of the larger blocks, and is a key feature of urban

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<sup>44</sup> The SEIFA index refers to Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage.

consolidation strategies in suburban Australia (Dingle, 1999). It is one of the most densely populated suburbs in the City of Canterbury (Profile ID & Canterbury City Council, 2014).

Despite the relative homogeneity of the built environment in Australia's suburbs, there are many ways that migrants have patterned residential space, including culturally nuanced forms of home construction that have added a unique, if at times controversial, twist to the Australian dream (Allon, 2006; Beynon, 2007; Levin & Fincher, 2010; Morgan, Rocha & Poynting, 2005; Randolph & Freestone, 2012). What is noticeable in Campsie is the trend of up-sizing homes by knocking down old, post-war prefabricated housing stock and rebuilding houses that maximise the land size (known as 'knockdown rebuilds' or more derogatively, 'McMansions'). This type of housing has been associated with migrant groups and their presumed desire for conspicuous displays of wealth.<sup>45</sup> In Campsie, such 'McMansions' are visible in parts of the suburb, and combined with the mix of in-fill housing, town-house development and medium density units, this has led to a heterogeneous residential streetscape that one local resident described as 'a bit of a dog's breakfast.'

High-density housing has left a long-lasting imprint upon the built environment in Campsie. In the late 1960s, increasing disillusionment with low-density housing as an appropriate and desirable land use introduced new policies that encouraged residents to live in smaller dwellings on smaller blocks of land. This change in urban policy had an impact on Campsie and Canterbury more widely: it was one of the few areas in Sydney that welcomed high density (the neighbouring local government area of Bankstown opposed it) (Troy, 2000, p. 724). Canterbury City has acceded to state wide planning priorities encouraging housing density, which has targeted suburban areas positioned

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<sup>45</sup> McMansions or 'monster homes' are not necessarily always an ethnicised architectural phenomenon. Some see it as a characteristic of the new, aspirational, white working class of 'cashed-up bogans' (Pini, McDonald & Mayes, 2012) and symbolic of the values of the conspicuous consumption shaping new housing developments on the periphery of the city (Allon, 2006).

along the main arterial train lines with direct access to the city.<sup>46</sup> Campsie is at the beginning of the development of high-density housing (in the form of high rise apartments) and at the time of writing, several developments were in the process of construction, particularly in key development areas close to the railway station and Cook's River (Canterbury City Council, 2010).

Residential patterns exhibit fairly high social mix: many of my participants (in both detached dwellings and units) commented on the ethno-cultural diversity of their neighbours, often in a positive sense. Nigel, a local Anglo-Australian resident, cites his friendly relationships with his neighbours – who are British, Tongan, Iranian, Lebanese and 'old school Aussie' – as one of the reasons why Campsie feels so attractively multicultural to him. Similarly, Henry notes, 'I have a friend who is Lebanese in our neighbourhood. And there are Bangladeshi and Filipino next door, in the same block. And an Australian [family] I think. So we are friends' (Henry, July 2012). There were examples of ethnic clustering in housing blocks, with some residents and community workers citing instances of discrimination by real estate agents of certain ethno-cultural backgrounds who were seen to favour particular ethnic groups over others (Norma, June 2012) (see also the example of Jass below). But, as Gow (2005) and Wise (2009) have shown, the unplanned residential proximity to difference in the majority of the suburb is an important source of everyday multiculturalism and conviviality.

While there is some affordable rental property in Campsie (the average cost of a two-bedroom unit is \$380 per week), the property prices have increased substantially. In 2014, the average price of a detached home is \$984,000 while the cost of a two-bedroom unit averages \$480,000<sup>47</sup>. According to local real estate agents, increases in property prices are due in part to aspiring homeowners who have been priced-out of the housing markets of the Eastern and Inner West suburbs. Several real estate agents also attributed

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<sup>46</sup> There has been an increase in the powers of the states to implement higher density policies over local governments, as well as reduced mechanisms for public consultation and avenues of protest against such development (Hasham, 2014; Troy, 2000).

<sup>47</sup> Figures current at 1 December 2014 (Sourced from: <http://www.realestate.com.au/neighbourhoods/campsie-2194-nsw>).

rising house prices to overseas or newly arrived investors seeking a foothold in Sydney's housing market in a site with culturally familiar services. Serena, a local real estate agent, commented:

Maybe five or ten years ago I had Chinese migrant families purchasing homes and doing a cash purchase, they were literally bringing in bags of notes. [...] It's partly because they are good savers, and partly because often what they do is that a number of families would often chip in together to buy a home. (Serena, April 2012)

For real estate agents and homeowners, the increase in property value was welcomed and served as an indication that the suburb was becoming more middle-class and gentrified. However, according to local migrant support workers, rising property prices have already had a displacement effect on residents, particularly recently arrived low-income migrants with large families entering on Family and Humanitarian programmes. Several residents I spoke to also attested to the rising rental property prices and the levels of housing stress experienced locally. Many of those living on lower incomes sought to stay in the area for reasons of amenity, social networks and a familiar local landscape, but found the rental prices were pushing them into surrounding, less expensive neighbourhoods 'out west', or smaller homes.<sup>48</sup>

Several strategies for coping with housing stress were mentioned by my participants, including shared accommodation. Jass, a Nepalese resident and chef in her late-twenties who had been in Sydney for five years, formed an informal business relationship with a real estate agent to have priority over vacant rental properties in a block of flats, which she then filled with family and friends arriving from Kathmandu and other parts of Sydney. Other participants noted that they had relied heavily on contacts through their local church to secure housing. Local support workers also mentioned that overcrowding

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<sup>48</sup> My own experience of living in a shared house on the eastern margins of Campsie supports this view of a rapidly changing private rental market. I chose to move out of the suburb in 2012 when the rental price of our shared accommodation was raised by \$100 per week.

and informal housing was a significant issue in the area, which is supported by recent research in the area (Canterbury Child and Family Interagency, 2009; Emsley, 2009).

### *Campsie as a gateway suburb*

Campsie can be understood as a ‘gateway suburb’ or ‘arrival node’ in Sydney to the extent that it attracts a high number of new migrants. According to the 2011 census, 28 per cent of the overseas born population arrived in the area after 2006 (compared to 20 per cent in Greater Sydney), thus reflecting a population that includes a relatively high number of new migrants (Profile ID & Canterbury City Council, 2012). According to my interviewees, the suburb is attractive to new migrants for many reasons, as Rose explains:

I really like [Campsie]. It’s close to the city, maybe thirty-five minutes by train, and still houses [are a] good price, compared to south, east or north area, still [the rents are] payable. Most of all I like the people – all multicultural people meets each other – I like it. (Rose, February 2013)

Location, affordable housing, good transport links, the presence of ethnic community groups and ethnic businesses were cited as important factors. In addition, a well-developed infrastructure of non-profit and government agencies providing settlement-related services, many places of religious worship (mainly Christian) and a multicultural ethos all features in participants descriptions of their reasons for liking or moving to the suburb. This institutional landscape provides a rich web of potential social support and networks for recently arrived residents.

Residential mobility also indicates the gateway function of the suburb. The most recent census figures (based on ‘place of usual residence five years ago by sex’ figures) indicate that 41 per cent of residents had moved to the suburb in the last five years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a). Of these, 40 per cent were living overseas five years ago, 36 per cent had moved from another local government area in another state of Australia, and 22 per cent moved from within the Canterbury (South) – Campsie area (2 per cent did not state their previous place of usual residence) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a).

Patterns of out-migration were characterised by residents moving further west or south to areas such as Bankstown, Hurstville and Liverpool. In-migration is constituted in part by people moving from gentrifying neighbourhoods such as Marrickville and Ashfield, and other areas that function as gateways, such as the City of Sydney and Randwick (that is, locales that have educational institutions and high numbers of international students) (Profile ID & Canterbury City Council, 2012). Anecdotal evidence from participants in my study suggests that the majority of out-migrants tend to be young, second generation migrants or upwardly mobile migrants seeking improved standard of living and access to affordable home-ownership. This observation would fit with a more generalised pattern of generational outward movement that has given Australian suburbs ‘a distinctive demographic life cycle’ (Dingle, 1999, p. 189). This picture of residential mobility unsettles generalisations about residents from non-English speaking backgrounds and working class neighbourhoods as being ‘locked into these zones’ (Healy & Birrell, 2003, p. 81), although forms of immobility related to poverty clearly also exist.

Recent research into international migration and global Sydney affirms Canterbury’s role as an area of arrival nodes (Hu, 2012; Hu, 2013a; Hu, 2013c; Hu, 2013d). Canterbury is on the periphery of the areas in which Sydney’s global economic markets are concentrated. Yet, it was the fourth most popular destination LGA in Sydney for overseas-born populations arriving in the city, and demonstrated high levels of new people movement from overseas and elsewhere in Australia. However, few internal migrants chose to move there (it was the third least popular destination for internal migrants out of all Sydney LGAs) (Hu, 2013a). Contributing to this picture of a relatively new, high turnover population are recent estimates of temporary migrant figures that indicate that there has been an increase in temporary migrants in the area of Canterbury South (in which Campsie sits as the primary administrative centre). This comprises a population numbering approximately 1995 temporary migrants, or 8% of the total population.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Temporary migrant figures in Campsie are still well below the concentrations found in suburbs clustered in the vicinity of knowledge economy nodes or international education institutions, such as Haymarket and Ultimo-Pyrmont in the City of Sydney (with 33 per cent and 21 per cent of the population comprised of

The notion of Campsie as a touchdown point in Sydney is also supported from an ethnographic perspective, by pieces of evidence from resident and community workers' anecdotes and my own observation in the local neighbourhood. Timothy, a local council manager summarised these dynamics by saying:

[In] Campsie and Canterbury it seems to be quite a pattern – people come here, they are here for a while, and then they move on. We are kind of like a residential but we are also a transitioning suburb. (Timothy, February 2013)

Local councilor Gemma had a similar impression, noting, 'We have an influx of people coming in and going out – finding their feet then moving on [...] quite transitory.' (Gemma, January 2013). Real estate agents and those working with migrant services also pointed to the highly mobile population of private renters. Norma, a local community worker observes:

Just by walking around parts of Campsie, particularly on the weekend, you realise there is a high turnover of people in the units. And there is often stuff put out in the street. [...] I think they are more likely to move out, I think there might be a lot more students. I also think, and the new census when it comes out might actually show a much higher number of southern Asians in Campsie over last couple of years, students probably. (Norma, June 2012)

While living in the neighbourhood I frequently came across the detritus of hasty house and potentially, transnational moves – discarded furniture and suitcases littering the street (see Figure 8), to the point that it became a policy issue for local government in the form of managing household dumping.

Overall, Campsie was presented to me as both an up-and-coming suburb and an urban margin, often depending on the informant's position in relation to the property market and socio-economic status. Hall uses the term 'urban margin' to characterise a relatively

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temporary migrants respectively), Kingsford in the Kensington LGA (18%) and Rosehill in the Parramatta LGA (17%) (Personal communication, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, April 2014).



poor, multicultural borough in London with comparatively cheap land and rent and where ‘the social and spatial boundaries of class are most likely to intersect with the ongoing waves of global migration’ (Hall, 2012, p. 32). Campsie fits this description. But its position in Sydney’s geography is also rapidly changing. Current house prices show that parts of the neighbourhood are gentrifying in conjunction with ongoing (sub)urban redevelopment and urban consolidation, and new types of migration (e.g. temporary) are altering its arrival city function. It thus represents a suburb in transition.



Figure 8: Artifacts of mobility: A suitcase discarded on a residential street (Photo: the Author)

### **Multi-layered cities: migration and urban transformation in Campsie**

Given the ever-evolving nature of place, it is important to put this social-demographic and urban snapshot of Campsie into context. How Campsie has changed over time is inextricably linked to the wider historical geographies of Sydney’s economic and urban development, as well as its insertion into international migration flows. In many ways, Campsie’s history and gradual transformation into an ‘arrival city’ is emblematic of the changes that have affected Sydney’s middle-ring suburbs as a result of human mobility and economic restructuring. Here I unpack the layers of place as shaped by waves of

migration into Campsie, and consider broader patterns of change transforming Sydney as a city of diversity.

*Layering place: Campsie's migration waves*

Initially developed as a settler colony and market gardening area on the edges of the city in the 1910s, Campsie gradually grew into one of Sydney's outer suburbs after the train line was extended in 1895. Aboriginal groups had long inhabited and migrated along the Cooks River, long before early Chinese migrants cultivated market gardens and Anglo settlers established farms in the mid to late 1800s.<sup>50</sup> In the late 1800s, Campsie was singled out as the site of the Harcourt Model Suburb – an experiment in urban planning that drew heavily on the Garden City movement. Although this venture eventually succumbed to 1890s Depression (Lawrence, Madden & Muir, 2010), the remnants of its design – the wide boulevard-style streets of the 'Avenues' area of Campsie – are still visible and celebrated. Once favoured as a site of leisure (for boating and picnicking beside the Cooks River), the suburb increasingly became oriented around residential development and manufacturing.

Campsie's population at this time was predominantly English, Scottish and Irish settler migrants, reflecting Australia's racially selective immigration policy (the 'White Australia' policy), which was in force from Federation up until the Second World War. However, Lebanese migrants also had a presence in the neighbourhood from the early 1900s; a Lebanese family owned one of the earliest businesses, opened in 1916 (Convy & Monsour, 2008, p. 23). A large-scale immigration program based on the first immigration minister's rallying call for Australia to 'populate or perish' drove post-war settlement in Australian cities. Between 1945 and the 1970s, there were significant numbers of refugees and migrants arriving from Europe. Campsie received an influx of mainly Greek and some Italian immigrants. This migration influx occurred in conjunction with the

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<sup>50</sup> Like other places in Sydney, Aboriginal and non-white presence in the area is largely erased from the official local historical narratives of place (Bugg, 2013, p. 11), which focus almost exclusively on European settlement.

decentralisation of production from inner city areas to suburban areas, the availability of industrial land and the suburbanisation of workers (Murphy & Watson, 1997, p. 100). Migration was directed to the outer ‘raw new suburbs on the edge’ where, with little infrastructure and services, lower-income migrants were pushed (Murphy & Watson, 1997, p. 95).

The massive process of suburbanisation in the 1950s and 1960s attracted people from the denser inner city areas – including areas of immigrant settlement – with the promise of the Great Australian Dream of homeownership, ideally a single-family detached dwelling on a quarter acre section.<sup>51</sup> Migration and housing policy have therefore long been interconnected in Australia, with migration stimulating the economy and domestic demand for local construction. Indeed, high levels of immigration at this time were achieved and maintained ‘partly because many migrants found the possibility of owning their own home attractive’ (Troy, 2000, p. 720).

In Campsie, the smaller, more affordable brick multi-unit blocks facilitated further immigration to the area as did the presence of local manufacturing jobs.<sup>52</sup> Home ownership was an integral pathway to integration, accumulation and claiming a ‘legitimate’ stake in the city (Levin & Fincher, 2010; Pulvirenti, 1997; Saunders, 2011). These factors gradually augmented the presence of ethno-cultural ‘others’ (mostly Greek and Lebanese migrants) that were already becoming part of Campsie’s working-class social fabric. Campsie was also transformed by further waves of migration at this time. Additional Lebanese migration was triggered by the civil war in Lebanon (1975-1990). The development of multicultural policies and a shift in immigration policy to allow Indo-Chinese refugees to settle in Australia saw a significant numbers of Vietnamese migrants and refugees arrived between the 1970s and 1990s. While the majority settled in

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<sup>51</sup> Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Australia has had high home ownership rates. Home ownership was an integral part of the development of the welfare state, and was mediated through wage regulation and subsidies, effectively functioning as a substitute for social welfare (Troy, 2000, p. 719).

<sup>52</sup> The longest standing of these factories was the Sunbeam factory in Clemton Park. It has recently been transformed into a new-build development called Clemton Park Village, which is marketed as a prime ‘Inner West’ site and Campsie is represented as a ‘vibrant and eclectic cultural quarter’ nearby.

suburbs further west (Fairfield and Cabramatta), there was some Vietnamese settlement in Campsie's vicinity. Several Vietnamese hot bread shops, restaurants and grocers along the main street, indicate their continuing presence in Campsie.

However, this did not always mean that these populations were accepted. A local resident whose parents owned a milk bar in Campsie in the 1970s, recalled the experiences of racism and marginality her Greek parents experienced in a predominantly Anglo suburb.

In the 70s I think there was a war in Lebanon and we got a lot of Lebanese migrants. That was when the first change was really visible. And that was when I felt... there was a lot of racist stuff happening too. You know my parents, you get a lot of that having a shop, you get people coming in and you know, the whole wog thing. [...] You know you'd give them change and it would be 'wog change' or 'wog money' or they'd yell out if they spilled something on the ground, 'come clean that up wog'. But my parents were just – they were the generation who would just put their head down and just do it. They wouldn't cause any trouble. (Sophia, November 2012)

As Sophia's comment demonstrates, everyday racism at this time was fairly common – a point that is reflected in the stories of many migrants of the post-war generation who were dealing with issues of loss and grief as well as the discomfort and non-belonging associated with processes of enculturation (Hawke, 2010). This was a period of the formation of multicultural policy when the remnants of the White Australia policy and a focus on assimilation often patterned daily life with overt hostility to cultural difference.

The late 1970s saw an era of global economic restructuring that brought an end to the post-war boom period and the state-business-welfare compact that had sustained the expansion of the suburbs and high employment. The decline in manufacturing and the emergence of a service economy were highly spatialised transformations, which saw jobs increasing in the service and knowledge sectors, few of which were concentrated in the immigrant-dense, working class middle-ring and outer suburbs (Murphy & Watson, 1997; Troy, 2000). High levels of unemployment were experienced in these areas, including Campsie.

In the late 1980s, Australia's immigration policy shifted towards skilled migration from the Asia-Pacific region. While there was a 'moderately visible' population of Chinese migrants in the middle-ring suburbs in the post-war period, it was not until the 1980s that significant migration from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and Vietnam took place, followed by migration in the 1990s of migrants from the Peoples Republic of China (Burnley, 2002). In the 1990s, the suburb became known as the 'Seoul of Sydney' or 'Little Korea' with a significant influx of South Korean migrants (Collins, 2006) over several documented phrases (Han & Han, 2010). Campsie appears to have been at the 'epicentre' of the tension between older generations of Korean migrants and the new migrants dubbed the 'IMF wanderers' who arrived in Australia after the Asian Economic crisis and intervention of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1997 (Han & Han, 2010).

Campsie's demographic constitution was, at this time, shifting towards an increasing population from the Asian region. Migrants from Chinese ethnic backgrounds – a highly diverse group – are geographically dispersed in Sydney, however, there is a significant presence in Campsie of those identifying as Mandarin and Cantonese speaking. Canterbury and surrounding local government areas have been associated with chain migration of Cantonese-speaking migrants from mainland China who were relatives of skilled migrants or former students that were granted amnesty following Tiananmen Square, many of whom had limited resources (Burnley, 2002, p. 373). In 1991, residents born in China represented 7 per cent of the population, and this figure had increased to 21 per cent in 2011 (see Table 5). While highly skilled migration from China associated with the new knowledge economy constitutes a professional class in other parts of the city (e.g. Ku-ring-gai, Ashfield and Baulkham Hill areas), Campsie has seen a lower socio-economic class of Chinese migrants (Burnley, 2002). More recent statistics show a marked shift in the suburb towards Mandarin speaking, first generation migrants, as well as an ageing cohort of Chinese migrants, many of who undertake care giving duties for

family members such as grandchildren.<sup>5354</sup>

While some residents of Lebanese and Greek background have remained, they tend to be associated with dwelling in the larger, detached housing in the area. The majority has moved out as a result of upward social mobility, and there is a significant visible presence of Greek and Italian populations in surrounding gentrifying or more affluent suburbs. The out-migration of these migrant populations and their Australian-born children is significant: the Lebanese population dropped from 10 per cent of the population in 1991 to only 4 per cent in 2011; comparative figures for Greek residents are 4 per cent in 1991 to 1.5 per cent in 2011. These out-migrations support Campsie's arrival city function. A number of participants also noticed an increase in Anglo-Australian residents in recent years, mainly middle-class individuals and families drawn to the area by the housing prices. Despite an existing Anglo-Australian segment of the local population, a younger and more affluent cohort is seen as part of a 'new migration', as are second-generation migrants from European and Middle Eastern backgrounds. As Talia, a local resident originally from New Zealand, noted:

Oh, actually with people coming, the migrants, it is not just the Koreans or Asian cultures that are there now. I have noticed a lot of Australians are coming through Campsie now and more the Greek or Middle Eastern or European are coming through. It is good, it is a good mix. (Talia, September 2012)

Sophia, a second-generation Greek migrant, who recently returned to Campsie herself to build her own home on a subdivided section of her parents' property, commented that this new in-migration was noteworthy in the context of Campsie's histories of migration of non-Anglo populations:

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<sup>53</sup> The combination of an aging cohort of Chinese migrants who arrived with their children in the 1990s, as well as the influx of the elderly parents of Chinese migrants entering via family migration streams represented an emerging priority for local Chinese associations (one had recently undertaken fundraising to develop an aged care hostel on their premises, partly funded by the Department of Health and Aging).

<sup>54</sup> In the 2011 census, 17 per cent of the foreign born population in Campsie spoke Mandarin at home, while 11 per cent spoke Cantonese (in 2001 these figures were 12 per cent and 11.5 per cent respectively) (Profile ID & Canterbury City Council, 2012).

In the last couple of years, we are getting Anglo-Australian migration... you know, people whose parents have lived in Glebe or somewhere else and they can't afford to buy there, and they've come to Campsie to buy a house or in the near vicinity. And now we are getting a sprinkling of the blonde hair and blue eye kids - they really stand out man! (Sophia, November 2012)

This statement not only signals the intersections between Campsie and processes of gentrification, but also the ethic of 'commonplace diversity' that pervades Campsie. This refers to the ordinariness of ethno-cultural difference and migration from overseas, where new international migration is not necessarily a salient change (Wessendorf, 2010, p. 16). Indeed, it was the internal migration of Anglo-Australians that was deemed noteworthy.

More recently, emerging birthplace groups arriving in Campsie include Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pacific Island nations. Several of my participants were recent Nepalese migrants – all in their twenties and thirties and mostly skilled – who were drawn to Australia through opportunities to study and to subsequently seek permanent residence through Australia's study-to-work programmes.

#### *The socio-material sediments of migration: Campsie's symbolic landscape*

It is through these multiple layers of human habitation and mobility that Campsie's contemporary multicultural emerges. This can be observed not just through a social-demographic and economic lens, but also through the very materialities of the built environment. There are visible artefacts of the overlapping histories of migration in the physical fabric of the suburb, particularly along the main street where 'past and present urban landscapes are palpably interwoven' (Hall, 2012, p. 31). One notices fading Italian, Lebanese and Anglo-Australian business names on worn-out facades and hastily painted-over Korean and Vietnamese characters on shop walls. The Lebanese-owned billiards hall – once the hub of the local Lebanese community – became an Asian-owned Internet café before the Arab Bank took over downstairs (see Figure 9). There is an Indian and Pakistani supermarket that was once a Greek milk bar (see Figure 10). Such remnants are now juxtaposed with symbols of recent migrations and emerging cultural hybridities:

Korean-owned Japanese sushi bars, Vietnamese grocers who offer money transfer services, and a halal Italian restaurant with Muslim Lebanese owners. Yet, there is continuity amidst the waves of new businesses, particularly at the south end of the main street: a Lebanese-owned chemist and a neighbouring restaurant, a Vietnamese-owned fabric shop, an Italian barber, an Indian-owned spice shop and a Greek optometrist have been in business for over twenty years old.



Figure 9: The Empire Hall, turned Internet café and bank (Photo: the Author)





Figure 10: Indian supermarket, once a Greek milk bar, Beamish Street (Photo: the Author)

These elements are incorporated into an Anglo-Australian town centre design that is typical of pre-War suburban architecture. Added to this are the physical signs of an evolving ethnic and migrant cultural infrastructure: local churches that offer sermons in Korean and Mandarin, a Samoan church on Canterbury Road, a Chinese cultural centre using the facilities of a local primary school in the weekends, the thriving and diversifying Chinese Australian Services Society complex located in the ‘Avenues’ area of Campsie (to the north-west of the town centre). Also noticeable are now-obsolete Greek and Korean cultural centres (on Campsie’s eastern and northern edges). Despite this complex history of migration, heritage is clearly designated as those elements of the landscape that accord with the local Anglo-Australian history (for example, the art deco Orion Function Centre, war memorials and Federation homes). Surveying the list of heritage sites, there is only one exception: a set of shops on the corner of Beamish Street

and Canterbury Road associated with one of the earliest Lebanese families in the area.

Campsie's built environment thus embeds histories of migration and urban transformations that have all contributed to its place production over time. These histories highlight patterns of physical movement, transience, social mobility and immobility, and a range of migrant claims to place. I now move on to consider how these are positioned in relation to multicultural Sydney.

### *Campsie in Sydney's contemporary social geography*

Campsie is a suburb of great hybridity. The fact that there is no one dominant migrant group is a defining feature of the suburb; its 'diversity of diversity' and profound social mix makes it unlike other multi-ethnic locales in Sydney which tend to be identified through the visible presence of one ethno-cultural group. This includes the Vietnamese in Cabramatta ('Vietnamatta'), the Italians in Leichhardt ('Little Italy'), the Turkish in Auburn, and the Lebanese in Lakemba.<sup>55</sup> Jacob, a local real estate agent, captured this perception of mixity by telling me, 'certainly you picked a good area to study, [all this] multicultural stuff here. Because there is just a pot and someone is up there stirring [it] around'. This in part, reflects a more general trend in multi-ethnic Sydney, where on the whole, particular areas may have high proportions of foreign-born residents but do not demonstrate a dominance of a single birthplace group (Hugo, 2011, p. 24). This has led scholars to assert that ethnic 'ghettos' and even ethnic enclaves are inappropriate concepts to characterise the settlement patterns of migrants in Australia (Poulsen,

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<sup>55</sup> However, this visible presence may be limited to the prevalence of businesses associated with these ethnicities that dominate the streetscape, rather than reality of immigrant settlement itself. This is the case in Leichhardt, a popular Inner West suburb, for example, where the Italian population has significantly declined. Once gentrified through ethnic entrepreneurialism, this suburb has maintained the Italian 'look and feel' without the population, which has dispersed, often to areas where the second generation can afford to purchase housing (Collins, 2013a). Interestingly, there was some anecdotal evidence that Campsie had received some of this population. Norma – a local community worker – commented that there seemed to be a significant number of middle-class residents moving from Leichhardt to Campsie. She commented on what she saw was the more genuine 'migrant character' in Campsie, compared to the gentrified and commodified ethnic iconography of Leichhardt as a designated ethnic precinct (Norma, June 2012).

Johnson & Forrest, 2004).<sup>56</sup> Indeed, scholars tend to focus on ethnic clustering in Sydney as a temporary and strategic phenomenon that is part and parcel of group processes to consolidate resources and establish a place in the arrival city (Burnley, 1999; Burnley, 2000; Saunders, 2011).

However, while there may not be ethnic ghettos, there is consensus that Sydney contains a ‘sharp differentiation between areas of cultural diversity and monolingual enclaves’ (Markus, Jupp & McDonald, 2009, p. xvii). There is a stark contrast between Campsie (and other suburbs characterised by high ethno-cultural diversity in Sydney’s middle ring suburbs) and areas of the city that are more culturally homogeneous (i.e. with concentrations of Anglo-Australian/European residents), particularly areas in the Northern, Eastern and Southern beaches, and some of the peri-urban, outer-ring and new build, ‘aspirational suburbs’ on the fringes of the city (Allon, 2006; Bugg & Gurrin, 2011).<sup>57</sup> There also remains strong evidence of ‘postcode discrimination’ which is compounded by what Randolph and Holloway (2005) refer to as ‘suburbanisation of disadvantage’ particularly in Sydney’s Western and South Western suburbs. Areas such as Canterbury have not necessarily escaped these negative forms of representation, which are exacerbated by an ageing housing and infrastructure and an uneven geography of investment.

Yet, any broad sketch of migrant settlement patterns in Sydney is being complicated by contemporary patterns of migrant arrival. In general, studies have shown that there is now greater spatial dispersal and interethnic mixing among recent migrants to Sydney compared with earlier generations of arrivals. There is evidence that changing patterns of

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<sup>56</sup> Poulsen et al (2004) find that no extreme segregation related to ancestry and birthplace exists in Sydney, and consider segregation a ‘transitory phenomenon’ for immigrant groups who will gradually ‘spatially assimilate’. Burnley (1999, p. 1295) similarly argues that except for the Indochinese population in Cabramatta, immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds were ‘not more segregated than the more concentrated continental European groups’.

<sup>57</sup> While internal migration out of middle-ring suburbs is disproportionately Australian-born, this does not necessarily indicate that immigration was the primary cause of this movement, or ‘white flight’ (Hugo, 2008). While increased international immigration is a factor for a small minority of internal migrants, it must be understood in relation to other interrelated ‘push factors’, including urban and economic restructuring and its associated outcomes, for which migrants are often scapegoats.

immigrant residence since the 1990s are connected to an increasing bifurcation between skilled and unskilled migration streams (Hu, 2013d; Hugo, 2008, p. 77).<sup>58</sup> The new migrant geographies are connected to Sydney's emerging global city function (Hu, 2012; Hu, 2013a; Hu, 2013b; Hu, 2013c). That is, they are mapped in relation to the urban localities associated with new knowledge economy that have consolidated around a 'global arc' that stretches from Port Botany in the south to Macquarie Park and up to Parramatta in the north. Temporary/highly skilled migrants are settling directly in affluent areas which have become primary destinations for a 'multicultural middle-class' made up of upwardly mobile second generation migrants and newly arrived skilled migrants (Colic-Peisker, 2011). Moreover, inner city areas and those previously associated with homogeneous, middle-class populations (for example, the City of Sydney and Randwick) are being transformed through high numbers of international students living in proximity to educational institutions.<sup>59</sup> Emergent geographies of this kind unsettle the taken for granted stereotypes of what constitutes Sydney's 'arrival cities'.

Sydney's global city geographies place Campsie on the urban periphery. Yet, increasingly it is being transformed through these very emerging geographies. Many of my participants were part of this economy – working in hospitality in the CBD or the North Shore, or seeking work in professions associated with the knowledge economy as IT specialists and engineers. Few residents worked in Campsie, except for those employed in the social and health services, or local retail. Campsie offers relatively affordable housing, good public transport links into the central city and an ethnic infrastructure for those working or aspiring to work in these industries. The diverse socio-economic statuses and range of migration trajectories of residents confounds any easy categorisation of Campsie as a strictly working-class, lower-income immigrant suburb. This is seen in the increasing number of professionals, highly skilled migrants and

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<sup>58</sup> In other words, highly skilled migrants have greater access to the resources required to enter a range of housing markets (Hugo, 2011, p. 24).

<sup>59</sup> For similar trends in Melbourne, see Fincher and Shaw (2009), Robertson (2013a) and Martin and Rizvi (2014).

international students seeking permanent residence, juxtaposed with a significant local population of labourers and tradespeople.

Yet, Campsie cannot escape the profound socio-economic inequalities that texture the city. Over-crowded accommodation, the growth in low-cost boarding houses, unfair evictions (particularly of recently arrived families) and rental increases and subsequent displacement of these vulnerable populations were familiar stories during my fieldwork. Others highlighted other forms of vulnerability, precarity and poverty amidst aggressive shifts towards gentrification linked with urban consolidation and regeneration, such as practices of extortion amongst the business community, and the presence of undocumented migrants (called ‘black people’ by the local Chinese community). Norma, a local community worker captures some of these complex socio-spatial contradictions in Campsie:

I actually think the area is being gentrified. I think Campsie almost has two populations - one that live in flats and those who live in houses. It would be really interesting to look at it because I actually think they are two quite separate populations. I think the houses - particularly the older style houses, are being brought up by Anglos who couldn't afford to live in Summer Hill or Dulwich Hill or whatever so they have been prepared to come out to Campsie... The flats themselves I think are far more dominated by migrants and I suppose poorer Anglos, but they are predominantly occupied by non-English speaking [people], mostly Chinese, some Africans, some southern Asians, [and] Koreans. I think there is gentrification going on but I think sometimes a lot of that is also driven by the real estate agents. There is a new pocket of townhouses up the top of Evaline Street and... when I looked at the rents that they were asking for them, I thought my god, nobody can afford that! (Norma, June 2012)

Campsie’s residents must negotiate increasing density, competition for space and displacement through rising housing costs as well as an increasing middle-class population of international migrants and socially mobile Anglo-Australians and second generation migrants. Of particular importance to understanding these dynamics – and their lived impacts – is the connection between place, cultural diversity and the city’s cultural economy, to which I now turn.

## **Multi-ethnic locales, global cities and the urban political economy**

A central aspect of Campsie's contemporary place identity is its ethno-culturally mixed population. The council's tag line is the 'city of cultural diversity'. Local histories of migration serve as cultural and economic capital to become part of a local place-marketing discourse, Campsie's representations of cultural diversity have currency in Sydney's symbolic economy that promotes it as a 'global city'. It is these imaginaries of the global city that symbolically order Sydney's urban localities, who must engage in and well-documented forms of civic boosterism and compete for state and federal funding, attract middle-class homebuyers to boost the local housing market and entice investment. It is worth unpacking how this set of signifiers about place identity, the cultural economy and global connectedness is configured in Sydney because they have profound implications for local-level discourses about how places (and the people in them) are valued.

Sydney's pursuit of global city status draws on standardised global city language, although global city discourse and its effect are highly localised (McNeill, Dowling & Fagan, 2005, p. 937). Indeed, the combination of the global and the local is part of the imaginary, as seen for example, in metropolitan planning and marketing that promote Sydney as a 'city of villages'.<sup>60</sup> Accompanying Sydney's nodal function for the operation of financial capital in the Asia-Pacific region and globally, is a narrative of the city as a highly liveable, sunny, beachside, dynamic, cosmopolitan global city. This representation of space presented by city marketers is what Lefebvre would refer to as an example of the construction of abstract space led by social engineers and bureaucrats that aims to enhance economic growth and reflects the logics of capitalism (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 39). It frames cultural diversity as a marketable dimension of the city's cosmopolitan urbanity.<sup>61</sup> In this discourse, diversity represents global connectivity and a desirable,

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<sup>60</sup> The idea of Sydney as a collection of 'locals' filters through popular discourse. Often this conjures up an image of the city's distinctive suburban localities as sites of intrepid exploration – particularly those deemed exotic through their ethno-culturally diverse population (see Koleth & Williamson, 2011).

<sup>61</sup> Cultural diversity is often mobilised in relation to city planning and regeneration through the notion of cosmopolitanism. As Binnie et al (Binnie, 2006), cosmopolitanism in the urban context is an ambiguous

‘authentic’ exoticism. Such cultural capital is readily consumed by tourists, investors and the elite, highly skilled workers of the global knowledge economy – the classes targeted in global, ‘creative’ or entrepreneurial city discourses (Florida, 2003; Zukin, 2010).

The place of diversity in global city discourses is also inextricably tied to migration policy. Since 2011, the Liberal-National Coalition Government in NSW has been strongly advocating the economic value of multiculturalism and the notion of a ‘big Sydney’ – particularly in the context of increasing highly skilled, temporary migration (Koleth, 2013, p. 122). Through state-sponsored discourses of ‘productive diversity’, local governments have been quick to capitalise on the ‘cosmopolitan’ assets of their local communities. Diversity connotes a set of exploitable resources that contribute to economic growth. The state has been active in promoting that ‘all institutions of New South Wales should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of New South Wales as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State’ (Community Relations Commission, 2014).<sup>62</sup>

In this context, the primary place-marketing strategies for the highly diverse suburbs in Sydney have been to ‘ethnify’ streetscapes through the promotion of ethnic entrepreneurialism and the creation of multicultural arts and food festivals, often combined with high levels of ethnic entrepreneurialism and ‘vibrant streetscapes’ (Collins, 2006; Collins & Kunz, 2009). In her study of Chinatown in Melbourne and Sydney, for example, Anderson (1990, p. 8) shows how ‘select symbols of ethnic diversity became objects of civic pride’ which draw on evolving stereotypes of ethnic

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concept. It is used to refer to: a disposition towards openness, acceptance of cultural diversity or the idea of global citizenship, to everyday cross-cultural encounter, to forms of middle-class patterns of consumption, global aspiration and capital-gathering. What is useful to note about cosmopolitan urbanism is that firstly, despite its aspirations to global connectivity, it is highly localised practice of meaning making, and secondly, cosmopolitanism is something that is actively produced through different forms of urban governance that mobilises and appropriates certain kinds of ‘appropriate’ difference, which can lead to the homogenisation of difference and the production of new forms of social exclusion (Binnie, 2006).

<sup>62</sup> As Mitchell (1993) reflects in the context of Vancouver, forms of racism, localism and patriotism potentially hinder a city’s spatial integration into the global economy. Again, the extent to which social equity issues are prioritised under this regime are questionable (Koleth, 2013).

Others that did not necessarily overcome underlying assumptions about primordial, racially inscribed difference.

As previously noted, while local cultural capital is generally oriented around a specific dominant ethnicity that is articulated through local business and streetscapes (for example, Chinatown) (Collins, 2006), in Campsie the contemporary ethno-cultural mix makes claims for any such particularism difficult. While in recent years Campsie has been marketed as a site of South Korean-ness – ‘the Seoul of Sydney’ – recent demographic shifts have undermined the relevance of this place identity, and other suburbs of concentrated Korean populations have claimed it. As Timothy, a council official notes, Campsie’s annual Food Festival,

... started off as the Korean food festival and we shifted that... we try and recognise the Korean influence to the festival with the sort of tag line ‘the Seoul of Sydney’ – although some group in Ashfield are trying to nick that now... [so] we use it, but it’s a question of whether or not we want to pursue some sort of trademark infringement! (Timothy, February 2013)

In this competitive atmosphere, place marketing in Campsie is now oriented towards a more generic multi-ethnic diversity, as shown in Chapter Five. Recent marketing in Canterbury has focused on positioning the area’s multi-ethnic localities as emblematic of the image of Sydney as a multicultural global city. This can be seen in the marketing of Campsie’s food festival as well as images deployed by developers that demonstrate the suburb’s geographical (and cultural) proximity to the CBD and its amenities (see Figure 11).



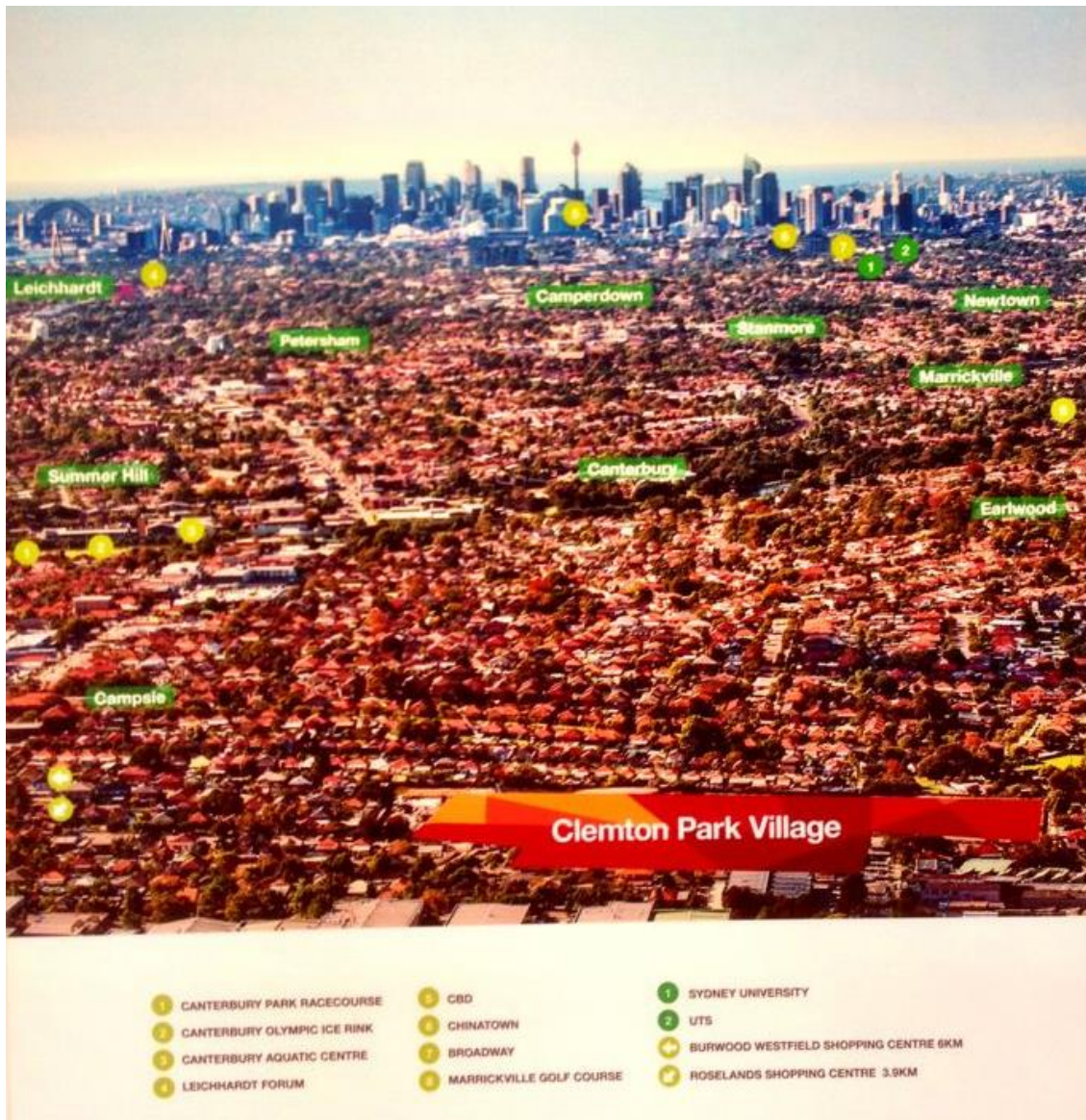


Figure 11: Visual representation of Campsie's connection to the heart of global Sydney (Source: Clemton Park Village marketing brochure)

Place marketing goes hand in hand with broader processes of global city branding and neoliberal restructuring. The rationalisation of urban space has seen, more generally, the privatisation and securitisation of public spaces in Sydney, which has had tangible impacts on the governance of urban space and decisions relating to land use as well as strategies for governing urban citizens (Iveson, 2011). A shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989, p. 8) relies increasingly on public-private partnerships

and is geared towards the ‘speculative construction of place rather than amelioration of conditions within a particular territory’. For some commentators, framing the city as ‘global’ justifies highly uneven urban restructuring processes which are a ‘means of trying to legitimise what are for many people painful dislocations involving greater economic insecurity, social inequality and environmental stresses’ (Stilwell, 1998, p. 163).

One aspect of this strategy is the cultivation of responsabilised and individualised consumer citizens (Iveson, 2011; McGuirk & Dowling, 2011; Osborne & Rose, 1999). These changes are reflected in local government policies and agendas – as we will see – as well as in the spatialisation of multicultural principles. Neoliberal agendas have seen a shift of power and funding away from local governments, to the extent that they are now seen to be solely in charge of ‘rates, rubbish and roads’. Additionally, local government and local service providers have been under increased pressure with the cumulative effects of the retrenchment of the welfare state since the 1970s, and who now rely on partnerships with the private sector and other community organisations to stay afloat. Fiscal pressures are indeed familiar in the Canterbury area.<sup>63</sup> In response, local government areas and town centres must become competitive and function as economic entities, to the extent that place identity and branding are integral to the ongoing viability of local government services.

While place-marketing strategies can lead to the regeneration of failing urban areas, boost local economies and jobs, and create a sense of civic pride and belonging, they can also lead to forms of exclusion and essentialism. Global city discourses inevitably operate on essentialisations of the city (Robinson, 2002) in order to provide an ‘illusion of coherence’ (McNeill, Dowling & Fagan, 2005, p. 943).<sup>64</sup> Sydney’s highly ‘imaginatively,

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<sup>63</sup> In 2014 the council applied for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) with the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal in order to increase rates.

<sup>64</sup> This was most apparent during the Olympic Games – the quintessential global marketing spectacular – when picturesque footage of Sydney harbour was broadcast instead of images of, for example, Auburn, a highly ethnically diverse and low socio-economic area, where one of the main stadiums was actually located (McNeill, Dowling & Fagan, 2005, p. 939).

topographically and materially' differentiated landscape (Murphy & Watson, 1997) has been shaped through contested immigrant histories and processes of racialisation, which are left out of glossy representations of Sydney as a global city. As Murphy et al (2003, p. 473) note, 'to market Sydney as a multicultural success story belies the more ambivalent political context of the city's diversity'. This is particularly noticeable for the suburbs to the west of the city, which Campsie sits at the border of, where representations of disadvantaged areas with ethnicised and criminalised populations are less likely to be part of the global imaginary (Dowling & Mee, 2000; Grace et al., 1997; Murphy & Watson, 1997; Powell, 1993; Turner, 2008). Selective valuations of diversity not only shape urban development and social planning, they inform ideas about legitimate and desirable difference, which inevitably inflect residents' experiences and practices of belonging on the ground.

### **Managing diversity in suburban space: local planning and multicultural policies**

Campsie's discourses of local place-based belonging are not solely dictated by its competitive position in urban economic agendas, they are also mediated by narratives about multiculturalism and national identity. In the following discussion I outline how diversity management in Campsie fits into the wider context of multicultural policy and rhetoric in Sydney and Australia, and how that might shape or intersect with urban planning and place-making policies.

Compared to debates about national multicultural policy, local and state multicultural policy has been much more robust and less directly criticised (Fleras, 2009; Koleth, 2013).<sup>65</sup> Each state has its own multicultural policy, and there is 'no national legislative overlay underpinning local government multicultural policy' (Pagonis, 2013, p. 149). As well as a shift towards the rationalisation and privatisation of social services (Roumeliotis & Paschalidis-Chilas, 2013), councils are playing an increasing role in coordinating

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<sup>65</sup> Multiculturalism has enjoyed a history of bipartisan support in the state, despite attempts by the NSW Premier in 2000 to mobilise a discourse against immigration that played on notions of spatial and resource scarcity, asserting that New South Wales was 'full' and 'overcrowded' (Koleth, 2013, p. 112).

services for newly arrived migrants and refugees in Australia (Pagonis, 2013). In addition to the symbolic and legal role they play in conferring citizenship, it can be argued that local government and their promotion of multicultural principles ‘have a key bearing on the extent and depth of citizenship in Australia’ (Thompson & Dunn, 2002, p. 264), and on spatial experiences of belonging.

### *Campsie and multicultural policy*

In Campsie, Canterbury City Council’s social and urban planning policies intersect at different points in the material landscape and in the lives of residents. They provide a discursive and legal framework for how ethno-cultural diversity is prioritised and integrated into council planning. Multicultural programmes, delivered as part of the council’s community development programmes, are a set of initiatives designed to build capacity around recognising the needs of the multicultural community in Canterbury. The council shifted to an integrative planning approach in 2010, which brings together a set of local policy areas that were previously functionally separated. In integrating social (including multicultural) and urban and environmental planning policy, it represents a significant change from previous multicultural policies in NSW, which began as a more directed and accountable programmes.

The *Local Government Act 1993* made NSW the first state in Australia to legislate the integration of equity and access principles into local government services. The Act required local governments to report annually on their programmes for their culturally and linguistically diverse populations.<sup>66</sup> Since 2001, the *Community Relations*

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<sup>66</sup> The ‘Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements’ (EAPS) were established in 1983, and then superseded by the *Local Government Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements* (LEAPS), which were developed and piloted in 5 local government areas, including the City of Canterbury, but the voluntary nature of the initiatives resulted in selective implementation by councils (Thompson & Dunn, 2002, p. 268). The Ethnic Affairs Commission produced the *Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement (EAPS) Program Strategic Plan* in 1990. This was replaced by the *NSW Charter of Principles for a Culturally Diverse Society* (Thompson & Dunn, 2002, p. 268) in 1993, which required all New South Wales public sector agencies to prepare *Statements of Intent* and the four *Principles of Cultural Diversity* as State policy. An additional regulation in 1998 required councils to develop social plans integrating the interests of their ethnic minority populations (Thompson & Dunn, 2002, p. 269).

*Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act (2000)* has guided local level policy. The Act established the Community Relations Commission and provided the legislative framework for the implementation of multicultural principles. The principles include the freedom to express, practise and maintain a person's own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage, the responsibility to demonstrate a 'unified commitment to Australia' and 'recognise the importance of shared values', and for institutional provisions for equality of access, opportunity and participation (Community Relations Commission, 2014). Currently, the requirement to report annually on cultural diversity programmes has been relaxed, and councils are no longer required to report through the Local Government Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements (LEAPs) programme.<sup>67</sup> As a senior manager at Canterbury City Council noted, there has been a 'mainstreaming' of multicultural principles, which become one of seven key target areas that are incorporated into the local government's integrated social plan.

A paradigm shift towards a focus on 'community capacity building' in the provision of council programmes was a recent development during my fieldwork, and was part of the mainstreaming of multicultural principles in local government. This more generalist approach to the community focuses on issues of 'participation', 'diversity' and 'pathways' rather than target groups such as the multicultural community, women or the disabled. Thus, multicultural programmes were rebranded as the prerogative of the new role of 'Capacity Building Officer – Diversity'. Tanya, a local council worker explained that this approach was 'how the consultants and management designed the position' in order to 'look at the bigger picture, bigger needs' (Tanya, July 2012).

The focus on 'capacity building' rather than direct service provision to the multicultural community shifts the emphasis to partnerships and it could be argued, a devolution of

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<sup>67</sup> As well as being guided by the Community Relations Commission and the Department of Community Services, local multicultural policy is, in theory, guided by the peak body for local government – the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) – and the 1998 *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* (Bugg, 2013, p. 5). Despite this, some commentators have argued that state and national level peak local government associations have limited capacity in the realm of multicultural policy, largely leaving councils to their own devices (Pagonis, 2013, p. 150).

responsibility in an age of fiscal restrictions for local government. Tanya comments that the capacity building approach involves:

Looking beyond the current infrastructure and programs and being more proactive at working with other levels of government in the sector too, to build capacity, without using council resources! I think that's the key... capacity building is about identifying strength and resources that already exist, and capitalizing on these resources, bringing interested parties together... in order to make it work. (Tanya, July 2012)

In Campsie, initiatives relating to diversity are now informed by the Multicultural Access Committee, which is comprised of seventeen volunteer local ethnic/migrant community representatives and migrant support service providers or community workers.<sup>68</sup> After my fieldwork, the Committee published a statement of 'common values'. It stated that the City of Canterbury:

... aims to foster a harmonious and cooperative community where a sense of community means all persons matter and all of us belong; [...] recognises that mutual respect is important to developing a resilient community and the need to seek understanding through open and honest dialogue by listening to each other and accepting our differences; [...] promotes residents actively working together to deliver the best possible outcomes for the community (Canterbury City Council, 2014b)

Interestingly, the statement is emptied of the language of diversity and multiculturalism. The key terms of common values, harmony, belonging and resilience echo wider discursive shifts towards a de-ethnicised, community harmony-focused rhetoric of managing diversity.

This 'bigger picture' approach is echoed across local government discourse. It fits, more broadly, with a social cohesion agenda that has emerged in state and federal policy discourse. This approach, which has been criticised as a 'watered-down' version of

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<sup>68</sup> This model of involving ethnic community leaders, rather than residents or solely relying on community workers, was deemed a major success of the council because it enabled more direct consultation with the ethno-culturally diverse population. It also avoided, as one council officer put it, the committee affairs being hijacked by 'narrow views' and very particular interests of local residents in general.

multiculturalism, focuses on barriers to social inclusion for all groups in society, with little mention or acknowledgement of the barriers faced by ethnic minority groups and new arrivals (Boese & Phillips, 2011).<sup>69</sup> In 2004, the discursive emphasis swung to ‘cultural harmony’, reflecting a change in focus at the state level from ‘ethnic affairs’ to ‘community relations’. This discourse ‘explicitly tied multiculturalism to an expansive notion of citizenship that went beyond formal national membership to refer to ‘the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society’ (Koleth, 2013, p. 113). It emphasises the ‘equality’ aspect of multicultural principles, constituting a rhetorical move away from notions of ‘special treatment’ of immigrants and ethnic minorities, towards the idea of multiculturalism as a policy ‘for all Australians’ (Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 480).

While state-level multicultural-for-all policies were purportedly de-ethnicised and made more inclusive in this period, political and media rhetoric tended to, conversely, reinforce a racialised interpretation of segments of the population. This included a reification of ethnicity through, for example, the sensationalisation of ‘ethnic crime’ (implicating in particular those from Arabic-speaking backgrounds). Poynting refers to the culmination of these narratives and their associated institutional sanctions as forms of institutionalised ‘state racism’ that exacerbated the wider social tensions that erupted into the Cronulla riots (Koleth, 2013; Poynting, 2006, p. 88).

### *Urban planning policy and diversity*

Everyday governance of the city constructs local citizenship and builds cultural values into the urban fabric (Valverde, 2012, pp. 20-21). If this is the case, it would suggest that ideally multicultural principles would apply to all areas of local governance, including social programmes and the management of the built environment. Yet, several studies

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<sup>69</sup> Boese and Phillips argue that the social cohesion narrative has wider political repercussions, to the extent that it veers towards a focus on ‘cultural and moral causes of poverty and the tendency to blame those affected’ through a ‘moral underclass’ discourse (Boese & Phillips, 2011, p. 193), rather than acknowledging the societal structures of exclusion, including racism and economic exploitation (see also Vasta, 2007a).

have found that local government attempts to embrace multiculturalism across a range of programme areas (particularly in relation to the built environment), are largely ad hoc (Bugg, 2013; Harris, 2014, p. 574; Sandercock & Kliger, 1998; Thompson, 2003; Thompson & Dunn, 2002).<sup>70</sup>

The extent to which this was the case in the local government area in which Campsie is located was unclear. I was informed that any planning applications involve in-house consultation across departments, so the community service team would have been consulted for ‘social input’. According to one manager, this process involves:

What we do with planning applications when they do come in, we refer them over to the community service centre [...] for input in terms of community safety, you know when they get the police to have a look at them, the disability input, and even just generally providing community facilities [...] there is a link there where we do actually refer applications over to them and they provide comments, and then those comments could then form part of conditions of approval. (John, July 2012)

Social considerations reflecting the needs of the community are thus input into the plan, albeit in terms that focus on community safety, disability and facilities (at least in this manager’s description), rather than design issues relating to the needs of a multicultural and highly socio-economically diverse population. Discussions with council officials and an examination of a local place management plan (detailed in Chapter Five) indicated that there was a tendency for multicultural issues to be largely seen as divorced from, or irrelevant in the area of local urban planning. In managing the built environment in a highly multi-ethnic LGA, there was seen to be no need for special treatment for its residents based on ethno-cultural difference. That is to say, the demographic dominance of local residents born overseas, informed a default stance in which diversity is the status

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<sup>70</sup> There are many factors potentially contributing to this lack of coherency, not least resourcing and the tendency towards ‘silos’ in local government departments. Furthermore, as Valverde argues, the efficacy of local government is also often compromised by the ‘dysfunctional dance’ of local politics, issues of consultation, participation and representativeness (with a structural bias towards home-owners), issues of city-wide coordination around zoning, and not least, financial pressures; which in turn, can have systematically negative effects on ethno-cultural inclusion (Valverde, 2012).



quo. As one manager told me, ‘it’s just part of our normal business, it’s not something special, we are not making a special effort anymore because it’s, you know... the residents are from all these different cultures, nothing unusual’ (Tanya, July 2012). As a local police representative told me, the entire community is multicultural, so ‘everyone’s work is ‘multicultural’’ by default (Francis, October 2012).

Previous research in the area suggests that the council has struggled with the provision of public space for a multi-ethnic community in the past. In a study of Muslim women’s access to public space in Sydney, Whitten and Thompson (2005) mention a case (in 2003) in which Canterbury Council objected to requests for women-only use of public pools, citing the Public Health Act and the council’s policy on making the pool accessible to the public at all times. While some provision was eventually made, and recent interventions indicate that the Council has made some headway in providing community spaces,<sup>71</sup> Whitten and Thompson stressed the need for ‘architecture and design to be more flexible in a multicultural community’ (2005, p. 7).

The issue of integrating urban planning priorities with multicultural principles reflects a discomfort with being seen to favour a particular ethnic or migrant group. In their study of the implementation of multicultural principles in local government operations, Thompson and Dunn found that there is an ongoing tension between ‘the democratic discourse of equal treatment’ and the ‘ideal of culturally flexible governance’ (Thompson & Dunn, 2002, p. 265). But more often than not discourses of ‘equal treatment’ and the ‘common good’ were evoked, particularly in the purportedly neutral realm of the built environment. But treating everybody the same and failing to recognise barriers to the enjoyment of local public spaces (and more general barriers to realising substantive citizenship) can lead to inequitable outcomes and perpetuate existing forms of disparity (Iveson, 2007; Whitten & Thompson, 2005).

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<sup>71</sup> Several local initiatives suggest support for multicultural principles and the recognition of ethno-culturally diverse populations, such as the setting up of a ‘community hub’ for emerging communities in the neighbouring suburb of Lakemba. The groups involved in this initiative were often the most vulnerable, such as newly arrived low-income migrants and humanitarian entrants.

## Concluding remarks

This chapter has sought to position the case study locality of Campsie within a broader spectrum of social, cultural, economic and political dynamics that constitute Sydney as a city. It has also outlined the policy landscapes that inform multicultural belonging in urban localities. Sydney as a global city is an essentially uneven terrain of belonging that has been hewed and spliced into its current socio-spatial order by multiple political and economic agendas. How Campsie has been positioned over time in relation to these forces intersects with the local histories of migration and their inscription in the local landscape. It presents us with a unique case study for understanding spatial practices of belonging in multicultural neighbourhoods, but one that is comparable to other transitioning neighbourhoods in established migrant gateway cities such as Sydney and locales in other global cities.

The following chapters deal with a more intimate portrait of the everyday dynamics of place. The three analyses of the production of public space in Campsie that follow can be read as microcosms of the contested geographies of identity and belonging that unfold at other scales, and have been set out above. The study of the pedestrian mall, library and the local park considers multicultural belonging as an *everyday practice* that is worked out in relation to the material, spatial, social and governmental dimensions of urban life. We delve into the messy realities of these sites, their inhabitants and their daily social production in an attempt to reveal some of the contradictions, power relations and emergent spatialities that pattern Sydney as a global, immigrant city more generally.

## Chapter 5 / Place-making and designing diversity in the local square

*Parks and open spaces, the last word in good intentions and bad urban representation, are simply... the degraded simulacrum of the open space characteristic of encounters, games, parks, gardens and public squares. This space, which has been neutralised by a degrading form of democratisation, has as its symbol the square (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 27)*

### Introduction

This chapter begins exploring the practices of belonging in Campsie's multicultural public spaces by looking at Anzac Mall, a local pedestrian mall in the heart of the town centre. The mall presents a complex set of social and spatial coordinates that signify multiple senses of place. It is an everyday space, a civic space, a commercial space, a social space and an emergent space. Transecting at one end by the main street, it is a place of passage organised around consumption as well as a meeting place and a stage for civic events. In the following analysis, I explore how the mall is produced by migrant place making practices and how dominant representations of space coalesce in the mall and articulate place-based identity and belonging.

I chose the pedestrian mall as a research site for several reasons. Firstly, the mall struck me as a highly diverse, mixed-use space produced by a range of mundane, informal practices and inhabited by a cross-section of the community. Secondly, participants mentioned it frequently in their descriptions of moving around Campsie, yet had highly ambiguous perceptions of the space. It was described alternatively as crowded, cold-looking, soulless, a place riddled with drug-problems, loud, pleasant, nice and a site conducive to children's play. Thirdly, the mall's design is somewhat ambiguous. It sits somewhere between a commercialised space of transit and the traditional plaza, square or arcade of modernist town planning. It is curiously hybrid: Anglo-Australian markers of national identity (such as war memorials) are counterpoised with myriad, more recent

materialities associated with migrant identities, e.g. non-English shop signs. This raises questions about its role as a public space – does it succeed in the conventional function of civic space to monumentalise and spatialise the relationship between citizens and the state (Law, 2002; Low, 2000)? Is a multicultural population re-envisioning this function of the mall, or is it more akin to the pessimistic picture painted by Lefebvre in the quote above where the square is rendered a ‘degraded simulacrum’? Fourthly, its topographically central position in the town centre marks it as a key strategic space for contemporary urban redevelopment and civic events, and it was an important site of the local government’s place-marketing priorities. It is thus a rich site for examining everyday cultural claims on public spaces, where the ‘ambiguities of proprietorship, of aesthetics, of social relations... and the political economy of everyday life collide’ (Harvey, 2006a, p. 19).

The chapter is divided in three parts. The structure follows Lefebvre’s tripartite model of the social production of space, discussed previously in relation to the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis. This model examines the dialectics of space in a way that avoids setting up discrete spatial categories or closing spaces into different scales (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]). These three ‘spatial moments’ are, to refresh, spatial practices (perceived space – the observable and material production of space), representations of space (conceived space – the dominant codes, models and narratives that inform abstract conceptions of space) and spaces of representation (lived space – the space as re-imagined and re-appropriated; a site of counter-narratives). I use this frame to tease apart the range of actors, representations and relations of power involved in the production of Anzac Mall. However, separating out these elements is a heuristic and analytical tool – a means to an end – rather than a reflection of their separate nature in the everyday production of space.

I start with a description of the spatial practices of the mall from three angles: its physical layout, rhythms and everyday socialities.<sup>72</sup> The second section examines dominant spatial representations by looking at local government place-marketing strategies of a local food festival and a place management strategy. I examine how these two hegemonic narratives of space produce distinct visions of desirable publics and tropes of productive diversity. The third section explores lived space by examining the gaps between urban design, multicultural rhetoric and everyday appropriations of space. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the modes of (un)belonging and possibilities for urban civilities that get produced in this public space, particularly in the context of neoliberal urban agendas (Hayden, 2006; Koch & Latham, 2012a; Low, 2000).

### **The spatial practices and everyday rhythms of Anzac Mall**

I became familiar with the pedestrian mall over a period of a year. I visited it on average three to four times a week, and then less frequently when I moved out of the neighbourhood. Sometimes this involved sitting for up to several hours on the benches in the mall observing the clusters of activity and people passing through at different times of the day. At other times I noted its daily rhythms and goings-on while navigating to other public spaces, such as Anzac Park. I jotted down descriptions of users' activities, plotted segments of movement around and across the mall on hand-drawn maps, visited businesses around the mall, walked around and chatted to traders at the Sunday market, sat in the Women's Rest Centre, and sometimes inadvertently struck up conversations with other mall dwellers and business owners in the surrounding shops. I also interviewed residents, council staff and local community workers about their perceptions of the space.

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<sup>72</sup> In examining the socio-temporal patterns of these public spaces I draw on Lefebvre's notion of rhythmanalysis (Lefebvre, 2004). Rhythms, he explained, are how the 'everyday' appropriates a particular place and time; they are a way of 'localising time' and 'temporalising place'. Places are made up of multiple, repetitive, overlapping, conflicting and synchronized rhythms that create the 'symphony' or 'polyrhythmicity' of the urban (Lefebvre 1996: 223). In this way, rhythmanalysis enables an analysis of local place as dynamic, multi-dimensional and porous, always in a process of becoming (Edensor 2010). While understanding how to apply rhythmanalysis as an analytical lens is – like other aspects of Lefebvre's work – 'frustratingly elusive' (Amin & Thrift, 2002, p. 19), it does provide a useful tool for attending to more detailed, multi-sensory descriptions of how places are produced. As employed in the following discussions, rather than speaking abstractly about 'atmosphere' and 'vibrancy', a focus on rhythms highlights the unique temporalities and spatialities that mediate and constitute social life in public space.

On a sunny weekday morning early in my fieldwork, I jotted the following notes that formed some of my first impressions of this space and its diversity of users.

The mall is buzzing with voices this morning. It's so busy it's hard to find a bench. Mainly elderly Chinese and Korean folks sitting in groups talking. One bench is filled by a crew of slightly disheveled men and one woman. At one bench two elderly men sit, each taking up a bench. One sits cross-legged, gesticulating to his silent companion.

At another, a group of six elderly ladies chatter loudly, they are all quite elderly but sprightly – I recognise a couple from tai chi – they are accompanied by a couple of small shopping carts. There is a relatively steady flow of people through the square, walking from Beamish Street down towards the park and vice versa [...] Two young men, perhaps in their twenties sit at the bench next to me, one is smoking. [They are later replaced by] two very smartly dressed Asian men, sipping coffees. They wear pinstriped suits and dark glasses.

A young couple with crying toddler go into the medical centre... An older Asian man in bright yellow 'Australia' branded hoody and an old fedora-style hat crosses the plaza, smoking. In the loud group of elderly Chinese, two men pull out two chairs and a small, foldaway table and set them up in front of the benches. They shake out the contents from a tin and start to play.

There is something about the space and relative quiet in the square at this time that seems to relax people – invites them to walk across it. Kids run in circles and chase the birds. The elderly slowly make their way across the mall with shopping trolleys or walking sticks, young mothers slowly push trolleys and prams, meandering or chatting.

These observations make clear the many actors, functions and modes of dwelling involved in the social construction of the mall. The different usages of the space by a cross-section of the community suggest multiple modalities of belonging intersecting in this space. The following sets out, according to our Lefebvrian frame, an analysis of the mall as 'actual space and its forms and objects' as well as a reading of its use-value (Eizenberg, 2012, pp. 767-768). I start with a discussion of the mall's socio-materiality and daily rhythms, which is mainly descriptive and gives a sense of the mall as a physical and temporally patterned space. I then examine in more analytical depth patterns of sociality, residents' perceptions of the space, and review how the mall is 'practiced' by users.

### *Locality and spatial layout*

Anzac Mall<sup>73</sup> is an oblong-shaped paved pedestrian area that constitutes part of Anglo Road. It was previously a roadway, and was pedestrianised in 1994. At its eastern end, it connects with the busiest part of Beamish Street and its transport connections. The western edge of the mall connects with Anzac Park (see Figure 12), and several community organisations, social services and places of worship (e.g. the Salvation Army, Anglican Church, Centrelink and the local Returned Serviceman's League club). It also connects, via footpaths around the edge of the park, to the library and Campsie Shopping Centre, in an adjacent street. Beyond the park are residential streets.



Figure 12: An aerial photo of Anzac Mall (Source: Google Maps)

The Beamish Street entrance is marked by a small circular wall with the name of the mall (see Figure 13 below) shielding a flagpole with the Australian flag. There are also several

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<sup>73</sup> ANZAC stands for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Anzac Day, celebrated on 25 April, is one of Australia's most important national commemorations, and marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by New Zealand and Australian forces during the First World War.

large oak trees, an ANZAC war memorial clock tower and commemorative mosaic set into the pavement (see Figure 14). The latter two features are designated local heritage sites. It features several sets of benches, small trees and shrubbery, shade covers and a small, automated toilet block. A women's rest centre at the western end provides toilets and information about women-specific community services, as well as an informal meeting place. Outside the centre is a colourful mosaic of a cheerful garden scene entitled 'Garden of Hope', which was made by several community groups and is accompanied by a plaque that promotes a theme of non-violence against women. The north and south sides are lined with shops set beneath two- to four-storey buildings. The shops house a range of businesses including several restaurants and grocery stores, beauty therapists, a café, and real estate agent, a green grocer, noodle bars, two dumpling shops (including one that claims to sell 'Sydney's best dumplings'), a tobacconist, a butcher, an Asian DVD shop, a medical centre, a couple of empty shop premises and occasional pop up shops (selling plants or ceramics imported from China). Services such as a real estate agent and optometrist occupy the second floor premises. Activity is mainly clustered around the shops closer to the high street and those with appealing shop fronts, like the green grocer's shop halfway down the mall, which is one of the few businesses that attract a high number of passing pedestrians. Most of the shops have relatively small frontages and varying degrees of access and porosity to the mall. Some are relatively inconspicuous and appear to attract a specialised customer base. Several of these shops seemed to operate as micro-public spaces for particular ethnic communities.





Figure 13: Entrance to Anzac Mall (Photo: the Author)



Figure 14: Anzac Mall clock tower at mall entrance (Photo: the Author)

Visually, the mall is a hybrid space. It features standard Anglo-Australian design and cultural symbols (e.g. the war memorial tower) mixed with the cultural symbols associated with businesses catering to a multicultural community (e.g. signs in English, Arabic, Chinese and Korean). Despite the neat and attractive appearance of some businesses, parts of the mall have a slightly tatty appearance, with tired shop facades, shop windows peppered with ripped, old posters, and vacant shops. The green grocer uses a mix of old shopping trolleys and crates to display fruit and vegetables creating an abundantly provisioned, if somewhat disheveled, shop front. This assemblage or bricolage of signs and materialities adds an air of informality to the more formal design features of the mall (e.g. the memorial, the orderly, fixed mall furniture and the cleared paved area through the centre). And while the businesses and use of the mall is regulated in various ways by the local council (a point I focus on in later discussions) there is an everyday ‘looseness’ to the mall space that leaves it open to ‘tacit rules [that] can support different uses and bear different bodies in space’ (Tonkiss, 2013, pp. 108-9). Initial impressions would suggest that the sense of informality and wide array of cultural symbolism in the mall undermines any dominant spatial code that might convey it as a privileged site for certain publics. But it also makes it a place of ambiguity for some residents, particularly for middle-class residents. Verna’s description of her impressions of the space captures the contradictory nature of the space well:

They do seem to be trying to get the community thing going there [but] to me personally I think it’s a really cold-looking space. I mean, it’s nice enough on a sunny day. But it doesn’t actually invite... it doesn’t look like the sort of place you’d want to hang around in. (Verna, November 2013)

The central position of the square makes it something of a reference point in Campsie. Participant observation and interviews suggested that the pedestrian mall was a physical site of orientation and *localised familiarity* in people’s everyday geographies around the suburb. If not a destination in itself, it was a central space of traverse that connected local people into urban and social infrastructures – the library, shopping centre, Beamish

Street, the park, the medical centre and Centerlink. Connor, a local migrant support worker, refers to this orienting function when he says:

People appreciate that square. People like it. But then, I'm not sure [about] the level of maintenance, or how much investment really goes into it, you know? It's not quite a visually very attractive place, but I agree it plays some important role. And people say 'the square' a lot, they refer to it all the time, [like when] they want to have an appointment [at the medical centre]. It's a kind of a reference point when they talk about Campsie. (Connor, June 2012)

Connor's statement also suggests an ambivalence that people feel about the design and upkeep of the space, despite the fact that it is appreciated as an open and accessible public space.

### *Temporal rhythms of the mall*

There are discernible diurnal rhythms in the mall. Activity begins with the clatter of deliveries and the rattle of mesh roller doors opening over shop fronts. Commuters and students pass through the square on their way to work and school. The trickle of elderly residents gathering on the benches heralds the arrival of the more sedentary groups of mall dwellers, who use the square to meet with friends, chat or rest after shopping. Towards mid-morning mothers with young children join them, often momentarily, while running errands and shopping. Lunchtime draws a diverse mix of people. While some of the elderly residents remain in place, the mall also hosts local workers, shoppers and other residents who sit in the square to eat lunch, talk on mobile phones, chat, rest or have a smoke. A lull after lunch is followed by increasing activity in the late afternoon when families and school children use the square for play, return commutes, or for passing through on pre-dinner shopping rituals. Older youth pass through in small groups, although seldom congregate.

Afternoon rhythms are followed by the return march of workers; clattering heels traversing the square to pick up fruit at the Lebanese-run green grocer. These commuters often pass a group of dancers practicing Chinese folk line dancing in the square most

evenings at dusk. Their choreographed movements are synchronised with music emitted from a small portable stereo. In terms of evening uses of the mall, the demographic shifts to younger occupants and families shopping or visiting restaurants. The local night-time economy is subdued and focuses on restaurants on the main street, several pubs and a couple of karaoke venues. Except for a few restaurant patrons the mall is largely devoid of activity after dark.

In terms of weekly rhythms, Saturdays in Campsie Town Centre are very busy. In the weekend high volumes of shoppers flood the town centre, mostly to shop in the many ethnic food and discount shops or to eat at local restaurants. Shoppers on the weekend reflect the diversity of Campsie's demographics, but are noticeably more middle-aged and middle-class. On Sunday, people are drawn to the informal trade of the Rotary Markets held in the middle of the square<sup>74</sup>. This market comprises around twenty stalls with a range of new, discount and second hand merchandise, such as inexpensive household goods, clothing, general bric a brac, plants, imported ceramics, sunglasses and jewellery. The majority of vendors are from non-Anglo-Australian backgrounds, reflecting the complex demographic composition of Campsie and its surrounds. The market is a temporary, semi-formal appropriation of the space, filling the mall with goods, stall holders and shoppers. On Sundays people also traverse the space on their way to nearby places of worship.

Annual rhythms of commemoration also shape the use of the mall. The memorial clock tower at the entrance (see Figure 14) is a site of annual commemorative activities of Australia's military history: Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and Victory in the Pacific (VP) Day. These events involve a parade down Beamish Street and a memorial service at the eastern end of the mall, before a lunch at the RSL club. The mall is also transformed during the yearly multicultural Food Festival (held in late May or early June), which

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<sup>74</sup> The market is an initiative by the local Rotary Club and had been running for 20 years with council approval. The Rotary Club is a non-profit international organisation made up of business, professional and community leaders who perform charitable acts in the community. The local chapter in Canterbury meets in Campsie, and has featured several previous mayors and aldermen as members. It was a popular market for vendors – the organiser mentioned they were 'busting at the seams' with applications for stalls.

draws significant crowds (which is discussed in the following section).

*Spatial practices of the mall: aged socialities*

Understanding the relatively unconscious and routine socio-materiality of these everyday activities is to understand the pedestrian mall as a perceived space in Lefebvre's terms. Lefebvre framed perceived space as a means of considering the 'the everyday routines and experiences that 'secrete' their own social spaces' (McCann, 1999, p. 173). This involves interplay between the space as designated by planners and how people actually use it, based on their individual and collective perceptions of the space. It is possible to identify both 'residential' and 'transient' populations (Low, 2000, p. 163) in the mall. Transient populations included shoppers, mothers with young children, workers eating lunch in the mall, commuters and other passers-by. There were also several groups of habituated or residential mall users whose daily presence produced this public site as social space. These groups tended to be made up of people who were marginalised to varying degrees, or who were excluded (either voluntarily or involuntarily) from the workforce: new migrants and asylum seekers, pensioners from migrant backgrounds and the unemployed.

The most regular and visible group of occupants in the mall were elderly residents from migrant backgrounds (mainly Chinese and Korean) who gathered and socialised in the space, particularly in the morning. One group of elderly residents of Chinese ethnic background (predominantly male, although it was often mixed) assembled on a set of benches near the noodle shop. They sometimes brought plastic milk crates and a foldaway table with them, to serve as extra seats and a surface for playing checkers. Games were accompanied by tea drinking from a thermos and chatting in Mandarin, often at high volume (see Figures 15 and 16). The practicing of playing checkers represents a common past time for elderly, male Chinese migrants that has been observed in ethnic precincts and other public spaces of Chinese migrant settlement (Spoonley & Meares, 2011, p. 51) as well as featuring as a common pastime in urban spaces in China

(Farquhar, 2009). The gendering of this activity did not preclude elderly female members of the community however, who often sat observing the game, talking, surveying the activities in the mall and contemplating life on the edges of this game, and often speaking to other elderly Chinese pedestrians passing by. A local community worker commented that this was an important meeting point for many of the aged members of the community, who had few other venues for socialising outside the family sphere or church. Moreover, the mall as a social space represents a connection to the urban rhythms of homeland places. Henry, an elderly Chinese resident, stated that the familiar language, practices and faces in spaces like the mall and Beamish Street meant that:

... We live here as we live in Shanghai. The same, we can talk in Chinese. We are feeling convenient [sic] [...] So I love Campsie. I even don't try to move to another area. (Henry, July 2012)

Despite experiencing housing stress (as the rental price on his flat rises) and having experienced incidences of racism,<sup>75</sup> Henry felt that the soundscape, sociality and visual familiarity of public spaces in Campsie provided him and his wife (who spoke little English) with a 'second home', despite still identifying with China as the 'motherland'. Recognisable spatial practices rendered these places less intimidating and eased their participation in the daily life of the suburb. The use of the mall also reflects continuity with recreational and social practices of middle-aged and elderly city dwellers in public spaces in urban China. In these homeland locales, activities such as tai chi, singing and dancing in shared spaces can be understood not only through beliefs about wellbeing (explored in more detail in Chapter Seven) but also a mode of reclaiming city spaces and elements of a collectivist past (Farquhar, 2009).

Other groups of predominantly female residents, from mainly Chinese backgrounds, migrated from their early morning tai chi session in Anzac Park. Tai chi practice

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<sup>75</sup> Henry relayed two incidences of everyday racism during our discussions. One incident involved having a racist comment directed at him in a butcher's shop. Henry explains the second: "One time in the bank I am in the line, some people are not in the line, [and] I say 'go in the line!' They said, 'Go to your home! You are not Australian'. Oh, very bad." (Henry, July 2012).

represents another quintessential and transnational use of public space by the Chinese diaspora (Rishbeth, 2001) and is discussed in more depth Chapter Seven. Pulling shopping carts and stopping at the Women’s Rest Centre on the way, they would rest in the shade of the sun umbrellas in the mall and converse. Cindy, an elderly female tai chi practitioner suggested that the mall provided an important space to sit, interact and watch the world go by for her and her friends. It was a ‘loud place’ compared to Anzac Park that she designated a ‘quiet place’. She liked the hustle and bustle of the square (see Figure 15) and enjoyed both the chance for socializing as well as the opportunity to passively partake in the life of the mall.



Figure 15: Elderly mall dwellers (Photo: the Author)





Figure 16: Elderly mall dwellers and games of chance (Photo: the Author)



Figure 17: Shopping scenes, Anzac Mall (Photo: the Author)



Several residents and community workers commented on the importance of the mall for groups of elderly Korean and Chinese residents, as both a social and material space. The materiality of Anzac Mall was a critical factor in its use as an inclusive space for elderly residents: the mall's proximity to health and social services, transport and residential areas, as well as daily shopping circuits, demonstrates an interaction between its design and the biological, social and psychological aspects of the ageing body. Jimmy, a local migrant support worker working with the Chinese community, noted that many of the elderly residents are family members of the cohort of Chinese students that migrated to Australia after 1989. He found that these aged residents were 'bored' and in need of services and social activities. Leanne, a representative of the Hong Kong Chinese community, noted the importance of such mundane public amenities. She argued that very ordinary elements of urban design in the mall – such as the availability of street furniture out of the way of Beamish Street's hectic pedestrian flows – were important to elderly in the area, as it enabled them to 'have a little bit of daily social life here' (Leanne, February 2013). Connor, a local migrant support worker, also touches on this theme of inclusion, by asserting that public spaces like the mall represent one of the few places available to this particular cohort of aged migrants:

Do you know the square there? Do you see many Asian elderly men sitting around there during the daytime? Elderly citizens, Korean... There is no day centre program, there is no place for them to go, that's why they hang around, because they don't have no other place to go. (Connor, January 2013)

Some residents perceived socialising, relaxing and being visible in a public space as a class-based phenomenon. Another resident, Phillip, whose wife was from Hong Kong Chinese ethnic background commented that his wife regularly passed the mall and called these habituated dwellers 'Chinese bums'. This perception diverges sharply from the narratives of inclusion used by community workers to describe elderly Chinese migrants' use of public space. Phillip's wife perceived this spatial appropriation as evidence of idleness and redundancy in the post-migration context of a particular classed and aged cohort.

On another set of benches was a small group of elderly Lebanese residents who visited the mall on a regular basis. They positioned themselves on the set of benches beside the popular Lebanese green grocers, next to large bins of copious seasonal fruit and vegetables. The activities of this small group of male residents, who rarely moved from these benches all morning and were presumably retired, included bantering with shop staff, sporadic conversations with each other, greeting familiar passers-by, watching others in the mall and just lounging.<sup>76</sup> This was a more clearly gendered use of space – I never observed women with them, although they would often greet known passers-by. This group's daily dwelling in the mall signified a familiar cultural pattern of male-dominated uses of public space, particularly for Lebanese Muslims (Whitten & Thompson, 2005). While this form of appropriation of public space by elderly, male community members is more prominent in locales with greater concentration of Arabic-speaking populations (for example, in the neighbouring suburbs of Lakemba or Punchbowl), it represents a remnant of spatial practices and participation in public space by an ageing cohort of Lebanese migrants in Campsie.

Each group of elderly residents tended to cluster around a particular set of benches, a routine requisition of space that asserted a temporary territorial claim upon certain sets of benches, and clearly defined a territorial partitioning of the mall – at least to the regular inhabitants. In addition, many of the resident groups tended to engage in in-group social interactions, with little engagement with other groups or strangers<sup>77</sup>. Class, ethnic and gender demarcations and language barriers are clearly important considerations in this

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<sup>76</sup> In this example, the micro social worlds of ethnic businesses are another important form of semi-public space that interfaces with, and at points, melds seamlessly into the publicness of the mall. Shops function as community gathering spaces, facilitating information sharing, socialising and gossiping, and thus producing sociality and belonging (Hall, 2009). While time and linguistic constraints made it difficult to research these sites in any depth, several shops in Anzac Mall appeared to attract regulars and operate as informal community hubs.

<sup>77</sup> Setha Low (2000, p. 163), in her study of public squares in Costa Rica identifies 'closed-society' and 'open-society' behavioural ecologies (drawing on Wulff and Low, 1987). 'Closed-society' behaviour ecologies refer to groups unwilling to engage with strangers, while the 'open-society' behaviour ecologies refer to those who are more outward looking and open to engagement. While spontaneous encounters did occur in the mall (and were facilitated to some degree by setting benches together in groups of two at almost right angles), the regular groups of inhabitants described above tended towards 'closed society' behaviour.

socio-spatial sorting. Yet, this pattern of affable non-engagement demonstrates an ethos of indifference, a mutual recognition of a right to inhabit this public space. Honorato, a local shopkeeper who regularly observes the goings-on in the mall, describes the micro-spatial boundaries:

The Chinese ladies have their own space, it is a little bit territorial. Having said that, it's quite a shared space, there seems to be no fighting and people respect each other's spaces. There are no confrontations that I've seen... they largely keep away from each other. (Honorato, February 2013)

This mutual – if indifferent – respect for other mall dwellers is seldom ruffled; there is no need to compete for space or interact if everyone keeps to their (silently) agreed-upon sections of the mall. Thus, through ‘naturalisations of repetition’ the mall becomes a ‘socially patterned ground’ where social norms are worked out daily, however subtly (Amin, 2008, p. 12).

Doreen, a local councilor of migrant background, had similarly observed these spatial practices in the mall and saw them as critical for the long-term settlement needs of migrants. She posited that as well as age, public spaces like Anzac Mall were key to belonging because they accommodated culturally nuanced modes of using public space.

Public spaces are vital. You need to have space to rest, sit, have informal chats, be still. What is lacking is congregating spaces... like informal places for meeting, like the old men playing checkers and the others that sit there... it's more of a European style, but we need more of that. (Doreen, February 2013)

Thus, the cultural role of public spaces for informal congregation was evident for residents from a range of backgrounds. In this sense, the mall represents a cross-section of informal, diasporic practices of public place making. These practices inscribe intersectionalities of age, gender, class and cultural norms of public space use upon the mall.

*Spatial practices of the mall: the sociality of the Sunday market*

The Sunday market (see Figure 18) represented another space of sociality – one that was partly regulated (by Council and the Rotary Club) and partly informal. This market has a visible presence of sellers from East European and European migrant backgrounds (from the nearby areas of Earlwood and Rockdale), although the majority of traders are from Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese backgrounds. Several of the stallholders I spoke to – from Macedonia, Germany and Vietnam respectively – had been attending the market for 20 years. As a long-standing institution that had moved around several locales in Campsie, it was clearly a familiar space of social exchange. Social interactions in the market occurred between stallholders and between stallholders and residents. Social exchange also occurred between residents but to a lesser degree, and few of my participants mentioned the market beyond it being minor part of their weekend leisure activities – something they meandered through when doing their shopping in the town centre or stopping for some bargain-seeking on the way to the park or church.

While the market was clearly – in terms of the ethnic make-up of its vendors – a multicultural space, language barriers presented a problem. A market supervisor from the Rotary Club informed me that in the case of language barriers with stallholders, he relied on one particular Vietnamese stallholder who spoke English and seemed able to serve as a ‘translator’ for other vendors. The Rotary Club’s promotion of the market as ‘very multicultural’ was somewhat undermined by an elderly organiser’s Anglo-centric assertion that he thought it inappropriate that elderly Chinese and Korean residents ‘chose’ not to learn English and to speak in their own language. My field notes from an informal encounter with an elderly stallholder from East European migrant background suggests a similar, if more direct, negative attitude towards certain ethnic groups in the suburb, in which he told me that Campsie was being invaded by Chinese migrants, and that they were all essentially ‘messy and dirty people’ (Field notes, Anzac Mall, 16 December 2012).

In a sense, the Rotary Market supports Watson’s (2009) suggestion that markets are a ‘neglected public space’ of social inclusion and ‘rubbing along’. In Campsie’s weekend market I observed instances of convivial interactions and bartering between stallholders and shoppers, facilitated by the temporary conversion of the mall into a site of informal economic exchange. In this sense, the market has elements of lived space – there is a potential for transversal relations in the temporary suspension of the mall’s usual socio-spatiality. However, this intercultural sociality was somewhat circumscribed in the case of the older generation of stallholders. The everyday sociality of the market was thus somewhat limited in the extent to which it fostered ongoing relationships or overcame prejudiced perceptions between migrant groups.



Figure 18: Weekend Rotary markets (Photo: the Author)

### *Spatial practices in the mall and marginality*

Yet, as much as the mall is practiced as a site of inclusion and sociality for certain groups of residents, and recognised as such by some spatial managers and community workers, not all forms of congregation were welcomed. This is perhaps best illustrated by a final group of mall-dwellers that were routinely visible in the space: a group of mainly Anglo-Australian, middle-aged males of slightly disheveled appearance clustered around the benches next to the takeaway shop, talking loudly. Local residents and shopkeepers variously labeled them ‘drug-dealers’ or the ‘local unemployed’, although of the former categorisation, I witnessed little evidence in the actual spaces of the mall. Honorato, a shopkeeper who regularly observed the comings and goings in the pedestrian mall, commented that they ‘gallivant in that area’. This whimsical phrase not only reflects his perception of this group’s erratic mobilities around the mall and neighbourhood, but more generally, points to their assumed lack of structured employment during the day and associates this group with unpredictable, unproductive rhythms. Somewhat ironically, this group regularly sat in a section of the mall closest to Beamish Street, where there was a sign prohibiting ‘loitering’. This presumed lack of productively and associated idleness in public space frames them as ‘failed citizens’ in the eyes of the local business community. Jacob, another local business owner says:

I have been working here for the last twenty-five odd years and the same people still sit out in the mall with no job. The same people that I saw twenty-five years ago are still the same people that sit there and they still don't have jobs. They get in trouble for drugs. (Jacob, April 2012)

The presence of this group of long-term mall dwellers is framed in the narratives of local shopkeepers through a normative lens of redundancy and disorder, elements that discourage customers and pedestrian traffic. In comparison, the spatial practices of people not participating in the labour force on a voluntary basis – retired residents or those engaged in child-care duties – were condoned by local space managers and business owners. They could, in other words, ‘legitimately’ dwell in the mall during daytime hours.

In sum, the discussion of the mall as perceived space – that is, focusing on the material and observable routines and rhythms that daily produce the mall – highlights the extent to which it is produced by a wide cross-section of the community. But it also highlights how its layout and patterns of use give this public space an ambiguous character: incorporating elements of formality and informality, voids and busyness, inclusion and exclusion, productivity and redundancy, patterns of movement and stasis, areas of clutter and calm, warmth and coldness, conviviality and indifference. These characteristics of the mall, that shape its use value, are patterned by rhythms of work and leisure, cultural expectations of public space use and structural conditions, such as a local history of neoliberal restructuring that has reduced work in the area and produced unemployment, or the squeeze on community spaces that have displaced or reduced the kinds of public space that groups like elderly migrant residents can access. Place-based belonging emerges at the intersection of these socio-spatialities and dominant and planned representations of the space, to which I now turn.

### **The mall as conceived space: managing multicultural and place identity**

The following discussion focuses on how Anzac Mall is imagined, marketed and managed by local decision-makers as a space of multicultural belonging. The analysis of the mall in this section draws upon ideas about conceived space or representations of space (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974)), which interprets space through abstractions: the plans, designs, codes and discourses of urban planners, place-marketing teams and bureaucrats. It also refers to the exchange-value of space, that is, ‘it’s quantifiable and commodifiable qualities’ rather than the use-value discussed above (Eizenberg, 2012, p. 773; Lefebvre, 1991 (1974)). What kinds of activities are appropriate and *who* is a desirable occupant of public space are set out in these spatial codes. It is through such representations of space that normative neighbourhood spatialities and a dominant multicultural aesthetics of place are produced. As I examine, discursive representations of the mall envision and direct processes of urban regeneration in the context of diversity, and can have profound impacts on the micro-social worlds of local public spaces.

I begin by looking at the way that the council utilises the mall for civic events, such as the annual Campsie Food Festival. Of particular interest is how tropes of multiculturalism associated with productive diversity are produced in this temporary transformation of the mall. Secondly, I examine a plan for the future redevelopment of the mall to unpack how the mall and its ideal publics are conceived by space-managers. The first analysis is based on an already-existing spatial manifestation of place-marketing narratives; the second demonstrates how the same narratives are projected onto a future Campsie.

*The mall as civic space: promoting authentic diversity and the food festival*

Anzac Mall is an important stage for annual rituals of civic celebration. During events such as Campsie's annual Food Festival, the pedestrian mall is temporarily produced as a site of imagined community. The one-day festival celebrates Campsie as a haven of multicultural diversity. Marketed as 'one of Sydney's premier food festivals', the event is organised by the council with sponsorship from local businesses as well as SBS Radio, local newspapers, the Korean Cultural Office,<sup>78</sup> the Commonwealth Bank, NSW Transport and the local rugby league team, the Canterbury Bulldogs. Campsie is flooded with a high density of pedestrians – an average of 15,000 in recent years – and the main street is closed to traffic (see Figure 19). Tables, chairs and stalls are set up in the mall, which is transformed by the presence of a large marquee and stage where the formalities, competitions and cooking demonstrations are staged. It is also the site where dance and music demonstrations are performed. Other festival activities (that vary year to year) have included food tours, tai chi lessons, kimchi eating competitions, noodle making workshops, children's activities and fruit and vegetable carving.

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<sup>78</sup> This organisation is part of the South Korean government's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.





Figure 19: Festival crowds, Beamish Street, Campsie Food Festival 2012 (Photo: the Author)

At the time of fieldwork, the festival had been operating for twelve years. It is part of a wave of place-marketing events in Sydney emerging at the time of the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, and capitalising on global city discourses promoting attractive cosmopolitan diversity (Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003). The festival was initially marketed as a Korean food festival in line with Campsie's tag line as the 'Seoul of Sydney'. Over time, this ethnic focus has expanded to include demographic changing in the area, although the South Korean presence remains strong. As Jacob, a local real estate agent notes:

The Seoul of Sydney was the big push, but just in the last two times it has been on there haven't really been advertising the Korean-ness of it all, if you like. And I think some of the Koreans are actually getting up and moving on and I am not quite sure what the next incarnation is in Campsie. I think probably Pacific

Islander, Indian, Fijian is there. Certainly general Asian as far as the Asian supermarket idea goes. They are not really pushing one flavour over another. (Jacob, April 2012)

The festival aims to ‘bring people from all different backgrounds to celebrate not only the harmony between cultures but also celebrate our love for good food’.<sup>79</sup> It is marketed as a ‘foodies heaven’ where attendees can treat themselves ‘to an array of delicious Portuguese, Russian, Turkish, Japanese, German and our predominant Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese and Japanese cuisines to name a few’.<sup>80</sup> Festival goers are told that they ‘won’t have to travel far to experience flavours from around the world’. This consumption of exotic, ‘global’ food makes the intercultural encounter intimate and embodied, and is a key pedagogical tool of multiculturalism (Flowers & Swan, 2012). Indeed, food is a potent symbol in Sydney’s ethnic economy – whether interpreted as a symbolic form of ‘eating the other’ or as a form of cultural enrichment (Flowers & Swan, 2012). However, as Perera and Pugliese argue that there is still a degree to which the gastronomic simplifies ethnic identities and renders them appealing in the context of existing Anglo-Australian cultural orthodoxy:

The culinary, with its economy of enrichment and incorporation, signifies the palatable and always aestheticised element of multiculturalism precisely because it still effectively reproduces an assimilationist economy of cultural containment and control. (Perera & Pugliese, 1996, p. 110)

People can experience these ‘flavours’ through the consumption of ethnic food, but also through the presentation of music, dance and other art forms (see Figures 20 and 21). In the two years I attended, African dance and music troupes, Korean seniors folk dancing, traditional Chinese folk dancers, lion dances, tae kwon do demonstrations, a Sierra Leone women’s group, and a Cook Islands youth dance performance were among the many acts that transform the paved area of the mall into a temporary ethnic performance space.

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<sup>79</sup> Sourced from <http://www.campsiefoodfestival.com.au/about/>, accessed 31 May 2012.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

These events are popular with a wide cross-section of the community who find them ‘entertaining’, ‘colourful’ and ‘interesting’ according to several fellow festival attendees I spoke to during the festival held in 2012.

In these performances, cultural difference is displayed to maximum effect (through costumes and colour) and draws on traditional or reductive elements of ‘Chineseness’ or ‘Africanness’ that seldom resemble contemporary modes of dwelling in urban space of these migrant groups. As Kay Anderson has shown in her study of the construction of Sydney’s Chinatown, these performances potentially legitimise popular beliefs that essential characteristics of migrants groups and ‘dramatise differences that in reality are subject to change’ (Anderson, 1990, p. 14; Anderson, 1993). Local ethnic business owners also embrace these representations of their culture, which cater to both a touristic gaze and a multicultural gaze. One shopkeeper who hosted a mini food tour in his shop, found that while the festival crowds were mostly friendly, ‘there is a them/us thing going on, like a zoo’ (Honorato, December 2012). The presence of local migrant groups is associated with exotic ‘elsewheres’ and cosmopolitanism, although in some years of the festival vendors have only vaguely mapped onto the actual demographic composition of the suburb.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> <http://www.campsiefoodfestival.com.au/about/>. Not all stall holders are local. Indeed, the festival includes many street food vendors who regularly circuit multicultural festivals and farmer’s markets in the Sydney region, which is why there is a reference to ‘Portuguese, Russian, Turkish, Japanese, German’ food in the festival’s advertising, despite the fact that any one of these groups represent a very small proportion (less than 0.5%) of the population. Such mobile expressions of consumable diversity – proven in other spaces of the city to successfully appeal to the middle-class consumer – lead some sections of the local business community to feel disconnected from a festival that aims to market Campsie and its local ethnic entrepreneurialism. A staff member informed me that the council recently had to persuade local business owners to re-invest in the festival after falling interest and a perception that external vendors were taking customers away from local businesses during the festival (Interview with Timothy, February 2013).



Figure 20: Chinese folk dance, Anzac Mall, Food Festival 2012 (Photo: the Author)



Figure 21: A Sudanese Sufi dance group, Anzac Mall, Campsie Food Festival 2012 (Photo: the Author)

The temporary reordering of Anzac Mall allows for mass mingling and micro-appropriations of the space. People sit on curbs, rearrange chairs and tables, and assemble in spaces of usually regulated flow, while crowding around the performers in the square. As such, it is a temporary subversion of the conventional spatial order, otherwise dominated by automobility. The audience for these representations of place is highly diverse. As such the festival is not entirely an instance of what Hage (1997, p. 118) calls cosmo-multiculturalism, in which the agency of migrants is subsumed to a form of middle-class consumption of ethnic otherness, constituting a ‘multiculturalism without migrants’.<sup>82</sup> Migrant residents were very much involved as both consumers and stallholders. Some local residents enjoyed the festival as it gave them a sense of pride and solidarity. Rose – a 40-year old long term resident from South Korea – felt that this celebration (as well as Australia Day) promoted a sense of community (Rose, February 2013). For others the festival was experienced as a sensorial, aesthetic event. Sophia, a local resident who is a second-generation Greek migrant, explained:

We have this Campsie festival and they dress up in their cultural background clothing and we have performances and stuff like that. You’ll really get a feel... that’s what I mean about the colour. It’s really sensational. I really love being here. (Sophia, November 2012)

Sophia’s statement highlights what is appealing about diversity, particularly as a sensorial experience of multiculturalism. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that despite essentialised narratives driven by corporate imperatives in the festival, it also offers experiences of affective solidarity and direct and indirect intercultural exchange. While such community building could be interpreted through the notion of conceived space as part of contemporary forms of urban governance – that is, the aim to create a sense of civic pride and loyalty to place in an increasingly place-less world of capital (Harvey, 1989, p. 14) –

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<sup>82</sup> Hage used this idea to refer to the nature of emerging forms of cosmo-multiculturalism. Using the example of the appropriation of ‘ethnic food’ into circuits of multicultural consumption, he argues that the ‘ethnic feeder’ is seldom represented as an active subject; rather, the eater (generally white, middle-class consumer) is framed as the active subject. It involves, in other words, an ‘erasure of migrants subjects’ (Hage, 1997a, p. 118).

it also suggests that there are also many moments that lend themselves to an analysis of the festival as lived space where micro-resistances and new meanings of space might emerge.

However, Harvey (1989, p. 14) also warns that, in the realm of urban governance, such ‘a search for local identity... opens up a range of mechanisms for social control.’ Indeed, the festival is a far cry from evoking Lefebvre’s notion of the right to the city where festivals can come to represent grassroots expressions of the passion and will of city inhabitants. In the micro-space of the pedestrian mall, few of the usual patrons are present in the mall at this time; the benches instead filled with newcomers to the suburb as well as a range of residents – particularly family groups – from Campsie and surrounding suburbs. A couple of elderly residents I spoke to from low socio-economic backgrounds commented that they occasionally attended the event as a diversion, but found it crowded and seldom engaged in purchasing food that they found to be cheaper in the local shops.

The carnivalesque atmosphere is also clearly regulated: there is a police presence, road cordons, a set programme and neatly ordered stalls that are all visually coordinated with standardised signage. Using Anzac Mall as a stage, the event functions primarily as an exercise in civic promotion, local economic development and place marketing. And this does not always equate to an experience of intercultural togetherness nor a celebration of the actually existing diverse community. Comments from Jacob, a local businessman, highlights the social impacts of the council’s aims to position Campsie within Sydney’s landscapes of marketable diversity:

[The community is] a bit cliquey [...] and the council kind of promotes it. I am not quite sure why, it might be the Council trying to get a place in the Sydney community for itself – the ‘Seoul of Sydney’, come out to our festival, it is better because we are Korean. Whereas you first started to notice that at Chinatown in the city, then it became trendy to be little Italy. And I don’t really think it is trendy to be Korean [...] they haven’t got anything really to back it up [...] You can’t make it an area that it isn’t – you can’t make it a place where people want to spend money when it is Two Dollar shops [...] Campsie is like most other places. It is kind of rolling on as the commercial things that happen dictate and all the



council is doing is try to put out a few fires [...] there is no direction. (Jacob, April 2012)

Jacob points to the trends towards ethnic branding that drive the political economy of diversity in the city, but that do not necessarily fit with a population that prefers (or can only afford to) shop in 'Two Dollar shops'. His remarks suggest that a discourse of productive multiculturalism runs the risk of prioritising an ill-fitting global city narrative and the imperative of capital over the socio-demographic reality of Campsie. By pushing a Korean place-identity, the council potentially undermines the ethno-cultural diversity that produces Campsie's everyday multiculturalism and shapes residents' experiences of place. Jeong Hoon, a new arrival in the suburb from a middle-class South Korean background, commented that this representation of ethnically branded civic identity was somewhat disconnected from his experiences of Campsie and its diversity:

I think I can sense that [a sense of community in Campsie] through the email from the Canterbury council [about the festival]. But in real life I don't feel it that much. I'm sure there are a lot of communities here... each community is different. (Jeong Hoon, June 2012)

While the socio-spatiality of the Food Festival experience from the perspective of residents could also lend itself to an analysis of lived space, my focus here has been on the representations that inform the Food Festival approximate migrant home-building practices that appear to be 'far more linked to tourism and the international circulation of commodities than to the circulation of migrants' (Hage, 1997, pp. 117, 119). Moreover, it fits with the general transformation in urban governance towards an emphasis on 'tourism, the production and consumption of spectacles, [and] the promotion of ephemeral events within a given locale', which are the 'favoured remedies for ailing urban economies' (Harvey, 1989, p. 13). Branding through productive multiculturalism to compete within Sydney's urban economy carefully selects representations of place and difference. And while the festival may foster opportunities for transversal encounters, there remains significant gaps between the representations of people and place evoked during the festival (conceived space) and the more nuanced, precarious and mediated everyday experiences of multicultural belonging. These have been glimpsed in the

previous discussion of the mall as perceived space, and are further examined in the subsequent section in this chapter focusing on lived space.

*A plan for Anzac Mall: cosmopolitan belonging and desirable urban futures*

Hegemonic frames for multicultural belonging are also articulated in the council's strategic plan for regenerating Anzac Mall. The Anzac Mall Place Management Strategy was adopted in 2012 but has not yet been implemented. The plan proposes re-opening the mall to one-way traffic, and creating a cosmopolitan 'eat street' where alfresco dining would be encouraged (see Figure 21). The plan will create 'smaller, separated civic open spaces'.<sup>83</sup> Existing heritage elements – the memorial clock tower and a decorative mosaic commemorating World War I – would remain in place, and the Rotary Markets would continue to be held in this space through temporary road closures (MacroPlan Australia, 2011). Public facilities such as the Women's Rest Centre would potentially be removed or relocated, as would the mosaic artwork outside it. The only uses of the mall as a recreational and congregational space would occur through council-sanctioned 'civic' events (the food festival, Rotary market and ANZAC Day memorial events).

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<sup>83</sup> A street view representation of the regenerated street (MacroPlan Australia, 2011) illustrates the extent to which spaces of congregation are designed out: it is envisioned that less than one quarter of the existing street space would be designated for activities and objects other than parked cars, moving vehicles, trees, outdoor café settings or pedestrian flows.





Figure 22: An impression of the redesigned pedestrian mall (Source: Canterbury City Council/MacroPlan)

According to the local newspaper, the redesign would showcase the area's 'enticing Asian offerings' and make Anzac Mall comparable to other 'eat streets' in the city, such as Leichhardt's Norton Street (known for its Italian cuisine) and Cabramatta's John Street (promoted as a Vietnamese precinct).<sup>84</sup> The regeneration plan aims to 'inject vibrancy into the precinct', and to 'improve its contribution to the Campsie town centre as a public space.'<sup>85</sup> Local economic development imperatives are emphasised in the plan and woven with aspirational imaginaries of Campsie as a highly cosmopolitan suburb. Gemma, a local councilor articulates this clearly:

Campsie, out of the seventeen suburbs that we have, Campsie seems to make its money ... Campsie seems to be on the move all the time. And it's going to be even

<sup>84</sup> Indeed, the plan cites other 'successful', automobile-accessible eat streets in Sydney, such as Concord, Crows Nest, Balmain, Randwick and Parramatta (although only Parramatta demonstrates the same degree of ethno-cultural and socio-economic diversity as Canterbury).

<sup>85</sup> See: <http://www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au/Business/Town-Centres-Economic-Development-Program/Anzac-Mall-Place-Management-Strategy/Voluntary-Planning-Agreements-for-Anzac-Mall>

better – we're going to have open-air cafes, we are going to have street cafes. I don't know if you know Anglo Road? [Anzac Mall] [It's] where we have the [Food] festival, we are going to open that street. It's going to be more cosmopolitan and draw more crowds. (Gemma, January 2013)

Gemma frames Anzac Mall's redevelopment as a natural outcome of the suburb's intrinsic dynamism, which must be capitalised on to make it more attractive to crowds of consumers. Her comment would also suggest a prevailing narrative in local governance that councils' investment in local areas must be justified through sustained economic growth and the ability of the suburb to 'make money'. This form of instrumentalist spatial assessment reflects what Harvey refers to as a shift in urban governance away from managerialism and towards urban entrepreneurialism. Urban locales are framed as corporations and urban governance is oriented to 'the provision of a 'good business climate' and to the construction of all sorts of lures to bring capital into town' (Harvey, 1989, p. 11). With little reference to existing design features or uses, the council classifies the existing spatialities of the mall as problematic and non-productive. The existing shops are deemed low-value businesses. Poor commercial viability and 'vitality' materialised in shop vacancies are cited as leading reasons for re-opening the mall to traffic, along with the perceived under-utilisation of the space and the threat of anti-social behaviour. A council administrator explained that the mall's 'lack of vibrancy' was due to a mix of global forces (the global financial crisis) and more localised factors ('drug problems' in the mall). To counter this perceived stagnancy, the plan aims to attract high-value, large retail stores as 'anchors' in the mall that would improve on the existing, undesirable 'anchor' of Centerlink (social welfare office).<sup>86</sup>

It is proposed that the redevelopment will be partially funded through a public-private partnership with developers who have purchased two buildings on either side of the mall

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<sup>86</sup> While this preference for a large retail outlet is fairly standard in urban regeneration strategies, it should not always be equated with greater economic growth, particularly in areas of with high ethno-cultural diversity and below-average incomes. In her study of a multi-ethnic retail strip in South London, Hall argues that city redevelopment strategies need to take into account the fine grain differentiations between local retail practices. She posits that local, innovative and resilient practices of existing independent ethnic retailers – and their ability to adjust to large-scale economic forces – are a key resource for more responsive local planning (Suzanne Hall, 2011).

for the purposes of mixed use, but mainly residential, development.<sup>87</sup> For the council, regenerating the mall as part of a public-private agreement (the strategy involved seeking 25 per cent of the funding from the developers)<sup>88</sup> is critical given increasing fiscal constraints for local government. The regeneration initiative has already involved \$75,000 worth of consultation (Vella, 2011).

Public consultation about the plan comprised direct consultation with eight local business owners and tenants and four residential property owners, who live and work in or proximate to, Anzac Mall (although information was provided to all businesses in Campsie) which formed the core of the reported community consultation comments in the plan. Shopkeepers were key stakeholders in this process of representation. Comments cited in the plan indicate the extent to which a coalition of shopkeepers, developers and councilors mobilised around shared agendas of public safety, attractive retail space and economic vibrancy. As such, the interests of a range of migrant and non-migrant business owners (and the Rotary Club who runs the market) are implicated in local space management strategies. In doing so, they create a normative gaze that divides anti-social elements from ‘the community’ and is familiar to neo-liberal civic redevelopment efforts in other cities and diverse town centers (Iveson, 2007, p. 149).

Further public consultation was undertaken through an information stall in the mall for part of one day, to gauge the views of the public, eliciting comments from ‘thirty to forty people’. As one council manager explained, engagement with the wider community is always a problem:

It’s very difficult. Particularly in the environmental policy area, they engage with a number of the community services groups [...] so we try to directly tap into

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<sup>87</sup> At the time of fieldwork, apartments in one of the complexes were being sold from the plan for \$450,000 - \$495,000.

<sup>88</sup> In this case, developer contributions are sought through volunteer planning agreements (s93F); an alternative mechanism to S94 and s94A developer contributions in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (NSW). The mandated contributions enable the council to levy contributions intended for ‘public purposes’ – to enhance public amenities and services, affordable housing, transport and other infrastructure. Employing volunteer planning agreements enables the council to direct these funds into the already-existing redevelopment plan for the mall.

those groups, into the CALD community in particular, we often have translators for certain policy or meetings where we think it might be appropriate or beneficial, response rate is still low [...] Even in the area of development applications [...] I think sometimes people don't necessarily see... having come from a background where it's not so much of a problem, [they don't necessarily see] the more higher density development [as a problem]. So that could be part of it. (John and Paul, July 2012)

These comments suggest that while efforts are made to engage the local culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, there is a lack of interest from the community in issues relating to the built environment. This indifferent attitude is partly attributed in John and Paul's statement to residents' cultural expectations regarding active participation in local planning decisions, and – as mentioned later in the interview – a general lack of time and resources of Campsie's diverse communities. While these attempts to engage the community are commendable, they also depend on *which* policies and meetings council deem contributions from the diverse community to be 'appropriate and beneficial' and there was little evidence that they had been used to inform the mall's place management strategy.

It is possible to discern two dominant representations of space – or examples of conceived space – underpinning the plan, both of which have a bearing on how multicultural belonging is imagined in this public space. The first is based on an ideal cosmopolitan public that imposes some kind of productive order on the existing 'messiness' of the mall. The second representation uses discourses of public safety to define who is 'in place' and 'out of place' in the future mall.

To begin with, the place management strategy does not mention diversity or multiculturalism, nor does it refer to the existing demographics of the suburb (except for noting 'Asian' patterns of dining out). Instead, public space is transformed through the language of consumer-oriented cosmopolitanism and maximised economic activity, which are used to describe the social benefits of the re-design. Key benefits are framed as increased attractiveness, 'access', 'vibrancy' and 'vitality', as well as a heightened 'potential for outdoor dining', 'passive surveillance' and 'functionality'. This is to be

achieved through the conversion of parts of the mall into privatised café spaces, pedestrian/consumer thoroughfares, and roadways, thus encouraging existing or desired middle-class consumption patterns, and patronage from non-local consumers that own private transport and have the means to eat out.<sup>89</sup> An excerpt from a conversation with a local official illustrates the projected demographic that the plan aims for:

RW: As Campsie becomes gentrified, and you provide outdoor spaces and higher value shops, how does that fit with the demographics of the suburb? Do you think there is enough of a [middle-class] population to sustain the gentrification happening in the area?

Timothy: Um, yeah... I have to say I haven't thought a great deal about that. I think there will be [more gentrification] with the developments that are occurring in the town centre, so there are quite a few new apartment buildings going in so I think that will bring new people to [the area], and also in the mall itself... [We've] seen quite a number of restaurants come and stay, so there are two very good quality Japanese restaurants, a Malaysian restaurants, a Thai restaurant, so a bunch of restaurants that have come with the people, so I think that will happen. (Timothy, February 2013)

Ethnic cuisine emerges as a key tool for attracting middle-class property investment and as a signifier of local transformation through gentrification, and is part and parcel of the push towards greater density.<sup>90</sup> This form of consumerist cosmopolitanism draws on other definitions of cosmopolitanism: as a everyday negotiation of 'living together with difference' (Noble, 2009b; Young, 1990), and open attitude to different cultural experiences (Hannerz, 1990; Skrbis & Woodward, 2007). But it does so in a superficial way, rendering 'culture' as product and spectacle which is taken up in urban strategies

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<sup>89</sup> There was only one existing café at the south-western corner of the mall that offered outdoor seating, at the time of research. This somewhat 'tired' and inconspicuous café situated amongst vacant shops did not exactly live up to the image of a cosmopolitan eat-street, but had for a long time been a key social space for the Hong Kong migrant community. At the time of writing, two additional cafés have opened in the pedestrian mall, one with outdoor seating. It is assumed that these cafes have taken advantage of recent amendments to council charges for the use of pavement space by businesses. This change – a key part of the Anzac Mall plan – saw the reduction of pavement display costs that had previously been set at rates comparable to Sydney's Central Business District. It also suggests another reason why this kind of outdoor spatial practice had not flourished in the mall previously.

<sup>90</sup> The council's recent Development Control Plan allows for greater density in Canterbury's town centres than previous control plans (John and Paul, June 2012) and public-private partnerships are seen to be necessary for taking advantage of state agendas for increasing housing density in town centres.

that could, in reality, design out many of the diverse cultural and spatial practices that give Campsie its present ‘vibrancy’. A local politician captured this sentiment when she said, ‘I just love it [Campsie]... it is bustling, it is different, it is interesting, you can get anything you want and there isn’t a big whopping Westfield sucking the life out of it’ (Carole, July 2012).

The plan envisions that local ‘cultural needs’ will be addressed in the redesigned mall through existing Sunday Rotary markets, the Food Festival and proposed Chinese markets on a Saturday, which are seen to provide ‘important cultural experience[s]’ (MacroPlan Australia, 2011, p. 43).<sup>91</sup> Material elements like the clock tower also seen to embody sufficient ‘local culture’ and identity for the whole community, despite its function in Anglo-Australian discourses of nationhood. As a council manager explained to me:

I think the mosaic is quite pretty and important, and the clock tower... although it’s the ANZAC memorial that is a Campsie icon – Campsie wouldn’t be Campsie without it. Whether you live here and attach the meaning of the ANZAC memorial to that icon, or whether it just represents a key feature of Campsie to you. I think more broadly people wouldn’t want to see that go. And it’s a key feature of the RSL’s functions. (Timothy, February 2013)

Timothy’s representation of the memorial clock tower illustrates its versatility as a material symbol. In his narrative, he recognises it as a signifier of military history and settler identity, as well as mobilising a more inclusive signifier of local identity. Lefebvre (2003 [1970], p. 21) argues that monuments in modernist urban space function to produce colonised and oppressed space, to the extent that the monument represents the power of an institution (e.g. the church, the state) and its ability to control the populace. There is, he posits, little idea of ‘habiting’ monumental spaces. On the other hand, monuments are also a ‘site of collective (social) life’ and can function to bring people together (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 21). Timothy draws on unifying representations of the memorial (as an

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<sup>91</sup> Saturday markets (mainly food stalls) run by a company that also manages the markets in the tourist hub of Chinatown in Sydney’s CBD, had been trialled in Campsie in previous years. However, the initiative had failed to capture sufficient customers, and was unsuccessful.

attractive architecture feature, part of local identification processes and as an element in rituals of collective memorialisation). But he fails to acknowledge other meanings and interpretations of the monument in relation to ‘repressive’ dimensions of national identity and state power, particularly when juxtaposed with significance afforded other memorial elements in the mall (like the Women’s Rest center mosaic). The Anzac Mall redevelopment therefore has traction within the dynamics of Sydney’s political economy of suburban infrastructural development that increasingly relies on private investment and a range of stakeholders beyond local government and residents. Cultural symbols of local identity are selectively engaged and ethno-cultural diversity in public space is emptied out and made over in the image of the competitive, cosmopolitan global city.

The second dominant representation of space that emerged from the plan – to which I now turn – was a set of signifiers associated with safety, productivity and the social control of diversity in public places. The plan and consultation highlighted public safety and orderly diversity by playing on the local community’s ambivalent perceptions of the mall. Yet, people’s ambivalence about the space was augmented by the existing design of the mall. The furniture in the mall is positioned around its edges, leaving a large, central, unsheltered paved area in the centre, suited to passing through or playing in, but without amenities to sit or dwell. The visible lack of sustained social utility in this central space reinforced perceptions of the mall as ‘under-utilised’, based on a logic of optimised public space and density of consumer traffic (and capital accumulation). The openness of the mall was also framed as problematic in the sense that under-utilised space is open to appropriation by ‘dangerous’ elements. In Anzac Mall, the disordered presence of the group of ‘unemployed’ mall-dwellers and a more nebulous discourse about youth and anti-social behaviour were evoked as symbols of existing and potential threats.<sup>92</sup> ‘No loitering’ signs, for example, were positioned at the entrance of the mall that interfaces with the main street to discourage groups of youths gathering, although the regulations were clearly not reinforced at the time of the fieldwork, and most activities observed in

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<sup>92</sup> This sits alongside emerging narratives of particular groups of problematic migrant youth – a police representative referred to groups of Polynesian youth and the ‘danger’ of young refugees from ‘war-torn backgrounds’ (Francis, October 2012) as potential sources of disorder.

the mall – from parents meeting their children, to pensioners chatting in groups or neighbours greeting each other – would contravene them.<sup>93</sup> Other responses to the disorderly elements of the mall in the form of spatial control included a regular police presence. Indeed, the square was often used as a ‘stage’ for local policing tactics, and several times over the course of fieldwork, police cars were strategically parked in the centre of the mall (see Figure 23), or next to the Women’s Rest Centre, as part of a local area command visibility exercise.<sup>94</sup>



Figure 23: Police cars in Anzac Mall (Photo: the Author)

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<sup>93</sup> Indeed, a local planner joked that he had completely forgotten the existence of the signs. Local council put up signage around 1998 to regulate perceived anti-social behaviour in the mall, and was designed to respond to complaints from businesses about groups of youth and prostitutes ‘hanging around’ in the area (Nuisance, 1998). During my fieldwork I did not observe any obvious presence of sex workers, although several interviewees mentioned that this industry had moved to the vicinity of Canterbury Road – a major arterial road regularly used by truck drivers, who were purportedly a key clientele.

<sup>94</sup> By parking directly upon public, pedestrian space the police make a clear statement about their power to regulate activities and behaviours in the mall. According to one local officer, the positioning of the vehicles and presence of the police was an exercise in community engagement. Another asserted that the mall was a ‘high drug area’, so the purpose of the high visibility exercise was to ‘have lots of police around so the criminals aren’t’ (Informal conversation in Anzac Mall, extract from field notes 13 February 2013).



Yet, several residents made the point that ‘the perception of crime was greater than actual crime’, as reported in the council’s consultation (MacroPlan Australia, 2011, p. 25). One of the Women’s Centre attendants commented that she had observed the group of unemployed men in the square for several years, and asserted that ‘they are harmless... they don’t do anything’. The central narrative of public safety in the plan therefore speaks to the strategic activation of space as a *problem*. Such a framing of space is familiar in contemporary Australian town planning, and addressed through the widespread use of the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles.<sup>95</sup> The perception of danger was used to justify returning the space to car traffic, for the reason that occupants in cars serve as ‘eyes on the street’ or natural/passive surveillance, as do consumers using the sidewalk cafes (MacroPlan Australia, 2011, p. 6). While Jane Jacobs used the idea to promote greater sociability, safety and walkability in densely populated urban villages (Davis, 2012; Jacobs, 1961), this concept is now more generally used to prioritise the ‘eyes’ of the automobilised, responsabilised middle-class. In Campsie it appears that the sight of the existing mall inhabitants, for example, those deemed risky bodies or marginal figures such as the elderly residents of migrant background, is not particularly valued.

However, the discourse of public safety and its spatial application was not always indicative of a revanchist middle-class reclaiming the city. Indeed, segments of the migrant community were encouraged to participate in community safety narrative building. New arrivals are often targeted by public safety initiatives, for example, through seminars provided by local police at English language learning centres. Established migrant groups and senior citizens were schooled in these ideas of public safety at information sessions in the local public library and community consultation on issues of community safety. Thus, local residents are enrolled into *seeing* space in this way and are socialised into cognitive ‘safety maps’ (Evers, 2008) that designate appropriate uses of,

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<sup>95</sup> Indeed, the Council was awarded \$500,000 from the National Crime Prevention Fund, administered by the Attorney General’s Office of the Commonwealth Government, premised on utilisation of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles in the proposed design ‘so that levels of crime, particularly robbery, will reduce and perceptions of safety will increase’ (Canterbury City Council, 2013b, p. 47).

and inhabitants in, public space.<sup>96</sup> These narratives then responsabilise subjects into ‘images of civility’ (Zukin, 1995, p. 44) that inflect local senses of belonging.

While existing, everyday uses of the space by a multi-ethnic population – elderly migrant residents, women, children and other groups – are briefly acknowledged in an appendix to the report, their insignificance is communicated in the fact that little in the preceding plan directly accounts for their spatial needs. Transforming the space into a ‘vibrant eat street’ capitalises on the ethno-cultural diversity of the suburb and its businesses, but in a way that potentially excludes certain segments of the population. This could include, for example, elderly residents and youth who cannot afford to purchase food and drinks in cafes or festival stalls, and women from a range of backgrounds (including Muslim) who feel intimidated by male presence in outdoor spaces and cafes (Whitten & Thompson, 2005). There is a danger that the imposition of a normative vision of safe, productive cosmopolitan space could undermine or simply design out the existing functions of the mall as a multi-layered cultural landscape and a site of everyday multiculturalism and the home-making practices of migrant groups (Hage, 1997; Jordan & Collins, 2012). The absence of a multicultural discourse in the plan is telling. Like the ‘neutral’ municipal bylaws in Toronto that Valverde analyses, it ‘does not mean that diversity is not constantly being managed, minimised, channelled... produced, or swept under the rug’ (2012, p. 77). Designing a public space that privileges certain consumption rituals, traditional symbols of Anglo-Australian national identity, and sanitised diversity, delineates a particular framing of local place identity that potentially leads to a symbolic and spatial displacement of residents and selectively inclusive narratives of multicultural belonging.

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<sup>96</sup> It is worth noting that while targeting ‘vulnerable’ new arrivals and responsabilising them into risk-averse behaviour in everyday urban spaces may have positive outcomes, some scholars have argued that this kind of profiling has an associated danger of essentialising migrant groups through stereotypes of passivity that frame them as ‘soft targets’. Dunn and colleagues use the example of institutional responses to the racial attacks on Indian students in 2009 that identified the behaviour of students in public spaces (e.g. speaking loudly in Hindi on trains) as a contributing factor to their susceptibility to violent crime, and argue that this has the potential to constitute a kind of ‘new racism’ in Australia (Dunn, Pelleri & Maeder-Han, 2011).

### **The mall as a space of representation: everyday tactics of belonging**

On the surface, these top-down visions suggest a closing down or at least containment of dimensions of public space as a site of congregation, encounter and multiple articulations of difference. Or, at least as a place of participatory democratic politics as envisioned in interpretations of Lefebvre's right to the city, or humanist imaginaries of democratic public space (Blomley, 2011; Mitchell, 1995). Yet, forms of imposed spatial knowledge do not touch down in the everyday life of the neighbourhood fully formed. There are moments of interplay and friction. Planning processes are often contingent and messy (not least in their dependence on funding, as in the case of the Anzac Mall plan), and far from complete in mastering prosaic public space. Moreover, micro-resistances and alternative spatial practices emerge that disrupt hegemonic ideas of space.

Here I consider *lived* or representational space as part of the dialectic of Lefebvre's three spatial moments. As the term suggests, it refers to space as directly lived, in the sense that it is not mediated through abstract systems of knowledge. Lived space largely involves systems of non-verbal symbols and signs, compared to the careful plans and narratives of conceived space. It is the 'dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate' (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 39). Edward Soja (1996), whose work updates and further expands on Lefebvre's tripartite model, proposes a re-thinking of 'lived space' as Third Space. Drawing on postcolonial and post-structural theory, Soja explains Third Space as that which is *unrepresentable* in the sense that it refers to the 'always Other' dimension of the city that cannot be captured by abstract space. This rendering of lived space does not necessarily contradict Lefebvre definition of *representational* space, because Soja is using the idea of unrepresentable space to emphasise the sense of possibility and virtuality that Lefebvre sees in the social production of urban space. Soja draws on subaltern identity politics to frame lived space as a space of radical urban subjectivity, and to thus capture a key aspect of Lefebvre's thinking about lived space as those tantalising moments of emergence and transversal

encounter in the city. But how do they translate into mundane place-making practices and cultural belonging in Campsie's pedestrian mall?

The following discussion addresses this question, by examining examples of socio-spatial 'tactics' that appropriate or re-imagine space in a non-confrontational and incremental ways, rather than as direct and transformational 'strategies' or form of social action (de Certeau, 1984). Nevertheless they play a key role in shaping the everyday production of Anzac Mall. I begin with an analysis of the Women's Rest Centre, examining it as a gendered site of unexpected sociality and exchange. The second part discusses a particular spatial practice of line dancing in the context of ethnic community identity claims. I argue that both constitute subtle resistances to dominant spatial narratives defining Campsie's legitimate multicultural publics.

#### *Hidden publics: gendered appropriation of space and the Women's Rest Centre*

The Women's Rest Centre sits towards the western edge of Anzac Mall, in a nondescript building (see Figure 24). The centre is comprised of one small room with seating and notice boards with community information on a range of local services, in addition to clean toilets and baby-changing facilities. It offers a Justice of the Peace service for a couple of hours twice a week. One attendant works in the facility at a time (there are two part-time staff), and is either seated behind a glass partition in the corner of the centre, or moving around the facility cleaning or chatting to users. It is a women-only space. There is a steady stream of users during its opening hours (from 9 – 5pm), and an attendant told me that they have an average of 350 users a day. Users are from a range of backgrounds, and use the centre as part of everyday circuits relating to consumption, health and childcare. Ostensibly, female residents used the centre for 'refreshment' and the toilet facilities, to feed/breastfeed children, rest, and to seek out information about local services.



Figure 24: The Women's Rest Centre and mosaic (Photo: the Author)

As a designated women's facility it is a clearly gendered space. There is a Council-funded artistic mosaic on an outside wall titled 'Garden of Hope'. The mosaic illustrates a sunny garden complete with child-friendly images of flowers, butterflies, birds and other garden creatures, and the words 'love', 'grow', 'trust' and 'safe' (the latter word framed in the image of a house). The artwork is dedicated to non-violence against women (and children) and made by young local women from local youth, childcare and domestic violence support groups.<sup>97</sup> The mosaic further reinforces the gendered, refuge function of the space, particularly for mothers.

The centre was associated with safety, comfort, cleanliness and convenience in users' narratives. Pamela, an elderly resident, who arrived in Australia from Vietnam in 1978,

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<sup>97</sup> According to the accompanying plaque, young local women from the Belmore Youth Resource Centre, Koorana Young Mothers Supported Playgroup, and a Domestic Violence Support group at the Sydney Women's Counselling Centre made the mosaic. Coordinated by the Canterbury Domestic Violence Liaison Committee and funded by Canterbury City Council and the NSW Department of Community Services, it was launched in December 2005 by the then-mayor, Cr. Robert Furolo.

was pensive when I suggested the Women's Rest Centre might be moved if the regeneration plan went ahead. She saw this amenity as a local necessity, as she felt intimidated by other unsafe or male-dominated spaces in Campsie:

But they should have a toilet there, because people need it. And they are cleaner than the [train] station - I see some men in the women's toilets... it's horrible, they scare me. They are very good in Campsie with the women's [centre] and they have the air con. (Pamela, February 2013)

Ada also found the centre to be a space of cleanliness and safety. She links it to the gender-specific sociality and subtle supervisory role of staff that provides a welcoming and protective atmosphere. Noting that she regularly used the facility, she explained:

They have very nice staff, very nice ladies there. They have two toilets, one for the man [the automatic toilets outside], and the toilets for the ladies. It's nice and clean, and the staff are very kind and careful. It's the lady's rest room you know, so many ladies use the toilet. And so they always clean very well. (Ada, February 2013)

The sense of unease associated with accessing other public facilities (such as the toilets behind the center – purportedly a site of local drug dealing) were part of female residents' psycho-geographical maps setting out safe pathways through the suburb.<sup>98</sup> Often, this was spoken about through notions of cleanliness as opposed to the more dangerous and dirty spaces of the neighbourhood, reflecting female residents' experiences of the visceral and symbolic dimensions of disorder that helped define the mental maps of safety, convenience and care and guided daily mobilities around Campsie. In relation to local spaces that were sometimes uncomfortable and threatening, the rest centre was a place where matter was clearly 'in place' – to draw on Mary Douglas's (2002 [1966]) classic analysis of the construction of concepts of purity and pollution. These perceptions inform subtle spatial and gendered contours of belonging and non-belonging in Campsie.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> This sense of security and safety has occasionally in the past been disrupted – an attendant noted that they had issues in the past with female drug addicts using the centre as a place to inject drugs (Field notes, 24 November 2014).

<sup>99</sup> My own experiences of conducting fieldwork in the pedestrian mall reinforce these perceptions of space, where oftentimes, I would feel quite conspicuous as a young female (particularly in the role of mall-dweller

To the extent that the centre excluded men, it presents an arguably necessary exception to the liberal theories of a universally accessible ‘public space’, as has been explored in relation to other controversial women’s spaces in Sydney (Iveson, 2007, p. 189; Whitten & Thompson, 2005). This form of special treatment constitutes a kind of counterpublic or withdrawal from public space, but it doing so addresses significant issues of equity (Iveson, 2007, p. 199; Whitten & Thompson, 2005). This was justified by both users and local service providers – one of whom asserted that there was a need for a safe, social space for women in Canterbury area more broadly, particularly those who had recently arrived in the country. Laura, a community support worker, explained that in a recent community consultation,

[One of the] main issues that really came out at all the consultations and the forum [...] was around the lack of space for women in the community. [...] People saying they felt very socially isolated or they knew many women who were – because of lack of family supports etc and arriving in a new country not knowing where to go, who to turn to – feeling very isolated, so a big emphasis was on women wanting activities and space [...] [not just spaces] where women are coming together, but maybe also [giving them] a sense of self-esteem and belonging. (Laura, July 2012)

But more than this, the rest centre also operated as a node of local gossip, intercultural encounter and informal information exchange. I regularly witnessed the easy sociality of the place, and indeed, for some regular users it appeared to be a social destination in itself. This is evidenced in an informal conversation with one of the attendants, recorded in my field notes:

[The attendant] comments that the women who do tai chi in the park in the mornings are often the first people to use the women’s rest centre in the morning. She says a whole range of people of different ages and ethnicities use the space. I ask if people use it as a space to socialise, she says yes, people do, they meet

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rather than passer-by). I recorded seven different instances of being approached by men (I was never approached by women). Exchanges ranged from friendly chats about Campsie or the goings-on in the mall, to attempts to pick me up or in the case of one concerned Greek gentleman, to marry me off to his single son. In any situations in which I felt uncomfortable, the Women’s Rest Centre was a useful ‘safe zone’ to move to (field notes, 25 October 2012).

friends, and sit and chat, use it as a meeting space. [...] Often the same people use it a number of times over the day. (Field notes, Thursday 25 October 2012, 2.15pm)<sup>100</sup>

Spontaneous social interactions between the staff and users or between users were relatively common. Visitors who appeared to be complete strangers ended up engaging in in-depth conversations about anything from children's health and education, local services and governance to the weather. Topics were sometimes gendered, relating for example, to child-care or where to buy the best women's clothing in Campsie, as illustrated in the following field notes extract:

While sitting in the Centre today a conversation started with Harriet [a staff member in the centre, of second-generation European migrant background] [...] and a young woman with a young baby (who later mentioned that her parents were of Hong Kong descent). They chat about difficulties of child rearing in general [...] The three of us talk about intergenerational dynamics in families – the young woman says her parents and in-laws don't give her a lot of support with her children, despite the fact she has two children under two years of age. A young African woman then comes in with a tiny baby, both Cathy and the young mother turn their attention on her. She is taking her baby to the medical centre with a rash, and has to wait for an hour before seeing the doctor. They both look at the child and tell her not to worry [...] They spend some time reassuring her before carrying on chatting about their own experiences raising young children, and each joking about their husbands' lack of support with childcare. Harriet then strikes up a conversation with me about her own, grown-up children, who have moved out of Campsie. (Field notes, Wednesday 6 February, 12.30pm)

What is noteworthy about this exchange is its impromptu nature and its ability to transcend any perceived ethno-cultural differences in mothering experiences. In other words, the woman's identities as caregivers of young children were more prominent in that space than ethnic or other identities. By sharing experiences of motherhood, the site facilitated solidarity and support, as well as a form of cross-cultural exchange that offered a legitimisation of the pressures of family and children.

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<sup>100</sup> My analysis in this section is based on spontaneous and overheard informal conversations with users of the space and the attendants, who I informed about my research. It also draws on observations and interviews with local residents who happened to use this facility. I was unable to directly approach users to invite them for formal interviews due to ethics clearance restrictions. In any case, I suspect this would have significantly disrupted the rhythms and sense of social trust engendered in the space.



In another informal exchange I participated in, Camille [a centre attendant] and Nancy, a middle-aged centre user who had stopped by the centre to rest while out shopping, debated the benefits of recent residential developments in the area. Focusing their discussion on a particular new housing development along Canterbury Road, a major transport corridor that bisects Campsie and Clemtown Park, Nancy (who described herself as a second generation Italian migrant and long-term resident of Campsie), railed against the lack of parking and congestion this would create and the lack of council consultation. She mentioned that a residents group, who met at the local bowling club, had formed to protest against the development, although she conceded the group could do little at this stage of the development, given the ability of ‘multi-national corporations [to] do what they want’. While Camille did not fully agree, and diplomatically pointed out the need for more affordable housing that might result from such a development, Nancy remarked that only ‘certain types of people’ liked that form of development (i.e. higher density housing) (Field notes, 24 November 2014). While the content of this exchange signals intriguing set of issues relating to the local politics of urban redevelopment, what I wish to highlight here was the fact that the discussion took place spontaneously in this non-descript, micro-public space between three relative strangers.

The attendants’ light regulation of the space and friendly presence was important to the extent that it encouraged inclusive sociality and informal dialogue and occasionally, debate across difference. This feature was less likely to be found in other consumption-oriented spaces of the suburb, and was clearly appreciated and reciprocated by users of the space. Indeed, during one session fieldwork, a regular user came past with a bag of fresh bread from the local bakery, to thank an attendant for her help. Thus, the attendants did not fit the role of ‘spatial managers’ nor community workers with an agenda to engage users. The sense of informal support is particularly valuable to people experiencing some degree of marginality or social isolation or who required an informal ‘refuge’ (e.g. pensioners, newly arrived migrants, or women seeking help). As such, the socio-spatiality of the Rest Centre facilitated moments where the parameters of

community and shared values were negotiated in relation to the multiple identities of the women using the centre – as concerned residents and rate-payers, as mothers, as aged citizens, as newly arrived migrants etc. Several factors, including its accessibility, its official designation as a women’s space and its casual, egalitarian order, enabled these kinds of encounters. In this sense, the Rest Centre comes close to what Ash Amin (2002) has referred to as ‘micro-public’ space. Moreover, this observation supports other studies of intercultural encounter that posit that while quotidian exchanges can be facilitated by planning measures, ‘conviviality cannot be coerced’ (Peattie, 1998, p. 240).

Yet, representations of this space in council plans failed to recognise the space as an important gendered site. Indeed, it was highly ambiguous in terms of the council’s allocation of responsibilities and resources. Initially, it was classified as a toilet block and supervised by the council’s waste management unit. In late 2012, local decision makers and spatial managers acknowledged the diverse community functions of the centre and its management was transferred to the council’s social planning division. Timothy, a senior staff member, explained why he was interested in my observations of the Women’s Rest Centre:

I’ll tell you the reason – we’ve been looking at options for cost reduction. One of the big sort of cost centres for our waste services – because it was waste services who ran the Women’s Rest Centre – and there was talk of just getting rid of it altogether. And I’ve said several times, because part of my role is business improvement, so I’ve said, but what’s it being used for? So in the last six months I’ve been successfully shifting the responsibility for reviewing that from waste [services] into community development [services], which has been a major coup for me! For two or three years I’ve been hammering our waste guys, figure out what the center is ... I knew something was happening there. But we need to get a handle on what’s happening there so if we do re-open the mall we can make provision, we are able to replicate that somewhere else ... because I think there is value in it... but I’m not quite sure where the value is. (Timothy, February 2013)

While this manager has an inkling of the centre’s community function, representations of the space within the planning and business development logics of the council were highly gendered. Through the lens of male-dominated management, knowledge about the rest

centre was incomplete and ad hoc and guised in a language of mystery, because it was a women's space (it is unclear why the female attendants of the centre were not consulted). Moreover, despite this victory in re-assigning the rest centre to the community development team, Timothy's representation of the space is one dominated by the idiom of economic rationalisation, where regardless of previous governance efforts to recognise areas of community vulnerability and need (e.g. relating to issues of domestic violence), the site's *functionality* and *exchange value* become the preeminent criteria for assessing its 'value'. Indeed, the plan for redeveloping the mall suggests that 'in its current form as a community facility, the Women's Rest Centre may not be the highest and best use in that location and it might not attract the right mix of people to bring vitality and viability to the Mall' (MacroPlan Australia, 2011, p. 29). As such, suggestions are raised in the plan that include the possibility that it becomes a 'non-gender specific shelter that provides important community information' or more profitably, a café (MacroPlan Australia, 2011, p. 29). The artwork and its significance in the context of community action against domestic violence is not mentioned in the plan, compared to, for example, the importance given the ANZAC memorial mosaic. The idea that a certain segment of the population are (in)appropriate inhabitants of the mall – (presumably based on their inability to contribute to making it an 'economically vibrant space') – ignores the centre's everyday activities, and entirely renders invisible its symbolic status supporting the right for women to have a safe refuge.

The plan fails to adequately account for the highly gendered spatial practices of the mall, and the fact that 'gender is experienced in and through place; place is more than [merely] a container for gender difference' (Dowling, 1998, p. 73). And while a more economically viable and well-designed mall space could contribute to greater gender inclusion in the long run, the dominant view of the future pedestrian mall is essentially politically and gender neutral. This reflects the ideal middle-class urban consumer-citizen that contemporary forms of entrepreneurialism governance seek to mould, attract and manage (Harvey, 1989; McGuirk & Dowling, 2011; Osborne & Rose, 1999). But as McGuirk and Dowling (2011) argue, everyday urban life and processes of social

reproduction are too ‘messy’ to be contained within the consumer-citizen subjectivities that neoliberal urban governance prefers. By designing space in a way that essentially erased gender differences and their intersection with local ethno-cultural diversity, spatial management strategies worked to disregard critical dimensions of everyday experiences of local belonging. In this way, the apparently objective tool of urban planning neutralises spaces of resistance (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]). Yet, through their everyday use of the space, women incrementally asserted their right to occupy this site as an exclusively female space, and were part of a quiet claim upon public space that countered these official narratives.

*Spatial tactics: the micro-appropriations of Anzac Mall*

Other spatial appropriations that did not accord with officially designated uses of Anzac Mall were also observable in its daily rhythms. These micro-spatial practices assert claims of other forms of local belonging, based on ethnic congregation and a lack of community space, which gets lost in official multicultural discourse.

One such appropriation of space is a form of line dancing practiced by a group of approximately ten to fifteen middle-aged to elderly, mainly female residents from Chinese ethnic backgrounds in the mall in the evening. The informal dance troupe was significant in many local residents’ recollections of the square, not least because the synchronised movements were accompanied by audible folk music that drew attention to this group. Indeed, several people mentioned it as a routine aspect of the everyday public culture of the mall:

Over the course of a day – early morning there’s the tai chi [practitioners from the nearby park] then the regular users [...] and in the early evening it’s the dancers and that’s pretty much every day that happens. (Verna, November 2013)

... have you noticed – in the wintertime I don’t know if they still do – there is a group of ladies that get together and dance, practice dancing there [...] it’s great to watch. (Margaret, July 2012)

Despite its familiarity to residents, the practice was also mildly controversial. Leanne, who volunteered for the local Chinese Hong Kong community, noted that this informal practice did not have council approval.<sup>101</sup> She attributed the group's use of the mall to a lack of available physical congregational and recreational spaces for residents. But she also explained it in relation to migrants' differing cultural habitus in relation to public space use:

But this [the line dancing] is not legal, yeah? Because you need the approval [from council], so sometimes people are complaining... But you can't think people will not [use public space] In Australia it's very boring, it's so dependent on where you come from. Sometimes during the first few years I felt horrible – too early to go to sleep. Seven o'clock you can't see even one person in the street. (Leanne, February 2013)

In this comment, Leanne argues that spatial appropriations like Chinese line dancing make sense in the context of migrants' expectations about street vitality and the accessibility of urban nightlife. The sluggish suburban rhythms of Campsie – compared to Hong Kong where Leanne had previously lived, for example – impacted on her sense of homeliness in the area when she arrived. Feelings of boredom and alienation were expressed as a lack of opportunities for socio-spatial engagement in the locality and activation of public spaces at night. In this sense, the line dancers represent a quiet encroachment that disrupts staid temporal, spatial and gendered codes governing the use of suburban public space, as well as council policies that require permission for organised activities in council-owned public space.

It was likely the practice was accommodated or perhaps merely 'unseen' by the authorities because it constitutes an aesthetically attractive, mildly exotic spectacle that aligns with Campsie's multicultural place-identity. The uneven regulation and accommodation of informal practices in urban space – through a highly contingent

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<sup>101</sup> I was, unfortunately, unable to trace whether there had been any formal complaints (to council) laid against this group. However, the practice was observable throughout my fieldwork period and recurred in residents' narratives of the space, which would suggest that this practice was ongoing despite any complaints.

politics of in/visibility – is fundamental to urban transformation and leads to the sanctioning of some spatial practices, and the problematisation or exclusion of others (Tonkiss, 2013; Valverde, 2011). In its very enactment, the practice re-imagines official (if seldom enforced) representations of this space as one of regulated civic togetherness, temporarily converting it into a pragmatic space of community activity and leisure.

Indeed, the lack of ‘community space’ was a common complaint from residents and community workers alike. A dearth of accessible community space (such as a local hall) not only reduces ethnic communities’ opportunities for gathering, but also for making identity claims. This is particularly marked for residents who may already have little ‘space’ in the national public imaginary where immigrant contributions are measured through ‘good migrant’ narratives based on productivity, passivity and conditional entitlement. A local community worker, Connor, remarks that this has a significant impact on processes of identity formation for local groups:

The community gathering is a very significant event in every community, because it’s the kind of activity they get united [sic], they find their common identity through the celebration of their culture. And I see the issue here is first of all, I think there is a financial issue, and local government is government and of course they play politics. I guess the majority that you see in local government, they are all developers! And I wouldn’t be surprised if the key decisions affecting the access issue of our target community are made on the basis of, you know, a [political] favour [...] some groups find it really hard [to access spaces for community gatherings]. (Connor, January 2013)

Connor’s comment stresses migrants’ spatial needs for assembly, which enables the social expression of ethnic belonging. He also points to the complex local political context in which decisions about public space provisioning take place. The small appropriations of space that happen in Anzac Mall indicate how activities in public space can contest existing bureaucratic spatial orders, as well as the demands of neoliberal capitalist interests that aggressively shape suburban Sydney, as well as the complex dynamics of local political representation. It is also interesting that this group is mainly

female; representing an en masse appropriation of space at dusk that subverts prevailing discourses of the space as dangerous and disorderly after dark.

The practice exploits the ‘loose’ nature of Anzac Mall – discussed previously – to recast it as a temporarily active, communal space. This looseness refers in part to the lack of explicit and enforceable rules in this site (Tonkiss, 2013, p. 109) – compared to, for example, the highly regulated space of the library (discussed in Chapter 6). Lefebvre provides a further way to think about the potentialities of these un/under-used spaces in the city through the idea of ‘spatial voids’ in the planned urban landscape. On the one hand, spatial voids in city space are one way that abstract space and its dominant logics of capital clears disorder from the city – as seen in monumental spaces such as Haussman’s Parisian boulevards. But the ‘dead spaces’ created by capital in the city are also potentially dangerous from the perspective of urban governance, because they are places where anything can happen: ‘a crowd can gather, objects can pile up, a festival unfold, an event ... can occur ... centrality is always possible’ (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 130). Anzac Mall incorporates elements of both aspects of void space. In one sense, local government policies that require approval to use the space for community activities inadvertently clears out informal congregation, particularly for those groups without the resources to apply for approval (or provide evidence of liability insurance required for any kind of planned event or gathering). But the peopling of Anzac Mall in the hours that it becomes a dead space – as evidenced in the line dancing – is also a form of informal contestation of the spatial logics of the mall that render it empty and under-used. It is this form of contestation in which ‘space [is] taken over by the ephemeral’ and where every place has the possibility to become ‘multifunctional, polyvalent, transfunctional ... where groups take control of spaces for expressive actions and constructions, which are soon destroyed’ (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], pp. 130-131). Even in the most mundane suburban sites, these types of spaces are most closely aligning with the prospect for resistance and activities that reclaim the city.

## Concluding remarks

City making from a planning perspective involves projecting the future ‘local’ in its best, sometimes utopian, light (Hall, 2013a, p. 8). The gap between reality and desirable futures is therefore expected – and while always negotiated and inevitably incomplete – it has potentially profound impacts upon who is and is not entitled to participate in those futures.

The chapter describes the production of Campsie’s pedestrian mall as it is forged through routine spatial practices, discursive place-marketing strategies and moments of counter-appropriation. In doing so, I highlight the ‘normative terrain’ upon which everyday forms of belonging and dwelling are monitored and negotiated (Trudeau, 2006). The council’s abstract visions of Campsie as a site of cosmopolitan consumption potentially wield an ‘awesome reductionist force vis-à-vis ‘lived experience’ (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 52). Standardising public space (and privileging automobility) runs the risk of ‘killing the vibe’ as one local resident put it<sup>102</sup> – that is, the disordered, informal multicultural that local residents appreciate. Neoliberal urban planning can privilege symbols and images over direct social interaction in public spaces, so that designers of urban public space ‘increasingly accept signs and images of contact as more natural and desirable than contact itself’ (Mitchell, 1995, p. 120). Diverse publics are desirable, but only those which are productive, safe and controllably ‘vibrant’. While drawing out attractive multicultural difference, it also nullifies lived difference. As Lefebvre argues, this indicates a profound contradiction of abstract space: while it emphasises homogeneity, ‘it can only exist by accentuating difference... [through] a continued state-sponsored process of fragmentation and marginalisation that elides difference and thus attempts to prevent conflict’ (McCann, 1999, p. 171).

A familiar theme of gentrification threads through this chapter. It is an example of the re-engineering and de-politicisation of (sub)urban space through a middle-class aesthetics

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<sup>102</sup> Informal discussion with Campsie resident (Fieldnotes, 6 February 2013).



and consumption culture that Sharon Zukin has classically called, ‘domestication (or pacification) by cappuccino’ (Zukin, 2010, p. 4), which potentially leads to the dispossession of original residents and a debasement of the commons (Harvey, 2012, p. 78). Yet, these processes of gentrification and their stakeholders and beneficiaries are often ambiguous, as Zukin argues, and mobilising notion of ‘authenticity’ as a ‘cultural form of power over space’ can be a means of gaining ownership over space for *any* group (Zukin, 2010, p. xiii). What is interesting in this case is who is doing the envisioning of ideal publics and for what ends. In a transitioning suburb of high socio-economic diversity such as Campsie, this is hardly a ‘migrant’ vs. ‘non-migrant’ debate. But as the examples above show, some groups – at various intersections of gender, ethno-cultural diversity and non-productivity – are clearly framed through discourses of non-belonging.

I also argue in this chapter that there is a continual interplay between the different ‘spatial moments’ in Anzac Mall that present gaps and negotiations for spaces of transformation. There are possibilities for intermingling at managed events – the food festival or weekend market – but as I have shown, prevailing spatial and social logics that manage diversity tend to limit the degree of transversal encounter in these temporary conversions of the mall. The majority of the mall’s intercultural interactions operate at the level of polite indifference to groups sharing space, and this represents in itself an important form of co-presence in multicultural localities (explored in more depth in Chapter 7). In this sense, the spatial practices of the mall are restricted in their ability to ‘break down the separate, specialised, and hierarchical structures of everyday life’ (Crawford, 1999, p. 34) and enable ‘more engaged urban subject[s] to emerge’ (Watson, 2009, pp. 1591, 1582). However, opportunities for new spatialities and new forms of transversal, multicultural belonging open up in unlikely places – for example, in the micro-public space of the Women’s Rest Centre. The mall’s sociality and emerging representational spaces point towards what Amin (2008, p. 8) calls ‘situated multiplicity’ and highlight factors that encourage and discourage urban conditions of civility.

## Chapter 6 / Creating multicultural citizens in the ‘city’s living room’

*In the history of writing on public culture, the semiotics of public space has been read as the symptom of the urban, and sometimes human condition... The displays of collective life in public spaces ... [fuse] the extraordinary and the ordinary in the lived experience of space, adding all manner of meaning to being in the company of strangers. (Amin, 2012, p. 73)*

### Introduction

In this chapter I examine how public space, multiculturalism and belonging come together in Campsie’s local library, a highly utilised and popular institution in the town centre.

Unlike the pedestrian mall, the library is an indoor public space and one that is more directly managed on a day-to-day basis by the local council. The library is an important social and spatial frame of reference for many local residents and spatial managers. It is also a critical place for articulating what constitutes local belonging and more broadly, belonging to Australian society, particularly for new arrivals and ‘citizens-in-becoming’. As archetypal public institutions, libraries have long been associated with the idea of the democratic public sphere in liberal democratic societies and their traditional function of mediating the relationship between the state and civil society. They do this by providing ‘access to information so as to encourage an informed citizenry and thus a healthy democracy’ (Dudley, 2013, p. 22). In a multi-ethnic, transitioning neighbourhood like Campsie, how does this quintessential urban public amenity shape constructions of citizenship and belonging? While Anzac Mall communicates certain registers of belonging based on urban regeneration and its ideal multicultural publics, the library communicates a slightly different story.

I again draw on Lefebvre’s three spatial moments as an analytical lens. I first consider Campsie library as a perceived space. I start with a brief description of the physical layout and temporal rhythms of the library. Drawing on observation and interviews with

staff, community representatives and local residents, I then examine how spatial practices of library users produce it as a site of sociality and as a semi-private ‘living room in the city’. In the second section, I analyse the dominant representations of the library (as conceived space) propounded by key stakeholders – the local council and other government and non-government agencies. In the third section I investigate the library as lived space, using examples of spatial politics and everyday claims upon library space that destabilise dominant representations of space, and have a unique configuration in a multi-ethnic locale like Campsie. In the conclusion I argue that emergent practices of spatial belonging are produced at the intersections of perceived, conceived and lived space. This interplay offers a more nuanced view of making place and multicultural belonging in Australian cities.

### **The spatial practices of the library and everyday life**

My initial impressions of the library were of a mildly chaotic, highly diverse and well-resourced space. I began using it as a convenient place to study, read, shelter, conduct and write up interviews, and to escape the dense pedestrian activity of the main street. I did not initially identify the library as a key site for my research. It seemed to be too obviously multicultural – a kind of cliché of Australian multiculturalism<sup>103</sup> – and my attention was initially drawn to other interstitial and less directly managed public spaces. However, after speaking to residents about their everyday routines, and observing modes of dwelling in the library, it became clear that the way the library operated as a site of multicultural belonging was far from straightforward. Despite being inconspicuous amidst the commercialism of the town centre, it is a kind of flagship institution in the multicultural landscape of the suburb, appearing prominently in council social planning documents and community notices, council signs along the main street, in discussions with local service providers, and featuring repeatedly in conversations about quotidian practices of place-based belonging for local migrant residents. The following unpacks the library space as social product; the result of the interplay between everyday routines,

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<sup>103</sup> As evidenced in popular culture, for example in the Australian television comedy series, ‘The Librarians’ which captures the central place of public libraries in negotiating the challenges of a diverse community.

individual perceptions of space, physical space and urban and multicultural infrastructures.

### *Spatial layout*

The library moved to its current location beneath Campsie Shopping Centre on a popular shopping street off Beamish Street in 1986 (from the council buildings in Beamish Street). It is the central library for the City of Canterbury in addition to three branch libraries.<sup>104</sup> The library offers some degree of interface with the street life outside, with all-glass window frontage and street-level access (see Figure 25). It occupies a non-purpose-built building; and while a welcoming space, there are several design features that make the site less than ideal, such as a poky back-entrance leading to the shopping centre overhead and the toilet facilities. The entrance foyer features seating, a display cabinet that houses small exhibitions about local community groups, and a multi-lingual sign welcoming users to the library (see Figure 26).

Service desks, self-service issuing stations and security gates are positioned just inside the entrance, beyond which the library opens into the main collection area. On the left is a large meeting and activity room facing the street (see Figures 27 and 28) furnished with large communal study desks, and next to it, a dedicated young children's ('junior reference') space complete with colourful, child-friendly furnishings. Further into the library to the right of the entrance and service desks is a signposted 'youth space' and several meeting rooms separated with glass partitions where the weekly English language classes are held. A magazine collection is positioned next to these rooms with several tables and comfortable chairs for reading.

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<sup>104</sup> The library employed approximately 25 staff, some of who were from migrant or ethnic minority backgrounds. There was a balance between male and female staff. Three staff members in senior and middle management positions – who nonetheless spent significant time 'on the floor' interfacing with the public – were interviewed during my fieldwork. Their responses were analysed in combination with over fifty hours of observation and commentaries on library use from resident users.



Figure 25: Campsie library (Photo: Canterbury City Council)



Figure 26: Campsie library's multi-lingual welcome sign (Photo: the Author)

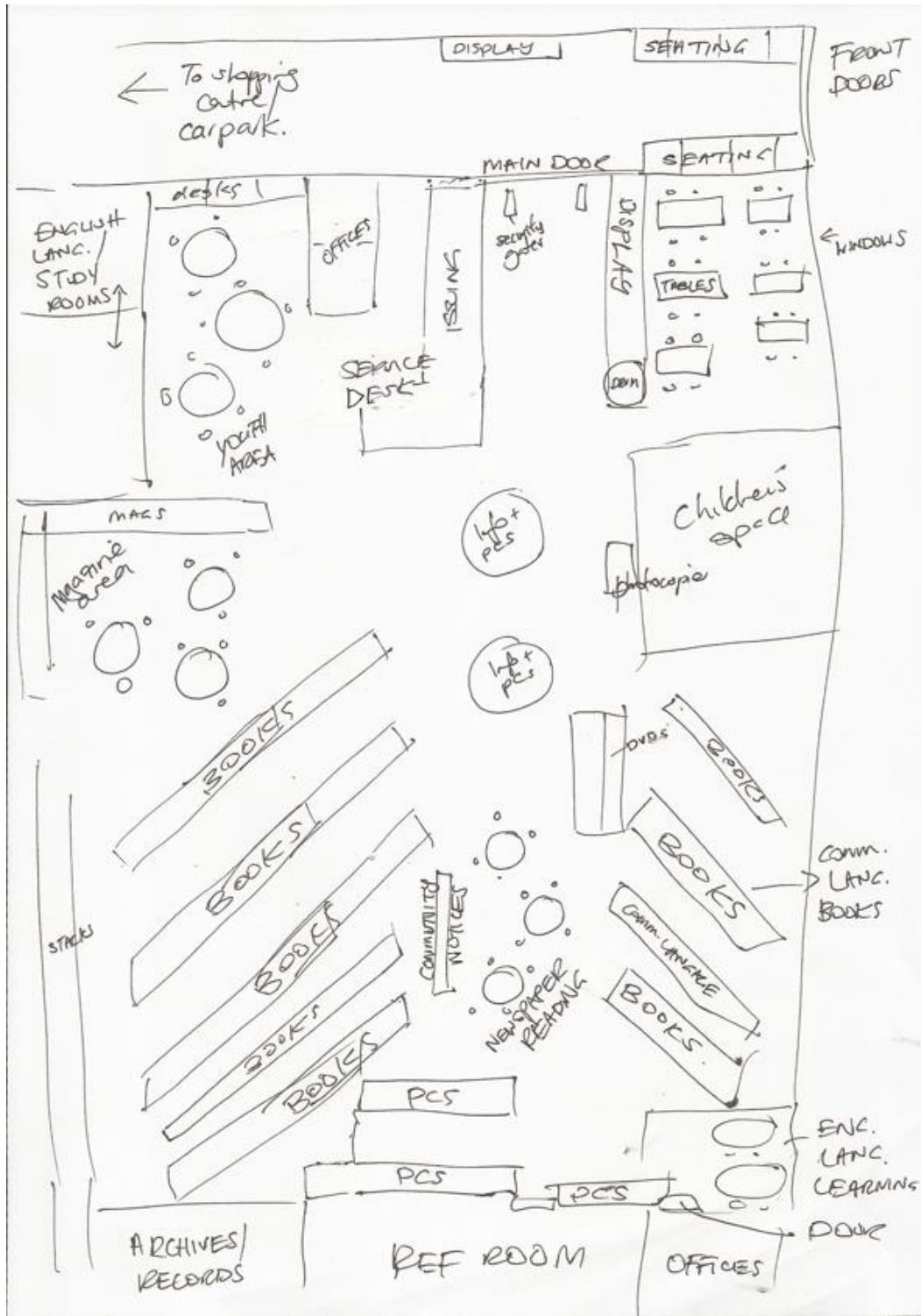


Figure 27: Library layout, field notes July 2012 (Source: the Author)



Figure 28: The library interior (Photo: the Author)

To the back of the library is a ‘Language Learning’ area signposted and positioned next to the community language book collection. The newspaper-reading section sits alongside and is furnished with small tables and padded, functional armchairs. This is divided off from the computers by a community noticeboard that displays notices from local ethnic and community organisations, the council, and about the library’s forthcoming events. Publically accessible computers are situated in two rows along the back wall of the main collection room, and beyond them, a door leads to the reference room, which is a dedicated quiet study space. Other services include a DVD collection, a photocopier and several circular information posts with access to the library’s catalogue system.

The library’s services are in high demand; staff told me that they typically have an average of 1500 people pass through each day. The crowds gathered outside the library



each morning before opening time illustrated the popularity of library services (see Figure 29). Some mornings up to twenty people waiting outside, ducking under the doors and rushing to the newspaper section to secure the most up-to-date foreign language newspaper edition. The library's opening hours reflect local demand – it is open seven days a week, and until 8pm on weekdays. It is free to access – a requirement that is mandated by state legislation (the NSW Library Act 1939 and the Library Regulation 2010).



Figure 29: Crowds waiting outside at opening time (Photo: the Author)

Accessibility and comfort were key attractions for local residents. It provides a year-round, comfortable environment to shelter from the elements, relax with a book, play, learn or have a break while shopping. The seemingly mundane fact that the library is air conditioned in summer and heated in winter was a significant reason for elderly visitors in particular to regularly use it.



### *Everyday rhythms*

The library has distinct diurnal, weekly and yearly rhythms. The library's long opening hours fosters a diversity of users and activities, reflected in the range of programmes that the library runs over the course of a week. Programmes include English language classes, book clubs, author talks, knitting groups and community poetry reading groups, children's 'storytime' sessions, after-school homework programmes and holiday children's activities. Margaret, a senior staff member of Anglo-Australian background who was particularly insightful about the libraries everyday dynamics, explains:

Well, Monday and Tuesday mornings it's ESL [English as a Second Language] students, and there are about 40 or 50 of them that come across the two classes. But generally, for the rest of the day, it's the people that come in the morning that go straight for the newspapers. So there is a core group of the community that goes straight for either the English language or community language ones.... that's why they all run through the door, to get the newspaper first. And then on some mornings like Thursday and Wednesday mornings we have our Baby Bounce program and our Storytime program, so it will be filled with young mums and carers, grandparents who bring their kids along to those programs. So if you came along on those mornings, it would be filled with the [elderly] demographic reading newspapers and then just 50 mums and their kids! And then in the afternoon it gets a bit quieter. But you know we have a lot of workers in the community that come in in their lunch hour and so on. So 1 to 2pm would be the quietest time, unless we have events. And then it's the children. And then at 5 to 8 [o'clock] it would be people coming back from work, people bringing their children in to get material and getting things themselves and other people. So it does change. And it also just depends on what events we've got on, and what demographic that's aimed at. (Margaret, July 2012)

Patterns of use were also shaped around annual rhythms – National Reading Week, national public and school holidays, end-of-year exam periods and annual celebrations such as World Refugee Day.

Spatial markers like the signed areas and different types of furnishings assign certain groups to different parts of the library, but activities often coalesce and overlap. The space's multi-functionality results in an amiable disorder that was a ubiquitous feature of the library for many of its users. Sometimes this leads to tensions around noise levels,

which are exacerbated by the number of users and limited physical space. Verna, a local teacher, colourfully articulates this juxtaposition of diverse activities and social density, which she saw as an asset:

I went to the library once in the morning and there were a thousand people waiting outside – I was thinking ‘Oh my god!’ And the doors opened and a hundred people walked in. And I said to the lady next to me, ‘what’s happening?!’ And she said, ‘oh it’s like this all the time love!’ All the old folk go and read the newspapers. They’ve got language stuff for them. It’s just brilliant. And they’ve got stuff for kids, and little homework centres. And you know, it’s an unofficial child-minding place too. A lot of kids go there from school, and their parents pick them up when they finish work. And supposedly they do their homework, ‘cause they’ve got computers there too. I don’t know whether libraries are this busy anymore – because a lot of things are online and people don’t use libraries like they used to. But here in Campsie, it’s really packed out! You should go – its mind blowing in an afternoon, high school kids and everyone. It’s just brilliant. (Verna, November 2012)

This description points to a prevailing aesthetic of multiplicity and ‘thrown-togetherness’ in the library that emerges in a public space servicing a highly socio-economically and culturally diverse population, not to mention the diversity of age groups. The library as perceived space has two key expressions, which is examined in the discussion below: as a place of sociality, and as a ‘third place’ merging the private and public spatialities of everyday life in Campsie.

### *The everyday socialities of the library*

For many users the library was part of their everyday social circuits. Participants told me that they used the library as an interactive venue: a site of meeting friends, entertaining children, exchanging information, and participating in various library activities. Indeed, staff member Anthony commented, ‘many students come to the [language] classes as a social thing – sometimes their English is actually very good’. Celeste, a senior staff member who had observed the patterns of spatial practice in the library over a number of years, reiterated the significance of this space as a place of social interaction to local residents. When asked what creates community and local belonging, Celeste replied:

I think it is actually having things like your local library run events and meeting people you know when you go out, recognising faces and having somebody to say hello to. [...] And having places that are open longer hours so there is somewhere for people to go and gather. I think for younger people it is certainly a space where they can come along and meet their friends and socialise. I think for adults it is more if they are coming and attending something. So we've got the Have a Yarn Craft Group, they might get together and have a yarn and a cup of tea. They would be people who would get a group of friends to come together for an author talk or something like that [...] Libraries now are being built with cafes and set-ups like that and I think that encourages more just using it as a social space really. I would say adults that use this area are event driven. Young people use it as a place to hang out. (Celeste, August 2012)

As Celeste describes, the library is produced by patterns of social interaction, from gathering with friends to more informal, ordinary types of 'facework' (Jensen, 2006) – greeting familiar users and staff as a practice of everyday reciprocity. Some participants mentioned regular, friendly exchanges with staff as vital to their experience of the library as a social space. For newcomers (particularly recently arrived international migrants), the library was key to establishing local relational networks and carving out a familiar space in the neighbourhood. Leanne, a local resident originally from Hong Kong, explained that this was a common part of the settlement experience:

Yes, when I came for the first few years, I used it a lot. I found it really helpful. And [the library has] change[d] a lot with the computer. Before, they have the video and stereo you can learn every single [English] word. But a lot of people, some of the parents like to bring their children to the library, to the Storytime, play time. It's very helpful for new migrants. (Leanne, February 2012)

These quotidian forms of recognition and interaction are an important part of forging a sense of local belonging and ordinary citizenship for new arrivals, where citizenship is realised through daily life as much as encounters with institutional and legal structures (Staeheli et al., 2012, p. 630).

But some users were ambivalent about the socialities enacted in the library, particularly elderly users, who experienced the library as overcrowded and the daily negotiation of

space as disruptive. As Ada, a local resident from Vietnamese background notes,

After three o'clock I hate it, it's so noisy. Sometimes, I can say this, it looks like a duck market! (laughs) The Chinese talk too loud. [...] Australian children or Vietnamese children they talk softly. If it's Chinese children they talk too loudly. (Ada, February 2013)

But others found the interactive quality of the library attractive. Jeong Hoon, a highly skilled computer programmer from Korea living locally who had recently arrived with his young family, used the library regularly. He found the diverse spatial practices and often rowdy social interactions to be unconventional but at the same time, socially meaningful vis-a-vis the permissiveness of Australian culture. He says,

The different thing is, in Korea in the library you should be very quiet. Very quiet. [The] library we think is meant to be for reading books. But in this place, sometimes when I use the library, some high school boys and girls are discussing about some subject, like school. So I think it's a good thing. But saying [talking] out loud like that, is it a normal thing in this country? Or just Campsie library? I don't know that. It looks normal, other people don't care about that. Right now I don't think it's a problem, I think it's the culture. Experiencing it, I think it's a good thing. (Jeong Hoon, January 2013)

Compared to his own cultural expectations of proper library behaviour, his contemplation and positive valuation of the way people freely interacted and were accommodated highlights the role of the library as a kind of pedagogical space (Noble & Poynting, 2010). To newcomers it communicates a set of norms regarding appropriate conduct in public space, and in doing so, the boundaries of who belongs and who constitutes 'the community'. Moreover, it offers one of the few accessible indoor public spaces in a locality that offers few. As a community worker commented:

It's a de facto community centre down there and some people spend a lot of time there – it's where they meet others, they interact. [...] They've got a whole range of stuff happening down there [...] It's a real hub – because in Campsie that's what it lacks. There aren't any neighbourhood centres. You've got the migrant resource centre but there's no sort of 'walk-in' neighbourhood centre. So the library is good, it's a real hub. (Laura, July 2012)

The idea of the library as a migrant hub emphasises its nodal quality in the socio-cultural landscapes of Campsie as a suburb of arrival. As an inclusive and social space, it offers a visible, spatial definition of local community to which people can belong and which they can literally ‘walk into’. In a sense, the space creates the community. Indeed, as staff member Margaret explained, the multi-functionality of the library and its ability to address the social, cultural and educational needs of the local population is, in itself, a process of ‘creating community’ (Margaret, July 2012).

The ratio of users to space guarantees a degree of social interaction through proximity in the library – a kind of ‘rubbing shoulders’ that constitutes the mundane ‘sideways and informal dynamic’ of everyday multiculturalism (Gow, 2005, p. 387). Libraries are, as Fincher and Iveson (2008) argue, key sites of encounter in diverse cities. Encounters are difficult to capture through spatial observation or direct questioning of users. However, it became clear that these exchanges ranged across a spectrum of interactional forms: fleeting encounters, co-presence in space, engaged and extended modes of social interaction and relationship building, and more engineered types of contact. I observed trivial micro-exchanges, such as an imperceptible nod or half-smile before a newcomer joined a shared table of magazine or newspaper readers. I also observed more overt interactions: an elderly Anglo-Australian man spontaneously engaging a young Middle-Eastern man at the computers in a conversation about the challenges of formatting documents for printing, or strangers at a tenancy information session exchanging experiences about accessing social housing. It is hard to say if these are moments of ‘transversal crossings’ (Wise, 2009) and the basis of ongoing interaction. However, what was significant in these encounters was the subtle communication of a reciprocal, legitimate right to share space between diverse users.

More formal exchanges also textured users’ experiences of the space. Library programmes had explicit aims for encouraging social mixing. Knitting groups, English language classes, book clubs and educational/training sessions brought together people from diverse backgrounds. Several participants found the English language classes to be

a particularly potent site for intercultural interaction. Bishal, a newly arrived, skilled migrant from Nepal highly valued the multicultural of the library and Campsie in general, and commented that he had made several friends at these classes, and that they occasionally met outside of class (Bishal, August 2012). Pamela, a 70-year-old regular to the library from Vietnamese Chinese background, who had lived in the ‘avenues’ area of Campsie since 1981, commented that over the crafting of crochet blankets in the library’s weekly knitting group, she had met several new friends. These were people from outside of her established ethnic community and volunteering networks. While these programmes provided opportunities for interaction with people across class, age, and ethnic backgrounds, they remained relatively gendered – particularly activities such as book clubs and knitting groups which attracted mainly female residents.

Through both fleeting encounters and more sustained and programmatic forms of exchange, the library thus operates as a potential micro-public space – a setting where a setting in which ‘prosaic negotiations and banal transgressions’ can occur and take people out of their normal frames of reference (Amin, 2002). Margaret illustrates not only the weight of generational factors in patterning intercultural exchange, but also their ambiguous outcomes:

I see it [social interactions between library users] working more with young people. Teenagers tend to mix across different cultures. Older people tend to stick together [but] that’s a huge generalisation. Some of our programmes that aren’t specific community language, that are more general, have people from everywhere coming together. Our English language book groups are quite multicultural so it brings people together. Our knitting group started as a bunch of old, European ladies and turned into a multicultural fest – so people from different cultures come together. That’s really nice. That caused its own problems, when some of the older ladies who weren’t used to mixing didn’t want to come anymore. But you know, that’s their choice. The opportunity is there is for them to mix... I see that happening a lot. (Margaret, July 2012)

These programmatic activities provide semi-formalised opportunities for intercultural encounters and align with Amin’s notion of micro-publics – as sites generating lasting interactions where encounter is ‘inculcated as a habit of practice (not just co-presence)’

(Amin, 2002, p. 23).<sup>105</sup> But whether ‘moments of cultural destabilisation’ actually occur depend on a range of factors; not least class background, individual biographies, and people’s expectations about interacting with strangers in public. Indeed, Valentine (2014, p. 90) argues that social contact can create or reinforce negative perceptions of a social group depending on the inequalities that patterns social space. Exchanging everyday niceties may merely reflect normative codes of behaviour in public space rather than a deep-seated respect for difference, working instead to ‘entrench group animosities and identities’ (Amin, 2002, p. 15; Valentine, 2014, p. 91; Wessendorf, 2010, p. 17). The everyday socialities of the library clearly mark it as a micro-public space (Amin, 2002) that – through residents’ sometimes creative colonisation of space – offers up moments of lived space. However, the forms of interaction I focus on here more often emerge from the social programming dimension of the everyday socio-spatial management of the library, and are thus more aligned with spatial practices as part of the ‘realm that reinforces routine, normalization and reproduction’ (Merrifield, 1999, p. 347) than transformational or transversal spatial moments (explored in more detail in the third section of this chapter).

### *Spatial practice and public-private boundaries*

A second dimension of the library as perceived space – as ‘materialised, socially produced, empirical space’ (Soja, 1996, p. 66) – is connected to its insertion into the intimate spheres of everyday life and social reproduction; in other words, the intersections with other spheres and rhythms of life, work, consumption and play. This in turn shapes its meaning and function in the lives of residents. According to Lefebvre, perceived space mediates the relationship between daily routines and urban reality, that is, the ‘the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, ‘private’ life and leisure’ (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 38). Here I explore the function of the library as an in-between space, betwixt the realms of family and the demands of work and

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<sup>105</sup> Several of the library’s programmes were designed to bridge gaps in the community and challenge perceptions between groups. For example, a planned programme that brought together youth and elderly members of the community through young people teaching elderly library users about social media and mobile technologies, with elderly residents shared stories about their history in Campsie.

education. It operates as a kind of home away from home that reconfigures or blurs the boundaries between private and public domains in Campsie. The following examples illustrate this idea:

Talia, a local mother who had lived in the area five years after migrating from New Zealand, related that her teenage son goes to the library daily. She explained that there was little quiet space in their two-bedroom apartment shared between five. Instead of going home after school, he set himself up in the library – his ‘second home’ in his mother’s words – creating a space where he could do his homework undisturbed. Ada, an elderly Vietnamese migrant who had arrived as a refugee in Campsie thirty years ago, spent a significant amount of her retired life in the library. She used it ‘from Monday to Friday. Except Saturday and Sunday, which are for my family. [I use the] computers, DVDs, CD, borrow the books – in the library they have so many community books’. For Ada, who lived alone, the familiarity of daily visits meant that the library acquired a sense of being a de facto sitting room while staff became her weekday family. Henry, another elderly local resident who had originally migrated from Shanghai, China and had lived in Campsie for sixteen years, similarly incorporated the library into his daily routines. He felt comfortable in the library that provides an alternative to the confined living quarters he shared with his wife, unemployed middle-aged son and young grandson. He says, ‘Yes, I always come here. You’ll see me very easy! [I] am always here. [...] I think the library is very important for us [people of migrant backgrounds]’ (Henry, July 2012). He attends English language classes at the library, reads the Chinese newspapers, meets with friends, and uses the computers to engage in transnational, familial communication, regularly emailing his sister in New York.

The integration of the library into everyday routines and a circuit of homely spaces suggests a continuation of residents’ domestic activities into the library. Indeed, Celeste comments that one of the main reasons the library is open late is because of ‘serious’ users who go to the library to ‘get their quiet study space because there is no quiet study space at home.’ (Interview, August 2012). Regular patterns of inhabiting the library



transform it into a physically and psychically comfortable, known space, which has important repercussions for fostering a sense of belonging to place. As Berndtson (2013, p. 119) states, this is an emerging function of public libraries, which ‘are no longer just places of reading and private study, but are community and cultural centres, living rooms for cities, digital hubs and mediatheques... the library is a ‘people’s palace’ and a key element in urban placemaking.’ These emerging dimensions of public libraries are highlighted by librarian Carrie, who speak about the multi-functional character of the library:

[Campsie library is] an umbrella covering education, community, social interaction, keeping up mother tongue, it’s more like the whole family – it is a family gathering in the place – education, socialising you know. Everything! We do have everything – babies, pre-schoolers, primary kids, youth, adults, the seniors, the aged community, you know we provide anything. ‘Food for the mind’ I can say. (Carrie, September 2012)

Carrie stresses the image of the library as a space of nourishment, life-long learning, cultural maintenance and intergenerational relations. Margaret captured this range of spatial practices, which merge public and private activities, by referring to the library as a ‘third space’. She says:

I think it’s the place other than the work place or home, or home and school. So they are the two main places you’d spend your time at. I guess that’s what I mean, the third space you’d spend a lot of time at, that’s welcoming and free and you can either get the information you need or just come in and read and have some quiet time, or come to a program and so on. So it’s more of that. I think the idea is that the amount of time you spend in different locations. People spend as much time in the library sometimes as the other two! (Margaret, July 2012)

Margaret’s description of the library closely aligns with Ray Oldenburg’s (2001) notion of the ‘*third place*’ prevalent in public libraries literature, perhaps more so than with the figurative ‘Third Space’ of critical urban theory (e.g. Soja, 1996), which is further explored in the last section of this chapter. Third place refers to the library’s role as ‘a public gathering spot away from home and work where people can engage in meetings both informal and formal’ (Dudley, 2013, p. 22). Oldenburg argued that places such as

coffee shops, bookstores, bars were critical for ‘vital informal public life’ and had shared characteristics of being accessible, accommodating, inclusive, egalitarian and ‘a home away from home’ (Berndtson, 2013, p. 123).<sup>106</sup> These are dimensions that staff emphasised: the library as multi-purpose and ‘welcoming’ space, facilitating the many ‘transactions of everyday life’ (Margaret, July 2012) that fall between, are ‘outsourced’ from, and increasingly blur public and private moments in local life.

This function of the library is indicative of transformations in the function of public libraries more generally. The traditional library model in countries like Australia, Canada and the UK has shifted from a focus on book collections to one that embraces the new socio-technological landscape and the demand for education in the contemporary knowledge economy (Alstad & Curry, 2003; Berndtson, 2013; Dudley, 2013; Fincher & Iveson, 2008). Libraries have been repositioned as integral community institutions and ‘one-stop shops’ oriented around connectivity, education and community development. These shifts are enmeshed in transformations in neoliberal governance that has seen a focus on efficiency and ‘customers’, a reduction in public spending and devolution of responsibility for key services to cash-strapped local governments<sup>107</sup> (Alstad & Curry, 2003; Dudley, 2013; McMenemy, 2009). Margaret explains that changing community preferences – Internet use, demand for educational resources, as well as places to ‘hang out’ – have all changed library functions. Although it is still ‘what we think a traditional library should be, but branching out a bit more, creating community spaces’ (Margaret, July 2012).

Political and economic changes combined with the enclosure of public space have compelled a diversification of library services (Berndtson, 2013). The function of the

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<sup>106</sup> A third place offers a neutral ground where people can gather and interact, is accessible and accommodating, functions as ‘a leveller, an inclusive place, that does not set formal criteria for membership and exclusion’, has regulars and enables people to keep a ‘low profile... [where] the threshold is low’, and is a place where ‘the mood is playful’ (Berndtson, 2013, p. 123).

<sup>107</sup> Public libraries in NSW are funded through grants and subsidies provided by the State Library, and through local rates. Campsie library has recently joined a public libraries funding campaign (headed by NSW Public Libraries Association) in response to shifts in the funding for public libraries, which has seen state funding reduced and 93% of the costs for funding the library shifted to local councils (New South Wales Public Libraries Association, 2014).

library as a ‘third place’ makes the library indispensable for segments of the community. Margaret, reflecting on library closure in the United Kingdom in response to austerity measures, argues:

They [the public libraries in Britain that stayed open] were the ones where the community said we need this because we use it for the Internet, we use it to get a job, for story time, all those things that we offer. But they position themselves like that... I mean I think we are in a really good position if they ever attempted closures like that. There would be such outcry that they wouldn't even think about it politically. Because most public libraries here, even if we haven't got them in strategies or whatever, written down, most libraries are learning institutions now, informal learning institutions. The community would just go nuts. I'm fairly confident about that. (Margaret, July 2012)

In sum, the library cannot be separated from the everyday lives of inhabitants and the urban infrastructures that shape life in (sub)urban localities – Lefebvre's ‘urban routines and urban realities’ which produce it as a social space and site for delineating ‘community’. However, in addition to this empirical snapshot of Campsie library, it is also crucial to consider the governing discourses that shape it, which are discussed below.

### **Representations of space: creating multicultural citizens in the public library**

The library is not only produced through everyday practice. Official narratives of public and civic space espoused by local space managers and community workers also informs the spatial management of the library and corresponds most closely with what Lefebvre called *conceived space* or representations of space. Conceived space reflects the dominant mode of capitalist production and the political infrastructures the support it (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 39). It is, he argued, a space organised around a linear code designed by social engineers, planners and scientists, which attempts to homogenise space through normative conventions of place. In the following analysis I highlight three dominant modes of conceiving of the library, its diversity, its role in Campsie, informed by interviews with local decision makers. As such, they set out particular socio-spatial blueprints for multicultural belonging and citizenship. I will discuss firstly, the

production of the library as a site of multicultural recognition and redistribution, and secondly, representations of the library as a place for producing ‘good citizens’ and socialising new arrivals.

*The library as a space of redistribution and multicultural recognition*

Public libraries in Australia are part of an urban public infrastructure that aims to facilitate systems of redistribution and recognition in the city. Systems of redistribution seek to address the uneven allocation of wealth, resources and status, and associated issues of locational disadvantage and access in the city (Fincher & Iveson, 2008). Recognition involves the implementation of the principles of multiculturalism (Fincher & Iveson, 2008), which is achieved in Campsie library in part through multicultural programming and policies. The library’s multicultural programme includes English language classes, the community language book and DVD collections,<sup>108</sup> and a ‘celebrating diversity’ programme that involves periodic events aimed at showcasing and educating the local community about selected local ethno-cultural groups. Other events include information sessions in community languages (for example, tax or tenancy advice in Arabic or Mandarin) and celebrating International Refugee Day. Material gestures of recognition of local ethno-cultural groups was also signaled through the placement of multi-lingual signage, and the various cultural artefacts scattered around the library space – such as a Korean ceremonial drum prominently displayed at the entrance of the library (a gift from a sister city in South Korea), or the small exhibition cabinet at the entrance of the library. While laudable as an attempt to create familiar cultural symbols for residents, such spatial cues also serve to visibly demonstrate the multicultural credentials of the local government.

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<sup>108</sup> Senior library staff told me that they gathered their knowledge of their users – and thus the demand for community language collections – through several formal and informal means: through statistics on library users (from library card application forms), through community language book requests placed by users, through dialogue with ethnic and migrant support organisations, through census data, and through speaking with users themselves (through their participation in community language book selection events).

Indeed, Celeste noted that the funding and delivery of services for the CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) population at Campsie library has shifted from being a ‘very small percentage of the resource budget’ to comprising ‘about 22 or 23 per cent of our total budget’ (Celeste, August 2012). Reconfiguring services to the needs of different ethnic and linguistic groups tracks the suburb’s status as an ingress point and transitional space for recent immigrant groups, as Table 5 shows. In addition to proportionately high English, Arabic and Vietnamese language library users, the figures indicate disproportionately high usage by migrant groups relatively recently arrived in the area (Bengali and Urdu-speakers).

**Table 5: Library user diversity figures, 2011-12 (borrowers by ethnicity or language group, fourth quarter figures) (Source: Canterbury City Library)**

Ethnicity/Language	Number of borrowers	Percentage of library users	Percentage of Campsie population <sup>109</sup>
English	18,734	36.4	17.0
Chinese	11,326	21.3	31.2
Arabic	4,713	8.8	8.2
Other	2,818	6.2	No comparable figures
Vietnamese	2,642	5.0	4.2
Korean	2,453	4.6	6.0
Bengali	2,050	3.8	2.3
Greek	1,125	2.3	3.0
Urdu	1,152	2.1	0.5
Hindi	1,078	2.0	1.9
Indonesian	868	1.8	2.0
Spanish	598	1.1	1.0
Tagalog	422	0.8	1.6
Punjabi	353	0.7	1.2
Tamil	204	0.4	0.4
Tongan	219	0.4	No comparable figures
Italian	230	0.4	1.5
Portuguese	177	0.3	0.8
Samoan	169	0.3	0.2
French	179	0.3	0.2
Nepali	188	0.3	No comparable figures

<sup>109</sup> These figures are from the 2011 census (Basic Community Profile, Campsie SSC, ABS 2012) using both Language Spoken at Home (B13) and Country of Birth of Person (B09) and provide a proximate comparison for the library borrower figures. Many residents spoke multiple languages. The total borrower figures obviously include people residing outside of Campsie; the library draws users from the surrounding suburbs also.

Somali	105	0.2	No comparable figures
Amharic	79	0.1	No comparable figures
Dinga	42	0.1	No comparable figures
German	47	0.1	0.1
Maori	48	0.1	No comparable figures
Polish	47	0.1	0.1
	52,066		

The role the library plays in interfacing with this diverse community on a daily basis is an important source of information for the local council – both in terms of information distribution and collection. It is a site where local government service provision to the local multicultural community is most saliently and directly enacted. As such, local council places such a high value on the library, as Margaret explains:

We are one of the largest community spaces the council funds, so I think the council sees us as a fairly important part of the whole community. Because we work directly with the community a lot of the time. It's an important public service is what I'm trying to say. I think this particular council places a very high value on our library services. (Margaret, July 2012)

A principal component of the council's efforts at multicultural recognition is the library's regular cultural celebrations. Carrie, a staff member explains that the events are usually done in consultation with community groups, so that these groups can 'promote themselves' although 'occasionally we can do it all ourselves'. During fieldwork I attended several of these events, which are often introduced by the mayor or senior council officials, and portray the cultural traditions of local communities through performative and visually/sensorially attractive types of dance, dress, music and food.<sup>110</sup> Carrie explains:

...we have our celebrating cultures in the library as well. It is our main cultures – the main groups – and we introduce every now and then a new group [or] culture just to get the whole community to understand each other, to live in more

<sup>110</sup> While food is not permitted in the library, I attended several cultural celebrations there where the consumption of 'ethnic food' was temporarily condoned. Food as cultural artefact thus enables a temporary suspension of the usual rules (as well as demonstrating the slippage the library must continuously negotiate between formal library and community centre). It reinforces the role of the culinary in the representation of local multiculturalism, as noted in Chapter Five.

harmony, with more understanding of each other. Sort of blend in together nicely, get to know about each other's cultures – colour, dress, music – many things are visual, to understand food... to understand each other, rather than [just] talking about the culture. Because this is an easier way to understand, isn't it. Especially when you have a community with you [who] have English as second language. It's easier to tell the story. We pick up special events in different cultures. Normally we pick up four cultures a year, we celebrate their events [...] We try to stay away from religion and politics, and just celebrate it as cultures [...] because we are a community organisation we don't promote religions, but we do understand cultures and what's important in the cultures for the community. [...] So it's more like exposing the colourful lifestyle of each community to the wider community. (Carrie, September 2012)<sup>111</sup>

As Carrie's comment depicts, telling sanitised, colourful stories about local ethno-cultural difference favours de-contextualised representations local migrant groups that fit with hegemonic ideas of what constitutes a 'harmonious' multicultural public who 'blend in together nicely'. These stories present the community as distinct groupings, regardless of historical waves of migration, intra-group politics and class and ethnic divisions. Such presentations reify ethnic difference and work to order the messiness of Campsie's heterogeneous population. An absence of (transnational) politics and the private performance of religious identity is preferable.<sup>112</sup> As Whitten and Thompson (2005, p. 9) argue, 'with the exception of food, festivals and fairs, displays of cultural identity are best confined to the private realm, where they do not challenge dominant uses of space or public behaviour.'

Connor, a local community worker associated these kinds of selective ethnic performances with a general discourse that pervaded local government narratives about what types of cultural celebration are appropriate. In Connor's view, this is inextricably tied to material resourcing of local communities:

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<sup>111</sup> Campsie library also recently initiated a multicultural film festival to celebrate Harmony Day and a refugee short film festival. While these events occurred in the period after my fieldwork, the fact that they showcase local film makers and thus migrant and refugee voices would potentially suggest a more politicised counterpoint to library's stronger focus on harmony, education and entertainment.

<sup>112</sup> It is worth noting that the library held regular author talks, which occasionally addressed issues of a political nature. I attended one session based on a book that was highly critical of the Australian governments' approach to asylum seekers. Interestingly, the session was attended almost entirely by middle-aged and elderly white females.

I know this Sudanese pastor who runs Dinka classes. He tried for ten years to get funding. [...] Let's say a particular ethnic group wants to participate in the council's festival. They are organising this thing throwing competition for Australia Day for Canterbury Council, if the ethnic group wants to participate in such an event, it's likely to be funded. But [...] the local government wouldn't see any value in a Dinka class. (Connor, June 2012)

Implicit in these representations of proper spatial use in the library are ideas of appropriate difference and community harmony, which have become increasingly politicised in recent articulations of multiculturalism in Australia. As previously discussed, cultural harmony discourses emerged in the 2000s under the conservative government. As a political rhetoric of social stability associated with homogenised national belonging (Murphy, O'Brien & Watson, 2003, p. 487), it works to evoke a consensus about what is suitable difference in Australia's public sphere, and to assert the need for a united national identity. As Bugg, drawing on Yuval-Davis, notes, 'people who are constructed to be members of other ethnic, racial and national collectivities are not considered 'to belong' to the nation-state community, even if formally they are entitled to' (Yuval-Davis, 2007, p. 10). This debate lays the blame for a lack of 'harmony' upon new communities, while also denying the wider context of race relations in Australia (Jakubowicz, 2015).

The power of these discourses was not lost on community workers, who highlighted the infiltration of these discourses into local level service delivery. From his experience of working with migrant communities, Connor interprets this discourse to mean, 'that there shouldn't be any riots... you know, basically, don't make any trouble based on ethnicity and race' (Connor, January 2013). He further argues that community harmony, in its local implementation, is about 'removing abnormality' and 'keeping the status quo' (Interview, January 2013).<sup>113</sup> As Hage (2003) has classically argued, themes of passive difference reflect an undercurrent of 'political necrophilia' in Australian multiculturalism – the

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<sup>113</sup> He goes on to note that ironically, to receive funding from the Federal government under the community harmony programmes there is a need to demonstrate the extent to which a group is failing to fit into prescribed roles as 'citizens-in-becoming': 'you need to package it in a way [as if you are] actually dealing with potential terrorists' (Connor, January 2013).



process by which the cultural ‘Other’ is embraced only once their political power has been ‘killed’.

Implementing ‘harmony’ at the local level, while seemingly innocuous, delineates the imagined national community and migrants’ place within it – a point explored further in the next section. Yet, harmony narratives of multiculturalism in the library intersect with other articulations of diversity: principles of redistribution and recognition of migrant disadvantage are more closely aligned with social justice discourses of multiculturalism that have been more prevalent in earlier phases of Australia’s history of pluralist ideologies (Ho, 2013).

### *Socialising citizens and localising national identity*

Library management identifies Campsie’s population of recently arrived migrants as an important constituent of Campsie’s multicultural publics. As Margaret relates, ‘being such a multicultural community and having new arrivals all the time, it is our responsibility, I think, to help assist the transition into life in Australia.’ Indeed, the library is an important part of orientation programmes for agencies working with Humanitarian arrivals:

It’s really good for agencies like the Red Cross, Metro MRC, Navitas and all those organisations always bring groups here. New migrants, their English classes, refugees, because they know this a place they will be able to get some resources. But it takes some time to convince people it’s free! (Margaret, July 2012)

The library operates, to a certain extent, as the community-friendly ‘face’ of local governance, where new arrivals can be socialised into certain ways of interacting with authority. The production of the library as a social space rather than a formal, institutional space was critical to this ‘arrival node’ function for new migrants. Margaret explains that this is particularly an issue when:

... there might be someone [released] from detention or migrated from a country where they haven't had as much freedom as we have. You see it totally differently. You know there are some migrants who still call us sir and madam, very formal language, very reluctant to ask for help [...] And I think we can create spaces that limit that for everyone. (Margaret, July 2012)

As well as playing a bridging role in initial settlement processes, the socialising function of the library is oriented around the tasks of 'integration' of new citizens. In particular, developing the social and human capital arrivals require for participation in Australian society, particularly those with limited resources. As Margaret describes:

[We have] job seekers. I think staff who work on the desk will tell you this, that the majority of people are trying to get information about visas. Because they can come in and print off the billion forms they need to fill out [...] And we charge for printing, but, even if they have access at home to the Internet, they may not have access to a printer. And just basic forms that they need [for] university applications and so on. So it's not just for checking their emails and doing social stuff. During the day you see a lot of people doing transactions that relate to their everyday life. And then after school it's all school kids playing games, and doing research on, for their school assignments. (Margaret, July 2012)

New residents can acquire greater knowledge about Australian institutions and their rights as citizens (or as permanent residents) through multi-lingual information sessions about policies and legislation that impacts them, ranging from tenancy rights to tax advice. In addition, the council provides basic IT courses and 'Prepare for Work' seminars to enhance access to the labour market and other dimensions of social citizenship as well as a Justice of the Peace service. Information is also provided on the more mundane aspects of urban citizenship, such as the best way to manage household waste. As such, the library plays a critical role as a site of inculcation and information sharing regarding the right way to engage in civil society as a local inhabitant and 'good (productive) citizen'.

As well as these resources for enhancing aspects of substantive citizenship – and potentially through it, subjective experiences of belonging – the library is also a place of interface for residents and a range of community stakeholders and government agendas

focused on migrant settlement at multiple scales: Federally funded migrant support and settlement services, local and State agency services (for example, through the Department of Health and the Department of Community Relations). Margaret explains:

We are a public space where we see a lot of people, so a lot of community organisations approach us, in partnership we work very closely with the Chinese Association, and the Health Department, so we have a ready audience. We have a space that they can meet, and it's a different clientele as well. Community organisations see the library as a great space to give public information because they are not just seeing the people they see everyday, they are capturing a whole different audience, I think. And I just think we took it on as part of our responsibility in the community as well. (Margaret, July 2012)

On the one hand, representing the space as a kind of shop front for migrant incorporation policy certainly contributes to the empowerment of some otherwise marginalised individuals in the community. On the other hand, it is also a place for the state to address and surveil its publics. This touches on dimensions of the library in its traditional democratic function – as a space of debate and as a mediator between the state and its citizens. But it also begs the question: into what kind of polity or social body is the migrant being included (or excluded from) (Boese & Phillips, 2011)? And, what kind of subjects do dominant narratives of belonging create? Guidelines for integrating 'citizens-in-becoming' through discourses of harmony for example, tend to assume that they aspire to the same set of formal and informal criteria for belonging: that they wish to remain Australia and become citizens, that they will have equal access the formal labour market and educational opportunities, will strive to become ideal consumer-citizens, will act in line with conventions of private property values, and will express their cultural identity in a way that acknowledges the dominance of Anglo-Australian values.

Some ethno-cultural groups in Campsie were seen to comply with this ideal more than others. The 'success' of migrant groups to 'integrate' was often articulated with regard to their behaviour in public space. In interviews and casual conversations, residents (predominantly those of Anglo-Australian decent) and community workers tended to identify Chinese migrants with the stereotype of the desirable, aspirational 'good

citizen’ – drawing on such cultural stereotypes as a ‘quiet’ and ‘hardworking’ temperament and dedication to education. The observable presence of Chinese students studying in the library or the spectacle of festivals in the main street (e.g. during the Moon Festival), were seen to be a market of their incorporation. Moreover, the presence of Korean businesses on Beamish Street led to repeated articulations of South Korean migrants as entrepreneurial shop owners (which a professional migrant from Seoul that I interviewed found both offensive and comical). Roger, a long-time resident from Anglo-Australian background, asserted ‘I have found the Asian people have been very family orientated [...] the Asian people don’t present any threats to the community in general. They are good citizens’ (Roger, February 2013).<sup>114</sup> Such ethnic stereotyping must be contextualised in relation to the changing political climate of Australian migration and settlement policy and its construction of preferable migrants. However, what is interesting for the current discussion are the parameters of legitimate citizenship that are illustrated in such perceptions of migrant groups, for example, the qualities of hard work, social mobility, self-reliance and entrepreneurialism; the quintessential attributes of the urban consumer-citizen. Ideally this is combined with a non-confrontational or passive attitude. Local community worker Connor highlights this latter quality of the ideal citizen-subject-in-becoming when he says,

I don’t think we have a culture that we, government and even community service providers, we see our target as subjects, yeah, they have to be passive you know? And they have to fit into our needs assessment, and we don’t really see it as our role to say, you know, what do they enjoy? (Connor, January 2013)

Therefore, while the library is an inclusive space, it is a public institution that must reflect prevailing narratives of multiculturalism. As a representational space, the library mediates and instills federal and state priorities that prioritise selective definitions of multiculture and belonging through the notion of the ‘good citizen’. As a public space for

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<sup>114</sup> Other residents had different opinions: Jacob associated Korean migrants with ‘entrepreneurialism’ and upward mobility, and lower income Chinese migrants with a lack of will to be upwardly mobile citizens: ‘They could be mobile if they wanted to be, they just don’t want to be’ (Interview, April 2012). Polynesian and Indian migrants were seen to be ‘kind of cruisey’ and ‘not entrepreneurial’ (Jacob, April 2012), while Serena – another business owner from Anglo-Australian background – reminisced for the earlier days of migration, because ‘Greeks and Italians were more likely to mix socially and integrate more fully after one generation’ (Interview, April 2012).

transitioning migrants into Australian institutional structures, the library as a conceived space inscribes narratives of community harmony, attractive, educational diversity and productivity. While far from a totalising discourse, it is one strand interweaving with the mundane activities associated with the socialisation of ‘new Australians’ in the library, and thus crucially shapes everyday practices of citizenship.

### **The library as lived space: identity politics and everyday spatial claims**

So far, I have explored the library as perceived and conceived space. But the spatialities of the library outlined so far implicate another mode of space that is neither routine and materially constrained, nor directed by governmental narratives. That is, the library as representational space or *lived space* (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974)). This discussion centers on instances of micro-politics and emerging spatialities in the library. First I examine the library as a site of diasporic identity claims through the practice of ethnic book selection. Secondly, I discuss an extreme example of non-belonging and the role of the library in providing sites of grounded citizenship. Thirdly, I analyse the reconfiguration of the space by unsupervised children and youth. Each example suggests alternative forms of spatial belonging and everyday citizenship.

#### *The politics of ethnic book selection*

Campsie library has a policy of including local ethnic and migrant community groups in the selection of their community language book collections. This participatory exercise is combined with other ways of choosing collections, such as a review of the language background of users through user statistics, or recommendations from the State Library. Conversations with library staff and users indicated that the book selection process was more than a neutral exercise in multicultural inclusion. Rather, it sometimes inadvertently raised questions about diasporic identity and intra-group politics. As Celeste explains:

[With] the Vietnam collections, Vietnamese people in Australia don't want stuff that is published in Vietnam because it will have a communist slant and they are

people who left post-1975 and so they will boycott places actually! So you have to be very careful about things like that. (Celeste, August 2012)

Far from migrants and refugees leading lives disconnected from the historical contexts of their mobility, their place-based identities and sense of entitlement to and inclusion in local public spaces is inflected with the politics and memories of displacement (Williamson, Forthcoming). Indeed, Ada participated in the book selection process and felt passionately about sourcing books from North America rather than Vietnam, as she saw this as a means to (symbolically at least) resist the Vietnamese government and assert her refugee identity. She says,

Most of the books come from Vietnam [or] from America [...] The books from America are more expensive than in Vietnam, because most of the authors in America they [have] a very good education, they have free minds. [...] But in Vietnam they think one way... what the author is writing they are controlling very strictly. [With] the communist regimes everything you write, they check [...] So I chose most of the Vietnamese books from America, because we would like to develop Vietnamese minds. They cannot rule human minds only one way. [...] I stayed in Vietnam nine years with the communists, [so] I know. (Ada, February 2013)

Book selection thus highlights transnational politics present in the micro-spaces of the library, which has the capacity to directly impact on whether or not communities' elect to participate in library services. This symbolic control over the library's book collection and her involvement in the politics surrounding the production of knowledge in the diasporic community was highly personal for Ada, whose own harrowing escape from Vietnam resulted in her daughter dying at sea and Ada being separated from her sons for several years. Her experiences of displacement and trauma (which could be interpreted as a profound lack of spatial citizenship rights) were assuaged by Ada's proactive engagement with local charities and public institutions such as the library in her adoptive Sydney, as well as her in-depth knowledge of Campsie and its geographies.<sup>115</sup> In doing so, Ada asserted her identity as a 'good citizen'; specifically through her civic

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<sup>115</sup> Indeed, Ada's knowledge of the surrounding area as a result of her daily walking routines in the suburb had lead her friends to call her a 'land god' of the local area (Ada, February 2013).

participation and passionate support of the democratic value of the freedom of speech; and more generally, through a claim for common identity that contradicts a history of negative media (mis)representations of Indo-Chinese community in Sydney (Dunn, 1998).

This example highlights the role of the library as a space of representation in that it involves the appropriation of physical space and the ‘symbolic use of its objects’ to generate counterspaces from subordinate or marginal positions (Soja, 1996, p. 68). This micro-mobilisation complicates social harmony narratives that tend towards a de-historicised and de-contextualised understanding of multicultural subjects and the processes through which they make place across time and space.

*Emplacing the displaced: precarious status and grounded belonging*

On the one hand, the library as conceived space instituted clear agendas relating to Federal and State priorities of community harmony. Yet, there were several instances in which the library also became a site of a subtle counter politics that subverted dominant political rhetoric relating to the quintessential migrant Other: asylum seekers. I use the story of Aarif, a local resident with indeterminate status, to illustrate this point.

The library was significant in the narratives of Aarif, a young asylum seeker who had had a traumatic trajectory to Australia as well as a highly fraught process of being recognised as a refugee in Australia. Unsurprisingly, the precarity of his status meant that Aarif’s sense of local place in Australia was uncertain and nebulous, and largely scaled at the level of the nation-state. His first priority was to be formally recognised as a legal inhabitant in Australian national territory. His daily geographies were mapped around the few sites that allowed him a sense of inclusion and recognition (and that he could afford to travel to) – such as the charitable organisation supporting him, language classes at a local church, a group of compatriots in a neighbouring suburb, and the public library. Despite his high level of education, the majority of his efforts to volunteer and contribute to society had been thwarted by his indeterminate status. His participation in free classes

there represented a key space in which Aarif experienced a sense of inclusion, homeliness and productivity. It was a place in which he felt a step closer to realising his basic desire ‘to contribute to this society and to have a good life’ (Aarif, June 2012).

Participating in local public space can thus counter an affective and in this case, literal, experience of being profoundly ‘unplaced’ in Australian society. It was the informal spatiality of the library as a space of indifference, anonymity and inclusion that allowed Aarif to find a place in his local environment – albeit a temporally contingent one. The inclusivity of the library reflects a wider local politics favouring the arrival and settlement of refugees and responding to Federal initiatives tightening border controls, particularly following the implementation of ‘Operation Sovereign Borders’, Australia’s military-led, ‘zero-tolerance’ border security operation (initiated by the Coalition Government in 2013).<sup>116</sup> This example demonstrates the relevance of local public spaces of multicultural inclusion and co-presence when wider public spheres – for example, political narratives that criminalise asylum seekers – close down spaces of hospitality and the accommodation of difference. It is an example of what Varsanyi (2006) calls ‘grounded citizenship’ – a kind of de facto acceptance of local membership of non-citizens and their place in a city, despite a lack of formal consent to enter and reside in the country at a federal level.<sup>117</sup> The library as lived space thus presents moments of resistance to, and subversion of, dominant ideologies of belonging to the Australian polity.

#### *Youth, de facto childcare and the spatial appropriation of the library*

A prominent feature of the library as ‘the living room of the city’ (Berndtson, 2013, p. 119) is the everyday appropriation of the space by youth and children. Many respondents commented that the library is an informal childcare facility, and I regularly observed the

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<sup>116</sup> Indeed, Canterbury LGA is one of several local government areas (and one hundred Australia-wide) that have elected themselves ‘Refugee Welcome Zones’ to demonstrate a commitment to welcoming, supporting and advocating for refugee rights (an initiative of the Refugee Council of Australia, begun in 2002).

<sup>117</sup> It is important to note that Varsanyi (2006) is discussing actually existing local policies in the US context to incorporate noncitizens, which has less relevance for the Australian context, given the small minority of undocumented migrants.



transformation of the library space and soundscape after school and during school holidays. Young people were highly visible and used the library to do homework, play on the computers, text, chat, receive extra tutoring, study, eat and play music (despite rules against these latter two activities). During the busiest times of the day, particularly when no chairs or tables are free, school-aged children sprawl on the floor space between in aisles in a jumble of bodies, bags and school books. The library is perceived to be a safe space, is monitored by staff, CCTV and fellow library users. This perception of space motivated non-prescribed uses of the space as both a youth space and a child minding facility:

People see the library as a really safe place. Which is good and bad as well. Because a lot of parents leave their children here thinking it's a safe place. The kids can't, for whatever reason, go home, probably their parents are working so there is no one there. So they come here. [...] I hate to say [it], but we do have an issue with unattended children. And we do have a policy on that, that states anyone eight or under, who is not attended by a child [aged] ten or over or an adult, is deemed unattended. And there are procedures we have to follow with that, because legally they can't be unsupervised. But we also recognise that in this demographic, in this community, a lot of parents do work, and childcare, after school care is expensive. It's difficult for us, because on one hand, we are not a childminding centre [...] and on the other hand we recognise that there is a bit of a need. So we monitor the situation... [...] it's not like we are washing our hands of the situation. But it is very difficult. (Margaret, July 2012)

Here, everyday practices intersect with local socio-economic factors: the reality of low-paid or intermittent work; pressures on a local demographic with a high number of young families; a lack of public infrastructure or inclusive recreational spaces for young people; the prevalence of smaller, higher density private dwellings with little play space. While Margaret is speaking mainly about under-age children, she recognised that both younger children as well as older youth are dependent on the provision of local spaces. This dependency arises for a number of reasons associated with age and generation, as Harris (2014, p. 571) explains, including: 'lack of income, independence, rights and transport options ... uneven prospects for mobility, the retreat of the state, individualisation of opportunity and responsibility.' As such, 'young people may continue to have an intense investment in the local as a space of belonging' (Harris, 2014, p. 571). These structural

issues were seen to impact most strongly on local newly arrived migrants from low socio-economic backgrounds. This was the observation of Sophia, a local English language teacher, of Greek ancestry. She commented:

The thing when you have a migrant parent, they don't often have time to take you anywhere. And you don't often have experiences outside of your home or school. Kids don't go anywhere, they have to stay home all the time. So this way, parents allow them to go to the library because I think they feel safe that the kids are at the library. And so at least they can get out and socialise a bit, and they've done something. Often they just stay at home, and they are playing computer games, watching TV or studying. (Sophia, November 2012)

Sophia generalises here about the resources of 'migrant parents' – likely drawing on her own biography of her Greek parents who worked long hours in a milk bar in Campsie. But she makes an important point about the constraints upon young people's movements in suburban localities like Campsie, where a mixture of factors exclude under-age people from participating in public space:

Kids like to hang out at big shopping centres right? But security guards move them on because they are 'scary' and make lots of noise [...] so where do they go? It's the same issue with children as well – there is a park and playground across the road, but it's a playground for young kids really and it's an open space, so when it's cold [and] raining. There is no soccer field, no basketball court, no skate ramp. (Margaret, July 2012)

Therefore, beyond school the library is one of the few inclusive, safe public spaces for young people in the neighbourhood. While this partially reflects its function as a 'third place', its spatial repurposing can also be viewed as a kind of appropriation or re-imagining of space. A local youth worker, who had a significant history of working with migrant youth, commented:

[There is] obviously not enough space. Not enough appropriate space for the kids to just hang out and not to be harassed by authorities or security police and all that. Now [they go to] the libraries. [...] The thing is the library is for everybody in the community, it is not just for the kids and I understand that the library staff are not youth workers but I think there is now a Youth Liaison Officer or something like that. But the thing is it is not targeting the main problem that there

is just not enough space and activities for these kids to do. So they think, ‘Okay [I’m going to] go to the library’. I know a few kids who go there because they want to pick up. Because where do you go? (Penny, September 2012)

While the role of youth and children in the production of library space as lived space is for the most part benign, the role of this public space in the spatial imaginaries and territorial identities of local youth was powerfully illustrated by Celeste’s description of rare and highly disruptive instances of youth appropriation of the library space. She describes:

I think back fifteen years ago there were gangs that would come through in the morning and the [Vietnamese] gang that had the white bleached bit through their hair - the Triple T, or something like that.<sup>118</sup> Anyway they would come through and they would have their lighters and they would wipe all the books off the shelves. And it would be in the morning and there would be old people around. They were really threatening! We have a bad fight in here a year or so ago, probably fifty people went berserk in the reference library and there were police cars and all the rest of it! (Celeste, August 2012)

While uncommon, these events point to the inclusion of the library in the spatialities of youthful performativity and territoriality. In a sense, the library offers a space for the cultivation of everyday citizenship where there are few, even if this is occasionally negatively enacted. It is space of belonging, but it is a somewhat precarious belonging that daily negotiates the boundaries and spatial norms of the library as a regulated, if tolerant, public space. Indeed, as Harris has shown in her study of young people’s intercultural interaction in multicultural neighbourhoods in several cities in Australia, local spaces are often critical in young people’s lives – as sites they identify with, where ‘belonging is first and most deeply enacted’ and ‘where they feel the greatest capacity to act’ (Harris, 2014, p. 573).

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<sup>118</sup> The staff member is likely referring to the 5T gang that was strongly associated with the western suburb of Cabramatta (City of Fairfield), and whose members were purportedly child refugees/children of refugees from Vietnam. The gang were involved in the Cabramatta heroin trade in the 1980s and 1990s.

A lack of youth-oriented and child-friendly public spaces in the neighbourhood and the securitisation of spaces like the shopping centre meant that children and youth staked a claim on this public space in a way that resisted traditional or managerial representations of the space. The re-purposing of the library reflects wider transformations occurring in the politics of public space and social reproduction more generally. Cindi Katz (2006) argues that contemporary narratives on terror and safety discipline parents and children into using public spaces in highly risk-averse ways. She posits that the privatisation and securitised of public space, combined with disinvestment in key sites of social reproduction (such as schools, housing and open public spaces), and changing work conditions results in the negation of ‘any notion of public or collective responsibility for social reproduction’ (2006, p. 111). Social reproduction is relegated to the private realm or ‘secured in increasingly privatised ‘public’ spaces of everyday life’ (Katz, 2006, p. 113). From this perspective, spatial appropriation of the library by youth is a form of resistance (particularly by under-resourced segments of the population) against the enclosure of public spaces and the neoliberalisation of everyday urban life.

### **Concluding remarks**

The chapter examines how different types of belonging are inscribed in the daily production of the library as perceived, conceived and lived space. These different spatialities demonstrate how the library is simultaneously a space of everyday sociality, a quasi-private realm, a site of redistribution and recognition, a space of dominant discourses of national and local belonging, a site of contestation and encounter, and a place of ordinary citizenship and emergent belonging. Ethno-cultural difference is both celebrated and carefully managed in the library space, in response to the demands of a highly diverse community as well as a range of stakeholders operating in the spheres of multicultural policy and migrant settlement. Moreover, there is a need to respond to the transforming role of libraries as community and educational institutions and the exigencies of Federal and State funding on the provision of local public services.

While dominant representations of an ideal multicultural public filters through the daily

management of the library (for example, through essentialised ‘stories’ about local migrant groups), there is also a prevailing, day-to-day ethos of ordinary difference that shapes the practice of belonging to Campsie’s multicultural publics. Margaret captures this in the following comment:

You walk through Campsie with people from all different walks of life, they might not be sitting and talking to each other, but I think just being in a space with lots of different people helps. If you go over to Double Bay and you sit in the Double Bay library there, you see European after European, [it] could be a white English person, Australian, South African, Anglo-Australians [but] everyone would stop and stare if someone walked in with a hijab, because it just never happens. Whereas here, no one bats an eyelid! I think that says a lot about the encounters and the space itself. And people are just like, it’s a normal thing. I get shocked when I go into Newtown these days. Because I live in Newtown, and I walk around and I just think oh my god I don’t see any multicultural faces except for the Vietnamese guys and the Thai guys who run the restaurants. And you come out here and its just, you know, it’s everyone. (Margaret, July 2012)

This sense of ‘commonplace diversity’ (Wessendorf, 2010) which was characteristic of people’s experiences of homeliness and belonging in Campsie more generally, but was also based on their common identity as primarily *library users* (Fincher & Iveson, 2008). Sometimes this was experienced through moments of spontaneous intercultural encounter that worked to destabilise fixed cultural identities and exclusionist discourses of belonging (Amin, 2002; Noble, 2009b; Wise, 2009). At other times, it worked through an ethos of indifference (Tonkiss, 2003) – a quiet respect of the right of (ethno-cultural) others to inhabit shared public space. The habituated spatial practices, subtle appropriations and encounters across difference that daily produce the library are part and parcel of the ‘dynamic, spatial and quotidian’ practices of citizenship in Campsie (Secor, 2004, p. 366). Moreover, they suggest something that is unique to these locales of concentrated diversity. They are also evidence of a ‘situated multiplicity’ – that is, ‘a particular spatial embodiment of surplus; the mingling of bodies, human and nonhuman [i.e. objects] in close physical proximity, regulated by the rhythms of invention, order and control generated by multiplicity’ (Amin, 2008, p. 11).

This condition of ‘amiable chaos’ also opens up spaces for forms of resistance to top-down narratives. Micro-spatial claims to space – to assert a particular diasporic identity politics, or to reclaim neighbourhood spaces for young people – challenge the official representation of the library as space of celebratory and contain diversity. These examples of lived space subvert, hijack or reimagine the parameters of what the library means as a *public* space. Such lessons can, in turn, inform more participatory and responsive ways of designing local public space in a multicultural suburb, as well as broader strategies for fostering the agency, rights and participation of migrants as urban subjects.

## Chapter 7 / Park life: diverse natures and mundane multiculturalure

*Parks and gardens make the 'elsewhere' sensible, visible, and legible, intercalated in urban time and place. They refer to a twofold utopia: absolute nature and pure factivity ... [They] have been forced together, but in such a way that they evoke liberty, utopian separation. (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 132)*

### Introduction

A tour of the pedestrianised mall and library have shown how public spaces in their various forms inscribe and are inscribed by different articulations of multiculturalism. These are produced through continuous negotiation between material aspects of space, routine uses, dominant representations and emergent practices of place. In their various configurations, the socio-spatialities particular to these sites can both facilitate and hinder belonging for migrant residents, and practices of everyday citizenship. In the final case study I wish to explore these dynamics in the local park.

Urban parks have been variously constructed: as places of health, leisure and recreation, community, social interaction and learning, cultural identity and memory. They have been constructed as a form of civilised nature that accords with family-centric regimes of suburban morality, not to mention their role as tourist destinations and enhancers of property values (Byrne & Wolch, 2009, p. 743; Watson, 2006). As Katz and Kirby (1991, pp. 266-267) argue, urban parks were established in concert with the rise of industrial capitalism, and were intended as a 'corrective to dense urban settlement'. These 'pleasure grounds' were later directed towards recreation for the working masses. Indeed, Gandy shows how Central Park in New York was designed to civilize the masses and spatialise elitist notions of morality and proper conduct (Gandy, 2002; Byrne & Wolch, 2009, p. 746). They have long been the site of contestations over social order and what constitutes public space and democratic participation (Mitchell, 1995; Smith, 1993). Yet, despite their ubiquity, the social construction of suburban parks have received relatively little

critical attention in social science research, particularly in the context of socio-cultural diversity (Byrne & Wolch, 2009, p. 744).

However, several recent studies have recast urban parks as nature-culture assemblages that are deeply implicated in processes of social stratification and racialisation in cities (Byrne & Goodall, 2013; Byrne & Wolch, 2009; Goodall et al., 2009; Low, Tapli & Scheld, 2005; Thomas, 2001). In many places, parks have served to inscribe the prevailing moral geographies of the time, along both class and ethnic lines. Byrne and Wolch (2009) argue that parks play a key role in ‘civilising’ ethnic minority groups by delimiting their activities in park spaces or excluding them altogether from spaces of leisure. Enclosing park spaces through privatisation strategies, policing and the regulation of certain ‘legitimate’ activities tends to create spaces that respond to the needs of a white, middle-class (and housed) population. The park is framed by these classes as a counterpoint to the disorder of the city – a ‘controlled and orderly retreat’ for recreation and entertainment (Mitchell, 1995, p. 115). But as critical urban scholars have argued, excluding marginalised inhabitants means that parks as public spaces lose their important function as spaces of democratic politics in the city (Low, Tapli & Scheld, 2005; Mitchell, 1995, p. 110). Urban parks are therefore inextricably linked to processes of social control and the production of civic and racialised subjects. How do these dynamics play out in a highly diverse, transitioning suburb such as Campsie, and its practices of everyday multiculturalism?

Drawing on observational data, mapping exercises and interview data, I read this space as a kind of ‘hidden’ space of multiculturalism and migrant belonging. It is not, on first impression, overtly linked to local government programs relating to promoting multicultural recognition (as is the case in Campsie library), nor is it as obviously tied to neoliberal agendas of regeneration and gentrification (like the pedestrianised mall). However, like most public spaces, it articulates a mutually constitutive relationship between urban space and the production of multicultural belonging in the context of the diverse city.



I use the Lefebvrian triad of analysis employed in the previous case study chapters. In the first section of this chapter I describe the everyday materialities, temporal rhythms and sociality that produce the park on a daily basis: the park as perceived space. The second section considers the prevailing representations of the park as expressed through the lens of local governance, particularly its abstraction through notions of healthy bodies and community recreation, as well as a less obvious discourse relating to density and green space. The third section considers Anzac Park as lived space, and studies the micro-spatial claims that unsettle official representations of space and its multicultural publics. I draw attention to instances of transversal sociality enacted in the park, to investigate forms of everyday civility. Finally, I consider how the interplay between the three ‘spatial moments’ of the park extends and redefines the boundaries of migrant belonging and everyday practices of citizenship.

### **The spatial practices and everyday rhythms of the park**

I begin with a discussion of Anzac Park produced as a perceived space. Lefebvre’s framing of this space is one oriented around the daily routines of social reproduction (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 50). Edward Soja (in a reframing of perceived space as Secondspace) has described it as empirically measurable space, understood in relation to ‘the absolute and relative locations of things and activities, site and situations... the concrete and mappable geographies of our lifeworlds’ (Soja, 1996, pp. 74-75). This is a kind of textual reading of the park, describing its ‘surface appearance’ as well as its production through ‘exogenous social, psychological and bio-physical processes’ (Soja, 1996, p. 75). To put it more simply, this analysis of Anzac Park makes clear observable, routine spatial practice as well as wider structural dynamics that influence everyday practice.



Figure 30: Aerial photo of Anzac Park (Source: Google Earth)

### *Locality and spatial layout*

Anzac Park is located at the eastern edge of Anzac Mall. A quiet road (Anglo Road) encircles the park and connects at park's western end with a residential street (see Figure 30). It is mainly used for parking rather than through-traffic. The park is a mixed-use area that is well maintained. It is crossed with paved footpaths that run the length and width of the park and intersect at its centre, with the majority of the park consisting of grassed areas. It is relatively small (just over one acre) there is insufficient room to accommodate playing fields. The park, originally called Elgin Square, was renamed Anzac Park in the 1930s in commemoration of the residents of Canterbury killed in World War I, and originally had a memorial rose garden and a memorial fountain, which were complemented by a World War One cannon in Anglo Road, removed in the 1950s.

A popular, medium-sized playground sits in the northwest corner, protected from the sun by three large shade sails (see Figure 31), which, as on-site sign declares, were funded by

the Federal Government's Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program carried out by the council in 2009, part of the 'Nation Building Project – Economic Stimulus Plan.'<sup>119</sup> Next to it, two large picnic tables provide seating for parents, and a drinking water fountain is positioned behind the playground. The playground is built upon a rubber ground surface that was extended to accommodate tai chi (*taiji*) groups who use the park. Park benches line the southern and northeast edges of the park, which is almost entirely ringed by well-tended edge gardens and several Canary Island Palms. A small maintenance shed sits inconspicuously in the northwest corner, while a small band rotunda is positioned in the centre of the park. The grassed area next to the rotunda is inhabited periodically by flocks of ibis, pigeons and seagulls that are occasionally fed by local residents scattering bags of stale bread. Large Camphor Laurel trees – a popular design feature in the pre-war design of many public spaces in Australia (and now considered a weed) – provide further shade around the park.

At the park entrance (see Figure 32) three signs greet the park visitor: one bearing the name of the park, one prohibiting the consumption of alcohol, and one setting out 'park rules' (see Figure 33) which prohibit unleashed dogs, horses, golf and archery, fires and camping, motorbikes, littering, playing handball games or kicking footballs, games that 'interfere with the comfort or convenience of the public', hawking or trading (without permission) and public addresses (without permission). As mentioned above, the park has two picnic benches beside the playground, but there are no facilities for cooking (for example, outdoor barbecues) or shelters for larger family groups, and limited space to have picnics. Indeed, I saw few groups picnicking in the park, despite this being a particularly popular activity for some migrant groups (Thomas, 2001; Whitten & Thompson, 2005).

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<sup>119</sup> The plan was designed to fast-track infrastructure developments and was rationalised as a post-global financial crisis stimulus under the Rudd Labor Government.





Figure 31: The playground (Photo: the Author)



Figure 32: The entrance of Anzac Park (Photo: the Author)



Figure 33: Anzac Park's 'park rules' sign (Photo: the Author)

Anzac Park is not the only park in Campsie. There are other green spaces in residential parts of the neighbourhood (some with playgrounds), which tend to be much smaller and accessible principally to the immediately surrounding houses. A park next to the council buildings is used for tai chi and as a lunch space for council staff, but is less visibly accessible to the public and does not have the heterogeneity of use characterising Anzac Park. The open, green spaces and playing fields along the Cook's River are in the process of being regenerated, but are less accessible from the center, western and southern residential areas (despite strategically erected council signs along Beamish Street directing residents to these spaces). These open spaces were considered by residents to be isolated and less user-friendly.

### *The temporal rhythms of Anzac Park*

The diurnal rhythms of the park are weather and season dependent, but there are noticeable daily patterns of activity. Starting from around 7.30am, the park is gradually populated with elderly residents practicing tai chi, calisthenics or exercising individually. With shopping carts and bags ready for post-exercise shopping excursions, these park users gather in two to three main groups of slow moving and synchronised bodies on the grass, in the band rotunda, or on the rubber asphalt of the playground area. These embodied practices lend an air of tranquility and synchronicity before the intensification of rhythms associated with commuters, early morning shoppers, motorists or families and children heading to the playground. Verna, a long-term resident of Greek background reflects:

I very rarely see them [the tai chi practitioners] as they're there very early in the morning but when I was working and rushing to work, they all just looked so peaceful. And I thought wouldn't it be lovely to be doing this instead of running off to get the train to work! (Verna, November 2012)

The position of the park between the train station, Beamish Street bus stops and residential areas of the suburb means that the park functions as a path of transit for commuters. The most noticeable flow of commuters traverse the park in the early morning and again in the evening, patterning the park through temporal rhythms associated with work and public transport. After the tai chi practitioners and commuters, the space is ceded to a melange of young children, milling parents and carers, and prams that use the playground area or the grassed areas for children's recreation. Elderly residents gather on park benches to read, listen to portable transistor radios, and 'take the air'. The majority sit alone, although some sit in pairs or small groups. They tend to be male. At lunchtime, the park is popular with workers from the surrounding businesses eating their lunch in the park. Throughout the day a relatively steady stream of shoppers pass through the park on the way to the commercial core of the town centre – offering a thoroughfare as well as a reprieve from the densely populated circuits of consumption in Campsie. A post-school rush sees another cohort of older children using the park.

Teenagers saunter around the space or sit together on benches in the late afternoon, while the evening sees more subdued rhythms of a small number of residents relaxing in the park, people returning from work or heading out to eat out at the cluster of restaurants along Beamish Street. At night-time, the park was sometimes used by groups of youths who – as one council worker noted – engaged in problematic behaviours such as drinking and left ‘a mess’ of bottles and rubbish littering the park. Limited lighting in the park reinforced local perceptions that the park was ‘unsafe’ at night.

During the weekend, the park’s rhythms are oriented around shopping, religious practice (two churches are located across the road), and family-oriented activities. A different tai chi group uses the space on Saturday and Sunday mornings. This was a more formally organised club lead by a renowned teacher from China that I attended for several weeks. The group was skewed towards young and middle-aged males although it included practitioners from a range of ethnic backgrounds and ages.

Clearly, the seasonal and climatic conditions greatly impacts on park use. During summertime, when temperatures in Sydney regularly reach 30 plus degrees Celsius, the cool shade of the abundant trees and the cooling effects of the grass can attract more pedestrians and park dwellers. In the hottest temperatures, even the park becomes too warm, and residents seek shelter in the air-conditioned comfort of the library or shopping mall. Similarly, the rhythms of the park vary with the coming of winter. The tai chi groups continue to meet, people still use the benches and playground, but numbers and time spent there are generally reduced. In the coldest weather park users will venture towards the warmer spaces of the shopping mall or library.

### *The functions and sociality of the park*

Spatial practices in Anzac Park mirror local demographics and the rhythms of work, leisure and domestic life. From observations and conversations with residents, there were five main groups of people producing the park on a daily basis. The tai chi and calisthenics practices, as well as the number of elderly individuals relaxing on park

benches, clearly mark the park as a place of recreation, leisure and sociality for a cohort of ageing residents from migrant backgrounds. The majority of the exercise practitioners are of Chinese ethnic background; they are only occasionally joined by non-Asian practitioners in the group and instructions and pre-practice conversation are predominantly in Mandarin. The group numbers around twenty people in the larger group that uses the playground area, which range from middle-aged to the elderly participants. There is usually a mixture of male and females, although elderly females predominated during the daily morning practices. I joined in on several sessions of tai chi with the group, who were welcoming although language-barriers to instruction were an issue. It became apparent that the group was a loose association of local Chinese community networks. While its proximity to local amenities was important, two elderly practitioners told me that tai chi was located in the park because practitioners preferred quiet, natural surrounds (compared to the 'loud' mall adjacent); it functioned, as one joked, as an 'aged playground'.

Secondly, the park was a space of healthful play for local children. A popular function of the park, it likely reflects Campsie's demographic of a relatively high proportion of migrant families with young children living in medium density living in the town centre and its surrounding streets, often with limited access to garden space at home (Emsley, 2009; Randolph & Tice, 2009). The park was highly used partly because of its central location and accessibility for families with young children who either had limited means of private transport or sought proximate spaces to other local amenities. For many of my interviewees with young children (nine of the sixteen resident participants), the playground and park were important places in the neighbourhood for entertaining their children, and was part of a daily or weekly routine. The relative cleanliness of the park and the playground and the relative overall sense of order achieved through the local council's investment in its maintenance creates a welcoming, convenient and safe site, as well as a meeting place for congregating with other families.



Talia, a local resident who had moved five years ago from New Zealand, used the park every week with her children as a social venue as well as a respite from the chaos of a five-person family in a two-bedroom apartment. For her and her husband it represented: ‘...time out for us. We are like, great, we can see [the children] from here. Yes, and just communing with others, other friends as well with children’ (Talia, October 2012).

Javier, a recently arrived, skilled migrant from Venezuela explained that his housing choice in Campsie was dependent upon its proximity to park space for his young daughter. Green space was a luxury he was unused to in his native Caracas where recreation took place in shopping malls (Javier, July 2012). Similarly, April – a forty-year old mother whose two daughters regularly used the park during the weekend in between activities at the library and their local church – reflected that parks were hard to find in her hometown in China, where people had to travel to the countryside to find green space. Moreover, it was also a place she could enjoy Sydney’s air clarity and warm weather; there was ‘very little blue sky’ visible in her hometown in the Guangdong Province in China. For Tanya, Javier and April – and other migrant residents I spoke to – the park fitted into aspirations relating to the way they aspired to raise their children; a landscape feature they associated with healthy childhoods, exercise and interaction. Indeed, Javier explained that his main reason for moving to Australia was to have ‘a better life’ and more space to play for his daughters. As such, its use is intertwined with some of the primary motivations and imaginaries associated with migrating to Australia of several of the migrant residents I spoke to. Besides economic security, educational opportunities and a better standard of living for their children were cited as key reasons for transnational relocation to Australia.

Jeong Hoon, a recently arrived highly skilled migrant from South Korea who regularly took his two children to the park, commented that the park aligned with his expectations of Australia as a country characterised by its attractive natural environment: ‘I have to say, the nature, the scenery is great. A lot of trees and fresh air and clean sky. Everything is perfect.’ (Jeong Hoon, January 2013). Despite Seoul’s advantages in terms of efficient public transport and the convenience of its 24-hour urban economy, he found Sydney’s

suburban open spaces were an improvement on his home city's neoliberalised and formulaic recreational spaces. He explains:

In Seoul I didn't go the park so much, because [...] there is not many enjoyment place[s], [they are more] like a theme park. That's why I like it here. [In Seoul] we don't have enough space to play around, not enough parks, even if there are parks, it is a bit difficult to access with traffic jams and things. And the park is made by the government or city council, so it's not this open. Actually its open to everyone, but I'm saying that to access the park is more difficult than this [...] If it is a park around the complex building it's a small park, because it's the law, they have to build a small park or fountain or something. It beautiful to look at but its useless for every people to enjoy it [...] Here they are more] functional and more natural. (Interview, January 2013)

The presence and design of local green spaces that respond to the needs of local families – rather than serving instrumentalist urban development and beautification interests – was significant in the perceptions of some local migrant users.

Thirdly, parents and other carers such as grandparents were also prominent users of Anzac Park. The majority of carers were female. This made the playground area and its surrounds a somewhat gendered space at certain periods of the day. The presence of elderly caregivers from non-Anglo-Australian backgrounds was particularly noticeable. Several community workers mentioned a trend in young, skilled migrants sponsoring elderly parents to migrate to Australia and live with (or close to) their family, to fulfill care-giving duties. This was particularly apparent in the Chinese community, and several participants discussed this activity as part of their everyday routines. As Jimmy, a local worker associated with the Chinese community noted, there was a noticeable reduction in attendance at the tai chi groups (as well as other community organised social activities for elders) during school holidays, which he attributed to the prevalence of intergenerational child-care obligations amongst this group. Research on child care practices amongst Chinese migrants would suggest that intergenerational and transnational patterns of childcare involving grandparents is relatively common (Da, 2003; Lie, 2010). This practice is particularly widespread amongst middle-class migrants where both parents are educated and working in professional roles, and where extended family living

arrangements and an intergenerational domestic division of labour are the norm (Da, 2003). It was noteworthy that some of the elderly caregivers were male, which would suggest a sharing of these activities across genders. It also raises questions about the place of the elderly family members in the public sphere – and by extension, in public space – both in sites of arrival as well as departure (discussed in more detail in the third section of this chapter).

Fourthly, the park was also an important node in the geographies of recently arrived migrants who do not necessarily use the park as a site for children's play. Bishal, a young, married (but childless) Nepalese migrant who had arrived in Sydney to seek work in the IT industry only a few weeks before I met him, identified Anzac Park as one of several key spaces orienting his daily trajectories around the neighbourhood (see Figure 34). It functioned as a place to rest, to walk through on his way to the job seeking services at Centrelink or on his way to English language classes at the library. In other words, it offered a neutral and restful space between Bishal's more directed everyday circuits oriented around setting himself up in Australia and his search for work.

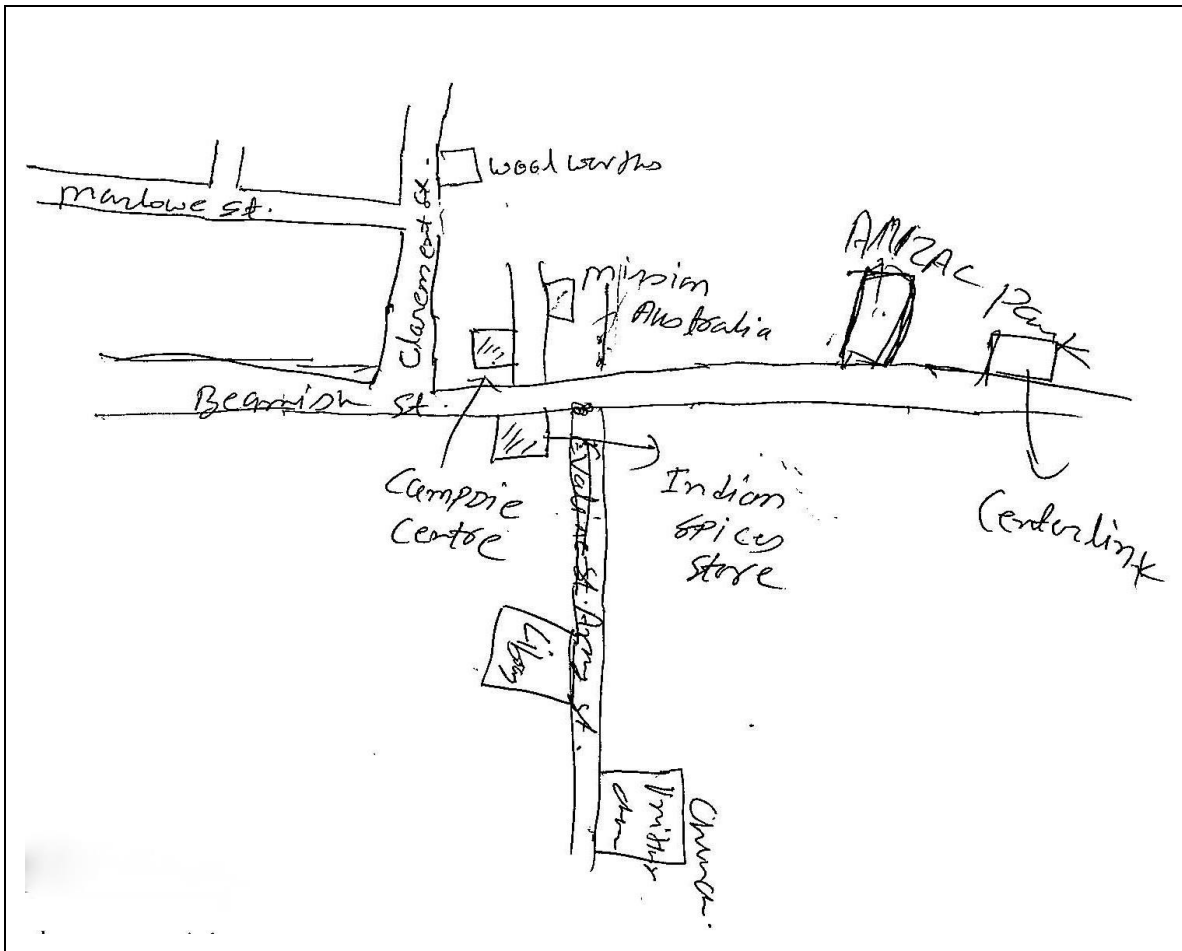


Figure 34: Bishal's hand-drawn map of his everyday geographies in Campsie

Fifthly, Anzac Park was a site of sitting, leisure and 'just being' for people outside of the more routine and orderly rhythms of the suburb. It is spatially proximate to a local infrastructure of welfare and support services for vulnerable populations, ranging from settlement services for asylum seekers and refugees and people seeking employment or housing, to those seeking assistance for substance abuse and mental health issues (e.g. the Anglican Church, Centrelink, the Salvation Army and support centre, a drug rehabilitation and a women's health facility in the adjoining streets). While less visible, there was a distinct presence of those who did not fit easily into the dominant groups of users in the park, or into the dominant temporal patterns associated with work, retirement or care giving that ordered other groups of users over the day. These tended to be people who would be perceived as 'loitering' in other spaces of the neighbourhood. Examples

during my fieldwork included middle-aged men drinking alcohol from paper bags (and sometimes urinating in the hedges), one man who regularly slept overnight on the park bench closest the Salvation Army, and a young man who, barefoot, paced back and forward across the same length of grass for several hours a day. The presence of these users reflects the fact that Campsie's geographies are also produced by inhabitants who have experienced forms of exclusion in the city (not least in relation to unemployment, a lack of mental health services and issues of precarious housing) (Rose, 2000, pp. 330-331).

Overall then, the park was produced by spatial practices of relaxation, health, leisure and play, sociality and marginalisation. Analysing the park as perceived space also highlights the routine uses of the space that emerge where individual perceptions of the materiality of the park coalesce with wider local urban dynamics, such as Campsie's demographic structure. While a physically open space with a diversity of users, management regulations prescribed a selective range of behaviours and spatial practices (as evidenced by the authoritative park rules sign), which communicated what kinds of activities (and by extension, people) constitute the park's 'appropriate publics'. I now turn to consider how hegemonic narratives about urban parks intersect with these 'common sense' spatialities of Anzac Park.

### **Conceived space: healthy citizens, ephemeral diversity and white landscapes**

Compared to the other two public spaces I've discussed, Anzac Park does not feature prominently in the regeneration narratives and social planning strategies of the council. It plays an important role during the annual food festival – particularly for providing children's entertainment – but in general, the park is represented in local government discourse as a popular if passive space; a background, ambient, natural space for the community counterbalancing the more commercialised areas of high pedestrian and residential density in other areas of the town centre. In this section I examine discursive representations of park space – the gaze of planners and other space managers – who

present it through abstracted interpretations rather than as a directly lived space (McCann, 1999, p. 172) and in doing so, foreground normative conceptions of park utility and the local community. I scrutinise these specific productions of space from two angles: first, in relation to historical constructions of urban parks as morally inscribed, White, civic spaces and what this might mean in relation to Campsie's contemporary configuration of population density, arrival and concentrated diversity. The second example examines how everyday activities in the park are ordered around dominant agendas of the healthy city, which has its own codes about the types of activities and bodies that should produce it.

*Ephemeral diversity, nation-building and 'natural' landscapes of whiteness*

In the first discussion of dominant spatial narratives, I want to explore how the transitioning and dynamic nature of its population was constructed in relation to hegemonic discourses about the built environment and material dimensions of suburban transformation. A surprising number of my interviewees expressed a sense of continuity and stasis when asked whether they thought the suburb had changed over time. Despite factors such as the relatively high turnover of shops and new types of residential development, Campsie's built environment was seen to embody stability in the face of other forms of social discontinuity. The majority of those expressing these views were Anglo-Australian residents or workers, but some of the longer-term migrants also articulated a sense of Campsie material landscapes staying the same. A manager in the council was of the opinion that:

Being here as long as we have, I have not noticed a significant change in Campsie in the last fifteen years. If you are going back twenty-five years to when I first came here, there [was] still the odd Greek deli [...] but they've gone. [There has been] an increase in Asian groceries [...] but no, no, the sorts of people that come into the council, the sorts of people that I confront going up and down for lunch each day hasn't changed that much. (Paul, July 2012)

It is possible that this sense of stasis can be attributed to the lack of significant redevelopment of the town center, and the presence of the aging facades of the early 20<sup>th</sup>

century architecture along the main street. Indeed, just like the built environment of the town centre, the materiality of the park has changed very little from its original, pre-war design (beyond the addition of a playground and extended rubber surface for tai chi). The following comment from Verna, a long-term Lebanese-Australian resident, conveys this:

The physical appearance of the shops hasn't changed very much at all [...] but the range of shops is totally different. [Given] the fact that it [Campsie] has really changed so very little over the last say, one hundred years, I suspect it won't change at a great rate. You would think that if it was going to change massively in the next ten years it would have started by now – and it certainly hasn't. Even the style of the shops is the old fashioned looking. I love it. [...] If my father were to walk back in here – it's been twenty years since he's been here – but he wouldn't find much difference. (Verna, November 2012)

However, this narrative of stasis inevitably slips into subsidiary narratives about how *people* or the community has changed significantly. As Ada, a long-term migrant from Vietnamese background notes: 'the pace of Campsie has really changed [with] so many populations coming, most of the Chinese and Vietnamese a little bit [too]... I see a lot of people you know' (Ada, February 2013). This dynamic of stasis and change is negotiated through a range of embodied practices enacted in the park space, and is highlighted in residents' narratives about the park as a space of change, movement and ephemerality. According to one informant, the park used to be a 'Cantonese-speaking park', reflecting the wave of migrants from Hong Kong who settled in the suburb post-1997. Others noted the dominant presence of Arabic-speaking youth in the 1990s, while more recently the presence of migrants from Mainland China has become more noticeable, particularly through the daily visible assemblages of exercise practitioners. Leanne moved from Hong Kong Chinese twenty years ago, and describes her experience of the transitory dimension of place:

I first migrated here in 1993. I first settled in Canterbury. From the time I arrived in this area until now, I didn't see anything change. [...] In Campsie, what is changing between then and now is changing people. The Korean people – the shops are more Korean, have now changed to Asian. The main street has changed to Mainland China. Except the women's rest centre, in the mall over there [...] that's all the changes I can see. It hasn't changed, the buildings are the same... [But] they change, the people

coming in, the dress and everything. It's like waves, like the ocean. (Leanne, February 2013)

Similarly, Donald, an Anglo-Australian man who had been practising tai chi in the park for 15 years, highlighted this layering of place through the movement of people, although he did not agree that this automatically characterised it as a shared, multicultural space:

Multiculturalism my arse. Nah, people use it in waves, one takes over from another. It used to be the Arabs. Now it's a bit more mixed, mostly Asian. [It's] less territorial now I think. (Informal discussion, field notes, 20 January 2013)

In its everyday social production, it is seen to be a highly multi-ethnic space that reflects its changing waves of migration, to the extent that Donald told me he often felt like 'the only white guy in the park' and noted the irony in the name of the road surrounding the park – Anglo Road. But, the ephemerality of migrant practices that shape public spaces (strolling, exercising, resting on benches, playing on the playground, picnicking and leaving nothing but flattened grass) make them no less significant in their ability to connect people to place (Byrne & Goodall, 2013).

There are several layers to this curious friction between representations of stasis in the built environment and dynamism in the lived environment, which are worth unpacking. Firstly, it highlights the basic fact of the 'long duree' of the built environment – that bricks and mortar embody planning decisions made decades ago, and in ageing middle-ring suburbs in Sydney, mostly built in the 1930s and 1960s and characterised by long-term disinvestment, the built environment does not change particularly rapidly (Randolph & Freestone, 2012).

But it also suggests a more fundamental paradox of this type of multi-ethnic suburb. On the one hand, representations of ephemeral diversity against an unchanging Anglo-Celtic backdrop reiterates the arrival function of Campsie – the expectation that successive waves of migrants will pass through the neighbourhood and move on. At one level it points to a pervasive characteristic of local articulations of multiculturalism practiced here;



that is, that migration-led diversity is highly mundane and taken-for-granted as part of the local landscape. In other words, there is a continuity to forms of social discontinuity. Wessendorf (2010) refers to this as ‘commonplace diversity’ characteristic of places of ‘super-diversity’ where new waves of international migration are expected and go largely unnoticed.

Yet, on the other hand, the stasis of the built environment also signals a strategy of the dominant/host society to address representations – both at the national and local level – of increased mobility and temporariness in city spaces. While this is demonstrated through different functions of urban governance – for example, through the management of development applications (Beynon, 2007; Bugg & Gurran, 2011), we sit this most clearly in the park through its insertion into discourses of local heritage. It is listed as a heritage site, and its name connects it into a local commemorative landscape, as does its proximity to the Returned Serviceman’s League<sup>120</sup> (sitting directly opposite), the memorial structures in Anzac Mall, and during annual days of memorialisation such as Anzac Day. As such, it is part of Campsie’s insertion into national myths of military history and an Anglo-Australian articulation of national identity. The park subtly combines the discursive power of heritage – an institutionally sponsored process of selective memory-making that ‘overwhelmingly those that suit the needs and interests of the nation-state’ (Ang, 2011, p. 83), and the ‘monumental’ role of urban parks, designed to socialise citizens into nation-building narratives (Law, 2002).<sup>121</sup> This aspect of the landscape is an important part of the mythical character of post-war suburbia, which Armstrong suggests creates a ‘mythic groundedness’ for those in the ‘host’ community whose sense of identity is disrupted by what they perceived to be cultural and social discontinuity (Armstrong, 1994, p. 104).

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<sup>120</sup> But, not all Anglo-Australian institutions remain unchanged. It is significant that the RSL club – a traditional ‘white space’ – had had a transformation of its membership in recent years. Indeed, a local resident informed me the RSL was ‘mostly Asian’. A perusal of the organisation’s website reinforces this shift in membership towards an Asian audience, which advertises, for example, regular Mah Jong nights, although the governance structures clearly remain Anglo-Celtic.

<sup>121</sup> Indeed, council’s list of heritage places reflects a strongly Anglo-Australian understanding of heritage as researchers have found in other, multi-ethnic parts of the city that renders migratory history and diasporic conceptions of place and belonging invisible (Ang, 2011; Armstrong, 1994).

In its design and name, and its proximity to the RSL, Anzac Park thus draws upon settler nation-building narratives, and a discursive history of suburbia based on home ownership, neatly trimmed gardens, homogeneity and political conservatism (Watson, 2006, p. 2).<sup>122</sup> As a mundane suburban public space, it is nonetheless embedded in normalised, morally steeped, White visions of the ‘natural landscape’ despite a range of cultural practices and forms of knowledge producing these spaces (Bugg, 2013; Duncan & Duncan, 2003; Low, Tapli & Scheld, 2005; Thomas, 2001; Trudeau, 2006). While measures have been taken to respond to the needs of the elderly migrant community, by adding, for example, a place to practice tai chi, the pervasive sense of the park as an unchanging environment, *despite* forms of social discontinuity, would suggest that the park reflects a ‘common condition’ in multicultural societies where ‘many aspects of the landscape and built environment... reflects only the dominant culture’ (Low, Tapli & Scheld, 2005, p. 13).<sup>123</sup>

#### *Parks, urban density and the moral landscapes of suburbia*

The park was a popular topic of conversation among space managers in the context of discussions about higher density housing and its social impacts. As discussed in Chapter 6, several community workers that I spoke to mentioned that there was a lack of sufficient recreational spaces for youth in Campsie, in the context of existing and ever-increasing higher density housing stock. Indeed, a recent report, one of the key issues identified in the Canterbury local government area was a lack of access to local parks for the high percentage of children living in flats (33% of children in the LGA compared to

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<sup>122</sup> Interestingly, Anzac Park is also a remnant of some of the earliest attempts in Sydney to design ideal residential space. It was part of the ‘Harcourt Model Suburb’ developed in 1885 by the Anglo-Australian Investment Finance and Land Company, and promoted as a ‘matchless centre of thriving suburban life’ (Sydney Morning Herald, 1885). It was designed around wide boulevards and large blocks of land, with Anzac Park and Carrington Square intended as the centrepieces of the subdivision (Canterbury City Council, 2013a). They were marketed as ‘splendid reserves...[which] have been dedicated as a perpetual right to the public for purposes of recreation’ (Sydney Morning Herald, 1885). The subdivision was based on speculation that a train line would be installed linking the suburb to the city; but the railway connection did not eventuate until 1895, the delay led to the collapse of the venture.

<sup>123</sup> See Sofoulis et al (2008) and Stewart et al (2003) for examples of local governments engaging in participatory design in multi-ethnic suburbs in Sydney.

9.3 in Sydney overall) (Randolph & Tice, 2009). Carole, a local politician, saw the park as symbolic of wider issues associated with urban consolidation and governance:

Look I think that this is the crux and the challenge for places like here - good urban design [...] But the role of local government is crucial which is going to be lessened under the new planning regime [...] The focus needs to be on people and safe spaces and places for people to be. If you go down to the park near the RSL Club [Anzac Park], the use of that is just phenomenal - you can go there almost any time and there will be a tai chi group, there will be... it is just wonderful for families and it just shows that tiny little pocket of space up behind Anzac mall just tells you just how much we need more open spaces in this area. But then you've got the river and what's along the river? It is interesting, you don't see a lot of migrants using those spaces and I am not sure why. (Carole, July 2012)

Similarly Jacob, a local real estate agent who managed several strata buildings in the area, commented on the value of open spaces in a rapidly consolidating area:

There is nowhere for their kids to go and play which is bad from a traditional perspective but there are probably kids all round the world that never get anywhere to play. You have only got to walk down to the park here at the end of the street at the end of the day and there is just kids going everywhere. It is an amazing place and whether it is good or bad I don't know, but the parents are getting out there or the grandparents and kids are running around like mad things and playing like they would at school. They go there because there is nowhere to play at home. But even in a three storey walk-up block there is not that many places to play either. Concrete gardens and a little bit of stuff - it is not like a three bedroom house where you can play in the back garden. (Jacob, April 2012)

While there may indeed be issues of a lack of space – as discussed in Chapter 6 in relation to the appropriation of library space by youth and children – it is important to look critically at these discourses, particularly as they are articulated by space-managers and local decision-makers. While clearly criticising the dominant, neoliberal representations of space that attempt to maximise consumer density in Campsie, and pointing to the social consequences of such spatial management, this discourse also draws on its own, problematic set of discursive representations of space associated ideas about family, morality and space in suburban settings. Jacob's comments evoke nostalgia for the 'traditional', low density, family-centric Australian suburbia of the post-war

period (far from more negative interpretations of ugly suburban sprawl). It also stirs up classic images of Australia as the ‘lucky country’ as well as remnants of a discourse of density as social ill (Whyte, 2009 [1988]). Threaded into this imaginary is the quarter acre block – *private* open, green garden space – imbued with notions of morality, healthy childhoods and conventional nuclear families compared to negative representations of apartment living (Troy, 2000, p. 723).<sup>124</sup>

In the context of higher density housing, urban parks take on the moral function as the gardens and play areas of the poor and densely packed (migrant) populations. From this perspective, Anzac Park and other such spaces are framed as outlets or ‘spill over’ spaces from the densely packed surrounding residential areas, as important sites for healthful leisure, release, play and recreation. These areas are overwhelmingly associated with transient, migrant populations, as reflected in Norma’s comment referenced in full in Chapter Four, where she refers to ‘two populations’ – the ‘Anglos’ that live in older style detached homes, and the flats that are dominated by ‘non-English speaking migrants and poorer Anglos’ (Norma, June 2012). Indeed, it is worth noting that the quieter, western end of the park is a residential street that is one of the most gentrified parts of Campsie, with large block sizes, renovated, heritage-listed Federation-style houses and extravagant knockdown-rebuilds. Slightly elevated above the park, a wall of shrubbery blocks the view from the street onto the playground and grassed areas; rendering invisible the messiness of everyday life performed in the park.

In this sense, the park could be seen as part of a continuum of ‘civilising spaces of nineteenth century liberalism and twentieth century social architecture’ that included public libraries, playgrounds and streets (Rose, 2000, p. 330), but given new relevance in relation to narratives of ‘spatial squeeze’ that impacts on the lives of lower income migrants living in units (Emsley, 2009). While often well-meaning and valid criticisms of

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<sup>124</sup> Jacob goes on to give examples of poor planning and lack of green spaces in other parts of Sydney: blocks of flat in neighbouring Lakemba, and higher density development in the Sutherland Shire. In the latter case he notes, ‘They have made a real mess of it. They’ve got all sorts of empty shops that no one wants to rent any more. They are slums waiting to happen I think’ (Jacob, April 2012).

the value of urban consolidation pushed by state government (and the lack of public space provision), the narratives varied in the degree to which they drew on progressive and inclusive urban planning ideas or somewhat more moralistic discourses of Campsie as ‘over-full’ and losing family-centric, healthful spaces reminiscent of Sydney’s suburban past. These representations of space also have implications for the micro-regulation of bodies in the park, to which I now turn.

*Safe bodies, healthful spaces and the good migrant citizen*

Historically, discourses of leisure and health have been used to frame urban parks as sites for balancing the vicissitudes of the industrial city. Parks were the ‘lungs of the city’ and ‘medical technologies’ for producing healthy, ‘fit’ and morally proper citizens, and overcoming crime and immorality (Byrne & Wolch, 2009, p. 746; Low, Tapli & Scheld, 2005; Osborne & Rose, 1999). Here I examine how the park is constructed as a healthful space through local discourses of public health, and how this informs notions of safe bodies and the good citizen-subject in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood (Byrne & Wolch, 2009, p. 746; Katz & Kirby, 1991; Mitchell, 1995).

Sophie Watson (2006, p. 7) argues that it is important to consider how public spaces are mutually constituted by ‘bodies and their micro-movements’ and ‘*how* different bodies can live and move in particular sites matters’. Activities such as caring for and entertaining children on the playground and elderly groups using the park for exercise aligned with the park’s function as a safe practice of recreation, and as a site of the creation of healthy bodies. Tai chi involves aged, gracefully moving bodies engaged in a visible (but not too visible) spatially and temporally limited practice that is both ‘peaceful’ and an attractive local multicultural feature. Although the council has not officially given approval to the tai chi groups as an organised, community activity, nonetheless they fit with an aestheticised vision of the park as a site of contained, non-intrusive, non-threatening and spatially confined practices of recreation.

An emphasis on health and wellbeing is used to frame current uses of the park within a

broader council agenda relating to the aging, social participation and healthy and safe places (Canterbury City Council, 2013c). Practices like tai chi are appropriated into community-wide wellbeing initiatives, such as the introduction of tai chi classes at the local library as part of annual ‘Seniors Week’ activities. Responsibilising citizens into healthy activities correspondingly frames urban open spaces as ‘important public health promoting facilities’, emplacing them within ‘healthy cities’ urban planning discourses about community wellbeing as a form of social capital (Wang, Mateo-Babiano & Brown, 2013). Indeed, during Campsie’s most recent Food Festival – the suburb’s place marketing event par excellence – Anzac Park was framed as the key site of the council’s agenda for ‘encouraging healthy and active living’. Educational activities in the park were framed as a ‘passport to a healthy life’ and included family fitness programmes (tai chi and pilates) in the park (Canterbury City Council, 2014a). In so doing, the park becomes another domain for the performance of community wellbeing. As Osbourne and Rose (1999) argue, public health discourses are an important governmental strategy, where all aspects of urban life ‘can be mobilised in the name of a norm of well-being: health now appears, simultaneously, as a maximisation of the values of community, public safety, economic development, and family life’ (Osborne & Rose, 1999, p. 752). Moreover, health is intertwined with the creation of urban subjectivity; it becomes ‘a signifier of a wider – civic, governmental – obligation of citizenship in a responsible community’ (Osborne & Rose, 1999, p. 753).

In this narrative, competitive, spatially expansive and boisterous activities are prohibited. The park regulations (see Figure 33) clearly delineate which forms of recreation are inappropriate and ‘risky’ in relatively small mixed-use space, including lighting fires, archery, motorbike riding and horse riding, and games and behaviour that potentially ‘interfere with the comfort or convenience of the public’. While common sense at one level, prohibiting activities like ball games also regulates out certain parts of the population, for example, youth who are more likely to engage in these practices. In other

words, certain park uses are associated with risky behaviour and bodies.<sup>125</sup> Drawing on research on other park spaces in Sydney, Byrne and Wolch (2009, p. 752) point out that while signs and rules may reflect a shortage of space, they may also ‘codify Anglo-normativity; ‘soccer prohibited’ signs might reflect... racially based attitudes about who belongs and what constitutes appropriate use of park space’. Mariana Valverde identifies this kind of coded language as part of contemporary city management strategies that deploy vague, premodern concepts like ‘nuisance’ (in this case, ‘interfering with public comfort’) to define certain people and activities in public (and private) space with regard to a normative community (Valverde, 2011, p. 297). She argues that despite city governance presenting itself as highly objective and modernist, these are essentially ‘relational, embodied, localised, and intersubjective’ logics of offensiveness that can be strategically and selectively applied.

A story from Donald, an Anglo-Australian man who regularly used the park, provides some context for this coding of space. He told me that several years ago, there had been a few ‘cultural clashes’ and ‘run-ins’ between ‘Arabs’ who played cricket there in the weekend (referring to young males from Lebanese backgrounds) and the martial arts group he belonged to, who also used the space. He found it amusing that after a couple of these encounters ‘the young men learnt’. It is presumed that the lesson that the young men ‘learnt’ was not just a prosaic one about the effectiveness of tai chi as a martial art, but also a symbolic lesson about their ‘out of placeness’ in the park (Poynting, 2006, p. 85). It is possible to interpret this instance of conflict as a tension over a limited spatial resource. In this sense, it is a territorial dispute – the incursion of cricket balls and noise into the peaceful, carefully carved spaces of concentration and practice of the tai chi group. At one level then, this clash could be interpreted as a form of recognition of the

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<sup>125</sup> Other sources of disorder, noted in the community strategic plan, identify public concern with ‘dysfunctional’ characters in park spaces scaring off children and young families (Canterbury City Council, 2013c) – potentially relate to the park’s proximity to several social support services.

other and their right to occupy local public spaces; as an equally ‘entitled combatants’ (Harris, 2014, p. 583).<sup>126</sup>

But, at another level, the informal community policing of park space and its legitimate inhabitants in this encounter likely signals a wider pedagogical exercise, that is more than an attempt to control disruptive forms of recreation or steer these cricketers to the sports grounds beside the river. Noble and Poynting call such ‘racialising acts of everyday incivility’ a ‘pedagogy of unbelonging’ (2010, p. 495) that functions to both limit the citizen-rights of the targeted to *be* in a given place’ and to regulate national belonging (Noble & Poynting, 2010, p. 491). This is specifically tied to recent socio-political processes of othering of Muslim, Arabic-speaking or Lebanese youths that have circulated in Sydney and Australia since the 1990s (Collins & Poynting, 2000; Poynting et al., 2004; Tabar, Noble & Poynting, 2010).<sup>127</sup> I have touched on these discourses in previous chapters.

While the centrality of this racialised narrative has weakened in Campsie, given the significant socio-demographic shifts (Lebanese families moving out and migrant groups from the Asian-Pacific region moving in) residue of these racialising processes remained in the narratives of some of my participants.<sup>128</sup> For example, Serena – a local businesswoman of Anglo-Australian decent told me she preferred the ‘Asian and Chinese element’ in Campsie, because ‘the Lebanese tend to be more aggressive’ (Serena, April 2012). Jeong Hoon commented that his friends often enquired why he was living in Campsie so ‘close to Lakemba, near more Lebanese people, they are not good’ (Jeong

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<sup>126</sup> As Harris has found in youthful conflicts over territory in highly diverse and under-privileged suburbs in other parts of Australia, conflict can ‘highlight a local experience of respect and acceptance of the right of diverse others to participate in the civic spaces and social life of the neighbourhood’ (Harris, 2014, p. 583) .

<sup>127</sup> This discourse was clearly articulated during the Cronulla riots in Sydney in 2005. Heightened by a decade of state racism and populist incitement by media (Poynting, 2006), the riots expressed an exclusionary nationalism that served to ‘confirm hierarchies of citizenship that privilege Anglo-Australians’ (Dunn, 2006, p. 84) and articulated a sense of belonging that was once highly localised and spatially expansive – that is, aligned with an imagined national territory.

<sup>128</sup> However, there is ample evidence in neighbouring suburbs such as Lakemba and Punchbowl of the racialisation of populations from Arabic-speaking backgrounds. A recent documentary, ‘Once Upon a Time in Punchbowl’ screened by public broadcaster SBS, documents these issues.



Hoon, January 2013). The spatialisation of these prejudiced representations has profound impacts on the subjective experiences of belonging in everyday public spaces for certain groups (Noble & Poynting, 2010).

Sanctioning forms of healthful recreation and park behaviour – and through this, particular social groups, functions to naturalise potentially exclusionary modes of using public space. And while this anecdote points to an historical and rare incident, it highlights the layering of park space and dominant representations of its legitimate producers. The park is portrayed as a race-neutral, family-oriented and natural space. Yet these ideologies ‘render [urban space] ahistorical, devoid of any indications of the social struggles around its production, or traces of the concrete space it replaces’ (McCann, 1999, p. 169).

### **The lived space of Anzac Park: everyday tactics and contested belonging**

In the third consideration of the park’s spatialities, I examine how moments of micro-appropriation and a symbolic reimagining of space do not necessarily fit with the hegemonic and routine production of space. Framing the park as lived space examines its emergent qualities, that is, practices that render it ‘Other’ through alternative meanings of space and have the capacity to transform it (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 39). It also analyses how spaces of representation are produced through the emotional and subjective experiences of space – how it operates as a realm of ‘collective memories, cultural symbols, and personal history’ (Eizenberg, 2012, pp. 767, 770). As such, it is potentially a ‘the terrain for the generation of “counterspaces”’ arising from users’ peripheral or marginalised positioning (Soja, 1996, p. 68), and thus ‘other’ claims of belonging in the diverse city. I begin with an analysis of tai chi practice as an example of everyday migrant activities that reconfigure the codification of space, reading it as a series of micro-appropriations and alternative visions of nature, health and extensive, translocal dimensions public space. In the second example, I examine how the park is a space of transversal intercultural encounter, which presents opportunities for new social

relationships to emerge that unsettle social hierarchies and indifferent patterns of social interaction found elsewhere in the suburb.

*Place making and tai chi: nature, landscapes of health and translocal belonging*

Tai chi was a key part of the park's daily rhythms as well as dominant representations of healthful spaces in the suburb. But it can also be read as a form of spatial appropriations. Part of the daily practice is a process of micro-claims and innovative uses of the materialities of the park. Seesaws are appropriated as benches for chatting before and after the practice, climbing frames serve for stretching purposes, and in the case of one sprightly elderly man, monkey bars are used for performing chin-ups; it is truly an 'aged playground', as one practitioner phrased it. A tree in the centre of the park is used a place to hang handbags, shopping bags and as a shelter for shopping carts (see Figure 35). Folk music from a portable stereo sometimes accompanies the practice – an aural transformation of the space. While an extension of the playground's rubber surface facilitates the practice for one group, people often spilled onto the grassed areas. The repetition of these embodied practices created worn patches of dirt – a kind of desire line that signals the human repurposing of the space beyond its formal, planned use. While accommodated to a certain extent by the local council, a council worker told me that sometimes practitioners were asked to move to another part of the park so that workers could re-grow the grass. Wei Long, a practitioner, explained, 'we are not allowed to stand on the grass. We exercise in the playground on the soft [surface because] its easier to practice on'. However, some tai chi practitioners found the arrival of children in the playground in the morning to be problematic – a 'noisy' disruption to the quiet embodied movements of the practice. She said the group would also like the council to create a special place for them to practice tai chi, apart from the playground (Wei Long, May 2012). However, as an unapproved use of public space, the practitioners must negotiate a fine line between asserting their right to park space and adhering to the council's formal and informal rules regarding the proper use of the space.



Figure 35: Tai chi practitioners and natural props in Anzac Park (Photo: the Author)



Figure 36: Weekend Tai chi practitioners, Anzac Park (Photo: the Author)

These seemingly inconsequential, prosaic re-workings of park space signal what de Certeau (1984) refers to as everyday tactics, the art of making do in regulated space. The habituated nature of these practices acts to incrementally transform the space and

challenge dominant frames of aesthetic space and family leisure. Making demands for additional space and asserting territory in this way suggests that the practitioners had an affective sense of confidence and a legitimacy in their right to inhabit the space – a key aspect of experiencing a sense of spatial belonging (Rishbeth & Powell, 2013, p. 163).

Secondly, this practice constitutes a form of place making which draws in part of familiar and embodied modes of ‘being-in-the-world’ that migrants bring with them from previous home places. Indeed, several elderly practitioners told me that they had practiced tai chi as part of their daily routines in China, while others had learnt it in Australia through various networks and community groups. Re-invigorated in the post-migration context (or as part of circular migration routes), the daily tai chi practice signals a reinvention and reinscription of everyday urban practice in China onto Australian public space. As one community worker explained:

This is a space that is actually meeting the needs of the Chinese community. You would understand what I mean if you go to China. Every park is filled with people. And that’s kind of a communism tradition. When they had communism they used to do a lot of activities instructed by the communist government, at the park. But I think they get some enjoyment. (Connor, January 2013)

These spatial practices are (for some residents at least) part of diasporic ‘home-building’ (Hage, 1997) processes that generate feelings of security, familiarity, community and a sense of possibility. Control over space or having ‘a space where the deployment of our bodily dispositions can be maximised’ is critical (Hage, 1997, p. 102) and fosters a sense of continuity after the disruption of migratory processes. The still, cool morning air, folk music from a portable stereo, unselfconscious and graceful movements, fans, swords and other accoutrements of martial art forms that unfold around the tai chi practice, all create an assembled sense-scape that speaks to/about another translocal place. It becomes, as Byrne and Goodall (2013, p. 68) argue, a dual sensorial in which a new place is made, or through which these residents are situated in a diasporic ‘ethnoscape’ (Appadurai, 1996) that connects two places – such as urban China and Campsie – in a continuum.

Wei Long, an elderly tai chi practitioner and local organiser of community activities comments told me that elderly women in China are often in public spaces because ‘there is no public space for them’ (Wei Long, May 2012). Indeed, middle-aged and elderly practices of walking, exercising, playing, singing and dancing in public spaces like parks are an integral life in many urban sites in China. In a study of public park uses in Beijing, Farquhar (2009, p. 553) argues that these are part of ‘life-nurturing’ activities that, while not overtly political, ‘assert the value of the collective’ and a form of ‘compliant civilisational nationalism’ with deep roots in China’s recent past. These routines and rituals make the personal public, in a way that signifies a ‘quietest form of action’ – a form of claiming, ‘crafting’ and ‘peopling’ the city’s public spaces that recalls a collectivist past (Farquhar, 2009, p. 555).

The practice in Anzac Park is embedded in a wider cultural landscape in Campsie town centre in which Chinese language, text, food and products, and familiar smells conjure a form of ‘homeliness’ that addresses a sense of displacement from homeland (Wise, 2011). Henry, a retired local resident from Chinese background (who I introduced in Chapter Five), reflected that one of the major reasons he feels at home in Campsie is because his daily trajectories around the neighbourhood – including visits to the library, local shops and occasional participation in tai chi in the park – provides an experience of continuity with life in urban China: ‘we live here as we live in Shanghai’. Through processes of hybridisation, memory and a continuation of public space practices in cities of arrival, transnational identities are formed and emplaced (Armstrong, 1994; Carruthers, 2010; Ehrkamp, 2005; Rishbeth & Powell, 2013).

A third, interrelated aspect of producing the park as lived space through this place making practice is linked to migrant landscapes of wellbeing and health that are overlaid onto Campsie’s dominant social geographies in myriad ways. With over twenty medical and holistic health centres in the town centre, priorities relating to the care of the body<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> I am grateful to Jeannie Martin for raising this point, and sharing her recollections of Campsie during her own research in the suburb in 1996-2000.

– an intimate and private space – were mapped onto the socio-materialities of the neighbourhood through residents’ everyday mobilities. These networks are mainly associated with the South Korean, Malaysian, Vietnamese and Chinese communities, and the availability of these services is a major draw for some (particularly elderly) segments of the migrant population. Rose, a Korean migrant living in Campsie, recalled that these services were part of her first impression of Campsie, which was ‘like a home town! I can see many signs in Korean. Korean restaurants, hairdresser, solicitors, doctors surgery and GP – I like those!’ (Rose, February 2013). The merging of bodily concerns and the production of public spaces are illustrated through an excerpt from my field notes, from a Sunday morning observation session:

There are already three tai chi’ers when I arrive. I sit with Donald and another man, Mr Lee, who I have never met before. He is giving Donald some acupuncture – applying a long needle to his hand, and then applying tiny needles (small coils) that remain in the hand. Sammy jokes about it, saying that this park is never dull, and it’s something I should write in my notes. He explains he has a sore shoulder, and Mr Lee is trying to fix it. Mr Lee is originally from South Korea, is retired and has lived in Campsie for the last four years. He is an acupuncturist and also practices tai chi in the park. He moved to Campsie from Melbourne to be closer to his daughter and to help look after his grandchildren [...] I get the sense he is here mainly because of family obligations. He says he doesn’t want to practice acupuncture here because he is retired, and that there are enough ‘doctors’ in Campsie. He talks about the importance of diagnosis – that once an accurate diagnosis can be made, the treatment will be successful. I chat about a sports injury I sustained years ago, and he takes my left hand, pushing down hard on several points on my little finger [...]. He takes out of his small, portable kit of tiny needles, which he proceeds to ‘hammer’ or tap into my fingertip. He advises me to have them in for a week. [...] After I leave, he remains seated, and chats with several other inhabitants who are watching the practice. (Field notes, Sunday 10 February 2013)

This snapshot of the park being used as an informal space of diagnosis and healing, as well as its conversion into a de facto tai chi studio, points to the blurring of boundaries between public space, health and the body for some local residents. In the park, the work of maintaining individual bodily health becomes a collective and spatialised project: park benches are temporarily converted into therapeutic spaces that intersect with the communal tai practice as well as wider networks of holistic health that criss-cross the

neighbourhood. In studying the reasons elderly Beijing urban inhabitants use park space, Farquhar (2009, p. 562) argues that ‘getting out into public spaces’ is deemed ‘healthful and wise’ and an essential part of living a ‘good life’ that is believed to counter issues of isolation and ill-health, a sentiment echoed by many of the practitioner residents that I spoke to. This blurring reflects knowledge systems that draw together the body, the social body, nature and wellbeing. Indeed, tai chi is based a belief in the interconnectedness of moving bodies, wellbeing and the natural environment that draws on Taoist principles of qi and energy flows. As one informant commented, ‘You can’t understand acupuncture and Chinese medicine without understanding the principles of tai chi’ (informal conversation, 16 December 2012).

While all urban parks are some kind of simulacra of nature (Byrne & Wolch, 2009, p. 745; Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 27), these groups preferred a particular assemblage of nature. Safety, cleanliness, security and accessibility were clearly just as important as the park’s ‘natural’ attributes.<sup>130</sup> The practice expresses culturally mediated ideas about nature as a site of meditation, contemplation and spirituality, as well as conceptions of healthful living and collectivism (Byrne & Goodall, 2013; Farquhar, 2009; Thomas, 2002). More generally, they demonstrate the ‘holistic nature of landscape experience across diverse and mundane urban spaces’ (Rishbeth & Powell, 2013, p. 164).

As a spatial practice, tai chi therefore draws on ideas about continuity between nature and the body that are not necessarily captured in the instrumentalist conceptions of the park as either an aesthetic, memorial space, or a site of family-oriented recreation. Instead,

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<sup>130</sup> This reflected a common use of space across the suburb, which saw recent and even long-term migrants favouring central, enclosed, urban green spaces compared to the more peripheral landscapes along the Cook’s River, for example. The local council has started to redevelop the Cook’s River area, which offers open green space and cycle ways, which appear to attract middle-class and Anglo-Australian residents mainly – it was seldom referenced by newer migrant populations I spoke to. Some residents cited issues of accessibility and walkability given that these sites were located some 15 minutes walk from the town centre. The places were also shaped by discourses oriented around conservation, which produced them as sites of mobilisation around a (predominantly white, middle-class) environmental politics and the celebration (as well as appropriation) of indigenous knowledge linked to the river for this purpose (this was particularly evident during the Council’s annual Reconciliation Walk along Cook’s River).

analysing Anzac Park through the lens of lived space highlights alternative meanings of inhabiting and producing urban parks in multicultural locales, and points to other registers for practicing belonging in these public spaces. It imbues local space with translocal places and other histories of public space use. Yet this discussion only highlights one particular spatial practice and its publics. How do these types of alternative spatial meanings interface with other groups? And how might it create openings for new civilities?

*Transversal encounter, indifference and reciprocities in the park*

As the case studies of the library and pedestrian mall have shown, these public spaces offer instances of intercultural encounter which can – although not always – engender socialities that destabilise stereotypical assumptions about social groups. The park similarly facilitated this kind of engagement, but did so without the programmatic and managed forms of social interaction that characterised the library, or the more territorial or even-focused socialities of the pedestrian mall. As such, I argue the park represents a relatively hidden site of everyday multiculturalism and ethnic place-making practices.

Most users saw the park as a ‘friendly’ space although few were able to pinpoint or articulate specific moments of conviviality with strangers in the park. One young mother commented that she would often greet mothers at the playground whose faces had become familiar over time. While conducting research in the park I occasionally struck up conversations with fellow bench dwellers. However, generally park users tended to maintain a social distance, which – given the general lack of conflict in the park – contributed to a norm of polite indifference. This was one aspect of the park’s lived multiculturalism. In its unhurried rhythms and retreat-like surroundings, the park was shaped by a shared recognition amongst park-dwellers of the right to inhabit the space in elective solitude and anonymity (Tonkiss, 2003) and by everyday practices of mutually worked out distanciation (Harris, 2014). For those passing through (commuting, shopping, strolling), the park was part of local, everyday spaces that are not necessarily destinations in themselves, but nonetheless constitute conditions of social proximity in the



neighbourhood. The relaxed environment of the park and its leisure function make it a popular space of passage, part of the 'pointless' neighbourhood mobilities that operate *between* nodes of sociality, consumption, work, etc. (Bissell, 2013), as Bishal's depiction of his transits through the park above shows.

Where intercultural interactions were fostered tended to be through habituated and semi-formal park activities, such as parents and children regularly visiting the park or the informal sociality of the weekend and weekday tai chi classes. The weekend classes, for example, included practitioners from Anglo-Australian, Malaysian, Mainland Chinese, South Korean and New Zealand backgrounds (at the time of research). This diverse group would sometimes go for a meal or drinks in the RSL club opposite after morning practice. Here, common practice shifts the focus on ethno-cultural difference to a shared identity as tai chi practitioners.

An informal conversation with Derek, a staff member who regularly maintained the park, revealed other instances of habituated, intercultural encounter. Derek mentioned that he gets on well with the tai chi ladies, and finds them friendly. They regularly greet him and exchange pleasantries, despite language barriers. He says, 'I had a debate with a guy over the weather, even though we didn't speak the same language!' Derek tells me that at the end of the year, the tai chi ladies sometimes give him a gift with a card, which they all sign. The gift is usually toys because they know that he has two daughters. They also often shared food with him during the Moon Festival. While these moments of intercultural interaction between a council staff member and park inhabitants might have been strategically motivated, it also points to the potentialities of the park as a space of transversal encounter in which hierarchical relations were recast in terms of a convivial reciprocity and mutual respect.

Understanding Anzac Park as a lived space uncovers multiple meanings of space that have the potential to both contest as well as reinforce dominant conceptions of the park and its 'proper' publics. While on a day-to-day basis, practices of civil indifference and

conviviality lead to a mutual recognition of legitimacy over the use of the park, this is not always the case, as the examples of occasional conflicts and micro-incivilities, mentioned above, attest. Sophie Watson argues that spaces that exist in the ‘interstices of the planned and monumental, divided and segregated, or privatised and thematised’ are politically essential for creating more inclusive and democratic environments (Watson, 2006, p. 7). Such public spaces provide something other than the ‘exoticised, celebrated and commodified spaces representing visible multicultural settlement’ that are central to the visions of city planners and investors, but are the ‘ordinary spaces of everyday life’ that might function as ‘spaces of enchantment and encounter across people’s differences’ and better work to bring strangers together (Watson, 2006, p. 7). In other words, its peripheral position in relation to the commercial imperatives shaping the mall, or the migrant incorporation agendas shaping the library, enable greater opportunities for ‘unpanicked’ conviviality (Noble, 2009b, p. 51) and intercultural encounter.

### **Concluding remarks**

This chapter explores how the park’s socio-spatial order is made up of a dialectical relation between perceived, conceived and lived space. The production of the space involves continuous negotiation between its materialities, discourses of spatial management, and everyday spatial appropriations. These dynamics produce some interesting contradictions. On the one hand, Anzac Park is shaped through the needs and desires of recent arrivals and migrant citizens, making it a multi-layered site of migrant place making practices. On the other hand, Anzac Park materialises historical processes of suburban planning, nation-building narratives as well as contemporary debates around urban consolidation in its design. The seemingly ephemeral nature of migrant spatial practices point to a dominant ‘norm of unmarked whiteness’ in the park (Anderson & Taylor, 2005, p. 462). However, as Byrne and Goodall (2013, p. 67) argue, ‘locality (or placeness) can often be sustained even where materiality is ephemeral’.

Regulating certain embodied activities and types of movement defines *how* to use the

park and by extension, *who* can use the park. Park rules specifically control congregation and public activities associated with public space as a democratic realm: public addresses are banned without explicit permission of the council. Moreover, signage and forms of community policing are based on dominant discourses about producing healthy citizens and safe, family-oriented space. But these representations can draw on wider narratives that discern which (racialised) bodies are more likely to cause disruption. In turn, subtle and not-so-subtle spatial regulation impacts on experiences of local belonging for those not deemed to be contributing to ‘community wellbeing’ as a form of social capital. While this creates a space for social and cultural citizenship for some parts of the community, it also involves ‘efforts to secure space on behalf of particular forms of public sociability through the exclusion of particular people who are conceptualised as a threat to those forms of sociability’ (Iveson, 2007, p. 148). Here, it is possible to see how ‘belonging is not a process of abstract, symbolic attachment, but grounded in movement in and through specific places’ (Noble & Poynting, 2010, p. 490). The prescribed uses of park space further embed a subtle spatial code regarding appropriate multicultural publics. This reading would support Byrne and Wolch’s (2009, p. 745) assertion that ‘park-making ventures have moulded socio-ecological and ethno-racial relations of power within cities’.

The peripheral position of the park in relation to the landscapes of urban commodification and regeneration means that it operates almost as a space of hidden multiculturalism. There is a sense of informal sociability and civil indifference observable in the daily rhythms of the park. This is partly attributable to its function as a ‘natural’ setting that accommodates those retreating from the rhythms of consumption that shape the rest of the town centre. Hybrid identities and alternative meanings of space are part and parcel of its daily production too. Informal healing practices, culturally inflected meanings of nature, and transversal intercultural encounters highlighted the park’s possibilities as a space of representations and ‘grassroots’ appropriations. If, in rapidly densifying cities such as Sydney, open public spaces are in danger of being designed out or becoming semi-private, enclosed places, perhaps the lightly regulated,

informal and convivial nature of sites such as Anzac Park present openings for other, emergent ideas about belonging in public space. While still a long way from examples of urban spaces as ‘actually existing commons’ (Eizenberg, 2012, p. 766), they do present a form of multiculture that might, if sufficiently scaled up, inform and foster urban spaces of more inclusive civility.

## Chapter 8 / Concluding Remarks

*Complex societies like our own depend on workers flowing across borders; contain different ethnicities, races and religions; generate diverging way of sexual and family life. To force all this complexity into a single cultural mould would be politically repressive and tell a lie about ourselves. The 'self' is a composite of sentiments, affiliations and behaviours, which seldom fit neatly together; any call for tribal unity will reduce this personal complexity. (Sennett, 2011: 3)*

## Introduction

The dynamics of the production of urban space and production of difference cannot be neatly separated. In this thesis I have brought these issues together to cast light on lived multiculturalism and belonging in one of Sydney's most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods. To paraphrase Keith (2005, p. 253), the dilemma of thinking about the interplay of contemporary urbanism and processes of racialisation is that in the 'crucible of the metropolis' conventional ideas of the 'receiving society' are subverted by the fact that racial identities and the city itself are always in flux. This study has taken an urban ethnographic approach and micro-sociological analysis to explore how these forces impact on experiences of belonging in contemporary urban spaces of diversity. I use my case study example of Campsie as a unique crucible of a particular configuration of these dynamics, but also one that proffers some insights for other transitioning, multi-ethnic locales in western global cities. Between the gentrifying inner city areas, the suburban 'heartland' and the 'new suburbia' of fringe developments, Campsie embodies multiple layerings of place making through histories of immigration, local economy and imaginaries of suburbia. Through an analysis of the everyday production of three public spaces, I have argued that the socio-spatial assemblages of the local critically mediate substantive, affective, cultural and social dimensions of ordinary citizenship.

Through the analysis of the three public spaces in Campsie, this research has demonstrated that these physical sites are far from bounded; they are instead intersections in a number of relational geographies (Amin, 2012; Massey, 2004). I have discussed how Anzac Mall (in both its present and proposed future configuration) is interpolated with the exigencies of privatisation and property development, competition between local governments and the overriding goal of economic growth, and various discourses relating to safe cities and the value of culture in the global city. In the library, various State and Federal priorities relating to migrant settlement and social cohesion converge with more ground-up attempts at fostering intercultural exchange and responding to the needs of a superdiverse community. In the park, migrant place making practices coalesce with historical layers of place making and nation building in suburbia, emerging residential patterns of urban density, discourses about open space and healthful citizens.

Filtering into all these spaces are translocal geographies – the multiple sites and place-based belongings of the diverse residents who use these spaces. Residents of migrant backgrounds bring with them certain embodied conceptions about the proper use of public space mediated by gendered, class-based, generational, religious and other factors that shape habitus. As demonstrated most saliently in relation to the park space, residents draw on homeland experiences that inform varied and holistic notions of nature and the urban. Place making practices are shaped by migrant residents' expectations about their role in public life. From elderly Chinese checkers players in the pedestrian mall to appropriations of the library by migrant youth, engagement in local spaces speaks volumes about cultural conventions and affective registers of what it means to be 'placed'. While consideration of the forms of transnationalism that shape Campsie have not been the primary target of my analysis, the preceding discussions go some way to illuminating the situated histories of places as well as their insertion and connection to transnational networks and subjectivities (Keith, 2005, p. 254). Each of these micro-geographical spaces is inscribed with other scales of belonging – not least transnational imaginaries of mobility and home as well as national and historical discourses of what it means to be Australian.

In this concluding discussion, I build on the analyses from each chapter and further explore their possible implications. I begin with a discussion of potential learning points for policies relating to migrant incorporation and multicultural policy. Next, I discuss the relevance of this place-based study for thinking about the role of urban planning and diversity. Special reference is made to issues of privatisation, urban density and the transforming political role of the suburbs in multicultural cities. I then discuss the value of analyzing belonging as spatial practice and the implications for thinking about urban citizenship. I then consider in more depth what urban multiculturalism means for creating public cultures of civility in the city, before scaling up the broader social significance of intercultural encounter, shared space and everyday civilities for reconfiguring national frames of belonging. Finally, I make note of further challenges that the current study raises for future research.

### **Multicultural policy and migrant incorporation**

In Australia, as in other western democratic countries of immigration, policies relating to migrant incorporation began as policies focused on national belonging and assimilation. Australian multiculturalism started as a set of principles for recognising the rights of newcomers and their equal role in national public space. The intricacies of migrant incorporation in relation to everyday life were of less concern (Amin, 2012, p. 60). Over time, however, policies of social cohesion and community harmony have very much focused on the intimate level of inhabitation in urban space. What is their impact on the lived spaces of multiculturalism?

The preceding analysis in Campsie highlighted several articulations of local multiculturalism. Local governance and spatial managers engage with multiculturalism as 1) a policy of affirmative recognition and inclusion, 2) a policy of migrant settlement and integration, 3) a policy of social cohesion/harmony, and 4) a policy of economic growth. These articulations of pluralist policy emerge in an environment of fiscal constraint and

various State and Federal agendas relating to urban consolidation and restructuring, and to priorities of community harmony and economic growth. In between are local political agendas and the demands of a highly diverse population. Where might this be leading in terms of the treatment of ethno-cultural difference in local governance and migrant settlement?

Local government policies have moved towards ‘mainstreaming’ multiculturalism. That is, rather than explicit multicultural programmes relating to ethnic populations and their needs, departments of local government are charged with individually implementing multicultural principles in what is sometimes an ad hoc fashion in some area of service provision, particularly relating to urban planning (Thompson, 2003). In targeting ‘capacity building’ rather than direct service provision, services are increasingly provided by third sector organisations. Boese and Phillips (2011) argue that this has been a common feature of the Australian policy landscape since the 2000s. Based on social inclusion discourses, it has led to what they call a ‘watered-down’ version of multiculturalism that pays insufficient attention to multiple indices of disadvantage relevant to ethnic minority and migrant groups (Boese & Phillips, 2011; Vasta, 2007a).

As my own research demonstrates, a shift towards mainstreaming multiculturalism in local government has also meant that the equality principle of multiculturalism is evoked as a justification for not providing specialist services based on cultural needs, particularly in relation to the built environment (Whitten & Thompson, 2005). Framed as ‘multiculturalism for all’, the very fact of a diverse resident population renders all service provision automatically multicultural – regardless of actually existing needs relating to indices of recent arrival, language skills, poverty and ethno-cultural difference. In this context, except for the directed multicultural programmes and collections in the library, special provisions for certain groups are regarded as politically unviable. In Canterbury, this has meant that multicultural concerns are rarely directly discussed in relation to the built environment. Residents and community workers found that there were very few public spaces and community facilities available for the exclusive activities of



community groups – whether organised around cultural and ethnic markers or not. This lead to prosaic public sites such as the pedestrian mall and Anzac Park becoming sites of informal place making practices and community congregation for various local ethnic and migrant groups.<sup>131</sup>

Local migrant support workers and council staff in Campsie comment that in this climate, the council becomes a coordinating service for various community organisations, while local NGOs and migrant settlement services have to engage in competitive tendering processes in order to secure funding from the government (Boese & Phillips, 2011, p. 191). In this competitive environment, the needs of a diverse community are thus shoehorned into a model that, as Connor noted, requires that ethnic or minority groups must prove that ‘they cannot be normal citizens’ and are failing to integrate into society to receive funding and services. In other words, migrant support providers ‘have to package it in a way that [they are] actually dealing with potential terrorists’ (Connor, January 2013). Through this discourse, new arrivals are deemed to belong if they can either prove their *commonality* through self-reliance (thus disregarding any forms of structural racism they face), or fit into pre-existing narratives of harmonious, attractive ethno-cultural difference. Anything else is viewed through the narrow lens of national security concerns and fears of social fragmentation (Jakubowicz, 2015).

The everyday production of public spaces – in terms of their management and the spatial practices that unfold in them – are shaped by these agendas. The Campsie public library provides a useful example. As a de facto childcare and youth service it reflects a wider retreat from government provision of social services, and devolution of services to the community sector – which Peck and Tickell (2002) refer to as ‘roll-back’ neoliberalism. As a space for coordinating local multicultural ‘audiences’ for a range of local and state agencies, and enrolling local residents in discourses of community harmony, the library is

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<sup>131</sup> Clearly it is important to also consider Campsie within the wider local government area, in which there are two community hub facilities (in Punchbowl and in Lakemba) to which emerging ethnic communities have some degree of access, although much of this access is based on the ability of these groups to be self-reliant and seek independent funding.

also implicated in wider shifts towards ‘roll-out neoliberalism’ (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 389). This refers, they argue, to more proactive social interventionist policies. It includes, for example, ‘the selective appropriation of ‘community’ ... the establishment of social capital discourses and techniques, the incorporation... of local governance and partnership based modes of... program delivery in areas like urban regeneration and social welfare’ (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 390). As an institution and public space, the library is at the forefront of these kinds of initiatives.

Under this form of neoliberalisation, ‘third sector initiatives organised around principles of self-improvement and moral responsibility stand in for state sponsored social policies and programs premised on collective responses to social risk’ (Pudup, 2008, p. 1229). Where an inclusive and expansive concept of multiculturalism could function as a key ‘collective response to social risk’, an overriding focus on ‘self-reliance’ leaves little room for strengths-based approaches, that is, governmental policies and funding structures that recognise, reward and build on the strengths of ethnic communities. Moreover, as several community workers argued, a shift to generalist approaches away from ethnic community-specific service providers potentially involves a significant loss of social and cultural capital (Roumeliotis & Paschalidis-Chilas, 2013).

But, more importantly for the current discussion, these policy agendas filter down and prescribe the everyday production of public spaces. Ground-up, locally responsive models of inclusion demonstrated in spaces such as the library and some of the council’s multicultural programming, must compete with dominant policy settings that shape urban diversity in relation to prevailing neoliberal and nation building priorities. Agendas relating to the production of ‘community’, safety, health and wellbeing, migrant socialisation and local economic growth have clearly positive motivations and outcomes, but also engender space use in selective and sometimes exclusionary ways.<sup>132</sup> They set the general parameters for legitimate ethno-cultural identities, and legitimate

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<sup>132</sup> Osborne and Rose identify these discourses as part of the ethopolitics of space that increasingly mould city locales through processes of ‘spatialising virtue’ (Osborne & Rose, 1999).

relationships between migrant/ethnic groups and different levels of government. In other words, they define – often in highly bureaucratic and mundane ways through service provision and the governance of local spaces – the boundaries of multicultural belonging.

As discussed in the case studies above, ‘harmony’ discourses tend to translate into a contemporary form of Australian multiculturalism that leaves little space for agonistic politics, dissent or dialogical (rather than dialectical) discussions (Sennett, 2011, p. 19) about where increasing diversity might lead. It loudly voices its harmonious credentials while often failing to acknowledge the lived practicalities of everyday multiculturalism and the ‘multicultural real’ – that which ‘cannot be incorporated by [fantasies of] White multiculturalism’ (Hage, 1998, p. 132). This iteration of multiculturalism cannot be understood separately from the production of urban space. Indeed, it denies the intrinsic conflict and contradictions that characterises the urban, a point that Lefebvre was careful to highlight (which is worth quoting at length):

There is nothing harmonious about the urban as form and reality, for it also incorporates conflict, including class conflict. What is more, it can only be conceptualised in opposition to segregation, which attempts to resolve conflicts by separating the elements in space. This segregation produces a disaggregation of material and social life. To avoid contradiction, to achieve a purposed sense of harmony, a certain form of urbanism prefers the disaggregation of the social bond. (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], pp. 175-176)

The original principles of multiculturalism were based on the enhancement of the social bond through equality and universalism. However, contemporary tendencies that knit multicultural discourse with a desire for homogeneous national identity, security and an over-emphasis on the exchange value of encounter and ethnic difference potentially undermine sustainable social bonds.

### **(Sub)urban transformations and governing inclusive public space**

In this section, I reflect on some of the wider themes emerging from the study in relation to urban planning, urban consolidation and the shifting social geographies of the suburbs

in the global city. I have focused on Campsie, in part, as an interstitial place – a place of arrival and departure at the symbolic margin of the global city. But it is also a place of long-term immigration, economic restructuring and Anglo-Australian working class culture. As such the study addresses calls to look at the ‘in-between’ cities ‘that are neither old downtown nor new suburb but complex urban landscapes of mixed density, use and urbanity’ (Young & Keil, 2014, p. 1590). I ask what might be learnt from a place-based study like Campsie regarding the transformation of cities of diversity, and how this might be spatially managed.

*Enclosure and the discontents of the global city: spaces for inclusive planning*

In Campsie, urban governance and ethno-cultural diversity intersected most clearly in place promotion strategies, reflecting themes of civic boosterism and urban revanchism that has been documented by a number of urban theories. Belonging to a multicultural community through this lens takes on the glare of urban entrepreneurialism and discourses of productive diversity. Public spaces – most notably the pedestrian mall – are refashioned through imaginaries of cosmopolitan places that fulfill the aims of the middle-class accumulation of cultural capital. Development interests, privatisation, notions of public safety and a tendency to prioritise automobility over walkability all result in a reduction in inclusive and accessible public space. While creating ‘safer’ public spaces and forms of inclusion for some segments of the population, it arguably places subtle control over entry and modes of dwelling. As such, it can undermine substantive forms of urban citizenship for Campsie’s diverse publics. As Katz argues, ‘privatisation furthers a project of consumership much more so than citizenship’ (2006, p. 120).

In urban planning strategies like this, multiculturalism is repackaged and made into spectacle. The competitive exigencies of Sydney’s global city status get filtered into the micro-spaces of suburbia, which inevitably designs out certain kinds of difference. As Sarup (1994, p. 102) argues, ‘keeping strangers at a mental distance through locking them up in a shell of exoticism does not however, suffice to neutralise their inherent, and dangerous,

incongruity.’ Valverde reflects that in the superdiverse city of Toronto, market-friendly forms of gentrified urban diversity circumvent a whole array of people who are considered outsiders, and ‘whose particular diversity cannot be linked to cities’ global competitive advantage [including] older blue-collar workers, young high school dropouts, recent immigrants, those who for health reasons need supportive housing, rooming house tenants – these and other marginalised groups’ (Valverde, 2012, p. 109).

This finding has resonance in Campsie, where the claims to public space made by elderly, migrant residents, women, youth and the unemployed were largely invisible in plans to reengineer Campsie’s central pedestrian mall. And while the food festival and weekend markets do provide a site for intermingling and intercultural encounter, there was little evidence that these types of civic events would automatically engender a greater sense of cohesion or sustained opportunities for transversal social exchanges. As a form of ephemeral entertainment, these strategies were not as important as the everyday place making practices of residents, which were more likely to be oriented around ordinary multiculturalism and various spatial appropriations shaped by factors such as ethnic identity, age and socio-economic status.

As such, it points to the danger of urban planning strategies relying on the market to provide spaces of encounter, or on public/private partnerships (Fincher & Iveson, 2008; Iveson, 2007). As I have argued, local, State and Federal imperatives towards economic multiculturalism and discourses of harmony have profound impacts on organising encounters with difference in local public spaces. But, despite these local level impacts, it is ‘unlikely that this shift is the result of raised awareness of research on situated culture’ (Amin, 2012, p. 60). This leads to the question of how much or whether these policies are able to engage with and acknowledge grounded experiences of living with diversity, beyond more politically driven agendas for superficial recognition of migrant cultural practices or initiatives to de-politicise and economically exploit the ‘ethnic element’. There is a risk – which several scholars have alluded to – that lived multiculturalism and its socialities will be increasingly coerced, appropriated, engineered or ‘cleaned out’ of spaces

of co-habitation; a ‘colonisation of the encounter’ by the government or market (Amin, 2012, p. 60; Binnie, 2006; Fincher & Iveson, 2008).

Taking into account examples of successful and responsive urban planning in Canterbury and other parts of the city (e.g. Stewart et al., 2003), it is no longer necessarily the case that the lived practice of everyday life is a complete ‘blind field’ for urbanists, as Lefebvre (2003 [1970]) would argue. However, given that ‘Australia has a long history of separating physical (i.e. landuse) planning from social planning’ (Whitten & Thompson, 2005, p. 10), there is still ample room for the adoption of more inclusive planning strategies for cities of diversity. In Campsie, there are arguably alternative strategies for engaging the local community and fostering a sense of ownership over local spaces (beyond conventional forms of exhibiting council plans at the council chambers and mailing information to individual households) that could also be explored. But at another level, as Kesten et al (2011, p. 147) have argued, it is difficult to formalise engagement between local governance structures and a local politics of multiculturalism, in the sense of engaging with funding structures and the policy world. The practice of everyday multiculturalism does not have key representatives to represent it, as do ethnic community organisations. But there also needs to be opportunities for connecting policy and political rhetoric with the lived experiences and realities of multiculturalism in everyday urban space.

Ideally, these agendas would address Sandercock’s calls for ‘new notions of citizenship, multicultural and urban, that are more responsive to newcomers’ claims of rights to the city and more encouraging of their political participation at the local level’ (Sandercock, 2003, p. 322). A more inclusive urban governance would ideally go beyond attempts to create strategic forms of ‘centrality’ in the city’s peripheral multicultural suburbs solely through economically oriented spectacles (like food festivals); instead, it would implement a system in which inhabitants were integral to the creation of centrality and encounter in the city (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 150).

*Critically engaging density in suburbs of migration*

There is also a need to consider both the implementation of and discourses associated with urban consolidation and density, and what this might mean for the provision of public spaces. Population density and its assumed connection to immigration is variously conflated and overlaid with ideas about designing and planning for the ‘compact city’ and its consequences. Both point to narratives relating to scarcity of space. This was particularly prominent in Campsie, where public space use is intertwined with residential patterns of higher density living, and where the everyday experiences of multiculturalism in the suburb are often characterised and described through the language of density. Given its many uses in public discourses and in my participants’ narratives, density and urban consolidation are associated with a high degree of ambivalence. Sometimes these concepts are used to refer to a sense of ‘fullness’ and the abundance of different cultural symbols that characterise some of Campsie’s public spaces, and result in a valued sense of ‘vibrancy’. Discourses of density and urban consolidation are variously used to rationalise both social and economic growth imperatives – more people in residential and public spaces produces greater social and economic ‘vitality’, not to mention better public safety outcomes.

Density discourses were also spoken about in relation to the provision of additional higher density housing. Some saw this as a good thing that would maximise the use of existing urban infrastructure and reduce the environmental impacts of suburban sprawl. But for other residents and workers in Campsie, higher residential density was connected to concerns about variable outcomes for the provision of public infrastructure and space. Indeed, sometimes ideas about density were related to over-crowding and a lack of resources. This was seen, for example, in the case of Campsie’s public library and some users’ experiences of the space as being too small, and in relation to moral narratives about a lack of play space for children living in higher density housing. These various meanings of physical and social density were often associated with migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds residing in private rental units.

Density has many affective articulations in relation to claims for public space: in the library it fostered both greater possibilities for intercultural interaction, as well as conflict over noise. In the mall it signified the successful regeneration of economic space. For many residents, this ‘surplus’ or situated multiplicity (Amin, 2008, p. 8) – experienced as social proximity to otherness in all its sensory dimensions – was a constituent part of everyday multiculturalism in Campsie. Often, many of these representations of urban density were conflated. What I wish to emphasise here, beyond its contingent meanings, is that it serves as an important signifier in multi-ethnic suburban settings – both its generative possibilities and its discontents. Both need to be critically engaged when understanding issues of space and the negotiation of diversity.

#### *Multicultural suburbia and its new publics?*

The thesis addresses a dual bias in the literature. Firstly, a bias in urban studies towards studying inner city privatisation and marginalisation, and secondly, an historical tendency in migration studies to focus on migrant incorporation in inner city areas. In light of the demographic reality of places like Campsie, this thesis refocuses the study of urban restructuring and international migration from the centre to the peripheries of the suburb (Young & Keil, 2014). A key point emerging from this research is that the suburbs of global cities are far from the rarefied, middle-class, Anglo-centric enclaves that they were once made out to be. The imaginaries of low density, conservative and homogeneous suburbia idylls no longer apply (if they ever did), particularly in the Sydney’s most multicultural suburban tracts. The suburbs are polycentric, heterogeneous and politically mixed locales (Harris & Larkham, 1999). While it is the inner city that is usually associated with wellsprings of political mobilisation, creativity and alternative publics, the prevalence of concentrations of diversity in suburban contexts would suggest a rethinking of this centrist logic. Perhaps, as Sophie Watson (2006) has suggested, it is in the interstitial spaces and neighbourhoods where multiculturalism is a common condition of everyday life that subaltern publics emerge. And these alternative imaginaries of belonging potentially shake up and challenge mainstream, and often exclusionary,



discourses about living together in difference in Australian society.

There is little research on what some scholars have called the ‘post-suburban’ condition and the complex geographies of migration and multiculturalism in the city (Allon, 2006; Mace, 2013; Quinby, 2011; Watson, 2006). It has been argued that in ‘new suburbia’ ‘inequality is more fragmented and invisible, because it takes place within a landscape designed to enhance patterns of private accumulation’ (Quinby, 2011, p. 51). I would argue that multicultural policy needs to better engage with these forms of emerging inequality, particularly given that the majority of immigrants reside in suburban settings. Moreover, this geography is characterised by ‘a marked absence of both public space and infrastructure’ (Quinby, 2011, p. 51). Public space provision in aging, densely populated suburbs in Sydney as well as the burgeoning outer suburbs of new residential development, is under pressure and has far-reaching consequences for how citizenship is enacted and how belonging is experienced in the multicultural suburb. Providing public spaces and sites of congregation can also provide venues for protest and activism, as well as venues for forging common identities. In the current age of increasingly exclusionist narratives of national belonging, suburban spaces and urban citizenship may become critical sites for achieving social inclusion.

Given the majority of Australia’s population resides in suburban areas, these complex geographies become a critical domain for negotiating intercultural relations, and exploring possibilities for realising inhabitants’ right to the city. As Brendan Gleeson (2006, p. 6) argues, ‘it is within the domains of the ‘ordinary’ urban citizenry – the middle and outer suburbs of our metropolitan regions – that the future of our cities is being shaped.’ Already there is evidence of counter publics emerging in sites previously associated with poverty, immigration and marginality in Sydney, in areas such as Bankstown and Fairfield (located to the west of Canterbury). These re-imaginings of place involve new ways of claiming space through diverse means: public art, urban spatial appropriations (e.g. parkour), alternative politics and other forms of representation (e.g. film) (CuriousWorks, 2011; Koleth, 2015; Koleth & Williamson, 2011; Mar &

Anderson, 2012) which augment (and offer alternatives to) governance-led regeneration projects or the more market-driven creation of ‘ethnic precincts’.

### **Belonging as spatial practice and implications for urban citizenship**

My research has explored how the everyday practices of residents moving through and dwelling in local public spaces produces them as urban and national subjects. I have demonstrated throughout how thinking about the mall, library and park in terms of spatial practice, representations of space and lived space shape how residents’ sense of belonging is routinely practiced, governed and challenged and re-imagined. In all these examples, claiming a place of belonging is also effectively making a claim as a member of the neighbourhood, city and nation. That is, citizenship as everyday spatial practice (Secor, 2004; Staeheli et al., 2012). While belonging highlights the affective and experiential dimensions of making home and being recognised as a legitimate member of a certain space or social group, urban citizenship places it within a continuum of rights in relation to the state. Urban citizenship recognises the urban realm as a critical polity and spatial frame for ascribing identity.

There are several advantages to thinking about the spatial aspects of belonging and citizenship beyond conventional definitions of legal membership. In Australia, formal citizenship is relatively accessible, in the sense that there are clear legal pathways to permanent residency and then citizenship, and the assumption that formal and substantive citizenship are neatly tied together. Multiculturalism here operates – in principle - to ensure that the enactment of citizenship is not hindered by differential access to political and civic life, based on ethno-cultural factors. But formal citizenship does not always equal substantive citizenship (Bugg, 2013; Carruthers, 2010; Holston & Appadurai, 1996; Staeheli, 2003). Migration or citizenships status does not automatically imbue a sense of belonging at the neighbourhood or city level, nor does it guarantee access to public space, welfare and justice in everyday life. In other words, it highlights the potential gaps between legal statuses and substantive forms of citizenship. As Noble and Poynting argue, ‘a grounded sense of cultural citizenship and social belonging is partly a function

of practices of inclusion or exclusion in local as well as nationally significant public space' (Noble & Poynting, 2010, p. 497).

Understanding belonging as spatial practice also foregrounds the material culture of the city. Local, familiar physical spaces, public sites like the pedestrian mall, park and library are often more immediately and routinely experienced as a form of communication about where and how new arrivals and other migrant residents fit in national frames of belonging. As such, it is critical to examine the politics of their production. Therefore, I take a more critical stance to how multicultural citizenship gets inscribed in the very urban vernaculars that shape our daily lives. The city's 'urban morphology' – its 'layout, material form, infrastructure, technological qualities, regulatory environment, natural and symbolic landscape' therefore all have a bearing on 'the experiential field in which collective feelings towards specific sites and the city as a whole, along with judgment of co-presence, arise' (Amin, 2012, p. 66; Binnie, 2006; Koch & Latham, 2012b). Focusing on everyday socio-materialities that shape belonging reverses the traditional rendering of space as neutral and silent. It presents another ground for claiming legitimacy, entitlement and participation in the city, whether for long-term inhabitants or temporary sojourners.

Moreover, as scholars like Lefebvre have argued, in its very dynamism and contradictions there exist 'seeds of a new kind of space' that can challenge the hegemonic ordering of the city. Lefebvre refers to this as 'differential space' that both accentuates difference while restoring 'unity to what abstract space breaks up – to the functions, elements and moments of social practice' (Lefebvre, 1991 (1974), p. 52). Differential space characterises 'heterotopic' places in Lefebvre's view, which he saw as 'politically and geographically independent from the early political city' and, intriguingly, associated with such diverse sites as fairgrounds, caravansaries and *suburbs* (Smith, 2003, p. xii). Clearly, suburbia is now deeply enmeshed in the politics of the global city. Yet, multicultural places like Campsie, I argue, are rich sites to explore the emergence of heterotopic places and the production of differential space. Lefebvre argues that the

energies, passions and creativity of city inhabitants that make the city into an *oeuvre* challenge and reshape abstract space, and thus restore differential space. While in Campsie differential space presented itself through small and often subtle moments of spatial creativity and re-appropriation – not the spectacular, revolutionary claims to the right to the city envisioned by Lefebvre – they are nonetheless significant for pointing to urban space as contingent and emergent; open to transformation and re-imagination.

### **The ambivalences and potentialities of suburban multicultural**

The various forms of intercultural interaction generated in each of the public spaces analysed were key to place making practices. In the pedestrian mall I analysed forms of territoriality and indifference amongst the sedentary dwellers, but in the interstitial and unexpected micro-public of the Women's Rest Centre, there were opportunities for intercultural encounter also. These observations are based on the daily rhythms of the pedestrian mall, while more often space-managers focus on intercultural exchange in the mall during temporary and managed conversions of the mall through the annual Food Festival and weekend market. And while these generate their own moments of potential encounter intercultural dialogue and encounter is not guaranteed amidst the prevailing thematic of consumption, entertainment and place marketing that can promote distinct ethno-cultural identities. The analysis of the library highlighted the more programmatic dimensions of intercultural encounter – engineered and moulded through its daily programmes and multicultural celebrations. These too are important instances of micro-public spaces that break down social hierarchies, albeit ones that are subtly and not so subtly coerced.

In Anzac Park a picture emerged of a less actively regulated although still highly ordered space where the everyday enactment of multiculturalism was more routine and unremarkable, and less obviously exploited by discourses of productive diversity, social harmony or programmatic multiculturalism. While demonstrating moments of territoriality as well as spontaneous and semi-organised intercultural encounter, indifference was the prevailing ethic of the park space. I would argue that was more than the absence of social relations,

but presents a condition of commonality in its desire for non-recognition and claims to everyday public space based on unremarkable difference. This is, as Tonkiss states, ‘dissociation as a certain kind of social relation’ (Tonkiss, 2003, p. 297). The analysis of these public spaces thus reinforces the idea that multiculturalism is, ultimately, shot through with ambivalence in its ‘raw state’ (Amin, 2002; Tonkiss, 2003; Wessendorf, 2010). In each public space, place-based associations depended on the socio-spatial configurations and prevailing representations that worked to either foster or hinder such relationalities.

Many other actors influence belonging in place: length of residence, age, migration status, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, and labour market participation. For people experiencing multiple intersectionalities, access to local public space is particularly important. This was a pattern observed across all three of the public spaces studied in Campsie. For more vulnerable groups – particularly those without a clearly defined place in either the national public sphere or their transnational social worlds, such as elderly residents from migrant backgrounds, youth and those with precarious work or settlement status – local public spaces were a site of resources, reprieve and reconnection. Like Hall, I found that ‘for those most vulnerable to the impacts of change, including the elderly, the young, the poor, and the newcomer, local worlds are spaces where much is at stake, since these are the places in which the less mobile are often highly invested - socially, culturally, and economically’ (Hall, 2011, p. 2573). But, these populations also were often – at least in the cases I examined – the conduits for subtle counter-publics and alternative visions of local spaces. Indeed, it has been argued that in relation to the production of urban public space, ‘marginal groups can always read and write different meanings into those spaces and, more than this, help us to see landscape as an ongoing relationship between multiple groups that interact without a clearly defined “core”’ (Law, 2002, p. 1644).

In one sense, Campsie represents a relatively ‘successful’ example of multicultural co-habitation. Overall, the general perception of Campsie from most participants was one of relatively well-functioning multiculturalism. There are few overt instances of conflict,

miscommunication or racial exclusion – on the surface at least. But there are myriad exclusions that cross over with dimensions of difference (for example, forms of residential displacement, petty crime, extreme poverty, etc) in addition to forms of exclusion from public space that have been discussed throughout. There is, in other words, always room for improvement. One of the key findings of this study is that governance in multi-ethnic urban localities (that is, local government and service providers) need to grasp the multiple scales at which urban diversity works. As well as implementing top-down discourses of community harmony and multicultural inclusion, there is a need to fully appreciate the lived dimensions of multiculturalism in local spaces. Appreciating the everyday workings of multiculturalism does not require resource-intensive management and investment, nor does it demand direct dialogue and resolution. It instead involves creating environments that foster engagements in a number of locations (work, school, the street, shops as well as public spaces) and lubricates a kind of ‘lighter-touch’ and spontaneous conviviality (Neal et al., 2013, p. 316). Indeed, I posit that social and urban design that responds to both the need for spatialities of *recognition* as well as the spatialities of *indifference* and ‘commonplace conviviality’ is critical for creating conditions of inclusion and supporting residents’ substantive citizenship claims. And, moreover, better involving local residents in all their diversity or participate in the design and management of these spaces as a form of urban commons.

In doing so, urban governance would respond to the two fundamental conditions of living in cities of diversity: they would address the politics of indifference that have long characterised the city (Simmel, 2002 [1903]; Tonkiss, 2003; Wessendorf, 2010) as well as the politics of difference/recognition that is part and parcel of pluralist democracies (Taylor, 1992; Young, 1990). This reinforces other theories that marry the often segregated disciplines relating to diversity and city planning: for example, Fincher and Iveson’s (2008) powerful treatise for underpinning planning in cities of diversity with the principles of recognition, redistribution and encounter. This argument also aligns with Amin’s persuasive argument that there are two emerging vernaculars in the diverse city. The first is a politics of the commons that is strengthened by the myriad ‘civilities of

indifference to difference' in everyday life, while the second is a shift towards policies of fear, security and exclusion made up of forms of 'incivility towards difference' (Amin, 2013, p. 1). I take up these points – and their potential implications for a renewed pluralist politics – in the following discussion, where I examine how such vernaculars can be scaled up to all spheres of life.

### **Scaling up spaces of belonging: rethinking Australian multiculturalism**

Several of my participants from migration backgrounds mentioned experiences of racism in their everyday lives: small incidents of insults, aggressive behaviour, and being told to 'go back home' (Henry, July 2012) were not uncommon. While discussions of racism were not a dominant narrative of my interviews in Campsie, and few participants raised the topic spontaneously, this did not mean that they did not sharply experience social, structural and institutional barriers and boundaries to feeling fully 'in place'. As Bishal reflects:

I think in this whole world, we have to see it as one country. We are all men and women; there shouldn't be any racism. If they look like Australian or from Nepal, we shouldn't behave like they are second-class citizens. Slowly it's changing everywhere. Maybe ten years before it wasn't multicultural like this, but slowly it's changing. (Bishal, August 2012)

As Bishal experiences in his daily struggle to find work and adjust to life in Sydney after Kathmandu, racial-based exclusions and social stratification pervade everyday life, even in relatively affluent, democratic countries such as Australia. Contemporary multiculturalism in Australia has clearly gone a long way to addressing this, but as Bishal notes, the progress is still somewhat 'slow'. The examples set out in this thesis would suggest the need for a re-grounding of Australian multiculturalism in the politics of everyday life. Despite a general acceptance of the reality of Australia as a multicultural society, it is constantly buffeted by waves of public opinion and political agendas. While the 'retreat from multiculturalism' in Australia is not at the level being witnessed in Europe, events would suggest that the Australian multicultural identity is somewhat

fragile. Multiculturalism has been open to appropriations by neoliberal economics, global city marketing discourses, conservative agendas of nation building in the image of Anglo-Australian heritage, racialisations of minority groups and terror narratives. All of these discourses and political agendas have myriad implications for lived experiences of and claims for belonging in Australia for migrants, as the examples in previous chapters reveal.

Theorists of multiculturalism have emphasised different pathways forwards. Some have argued for stronger, expanded forms of multiculturalism (Vasta, 2007a; Vasta, 2007b); engendering a more extensive, unifying sense of nationhood, or at least a renewed framework of belonging that takes on board cosmopolitan and transnational identities (Carruthers, 2013; Castles, 2013; Collins, 2013b; Parekh, 2006). Others have highlighted the need to continue to contextualise contemporary debates in relation to historical experiences of colonialism and new forms of racism, arguing that older forms of racialisation have been recast through the conflation of cultural traits with an imagined primordial and irreconcilable racially-ascribed 'Otherness' (Amin, 2012; Gilroy, 2004; Hage, 1998; Hall, 2000). Still others propose the need to examine a renewed political frame of 'interculturalism' (Meer & Modood, 2011). But what is overlooked in these more macro-framed perspectives, I would argue, is the value in the relational, the material, the multi-scalar and the ethnographic realm of the urban in re-vitalising and re-orienting pluralist policies of the future, which I endeavour, in some small way, to contribute to.

But re-grounding multiculturalism does not mean taking the ambivalent multiculture of urban encounters as the antidote to, or more genuine version of, national discourses of belonging. These scales are irreducibly interrelated – as Anderson argues, neighbourhoods are a 'crucial relational field within which qualitative determinations over national belonging are grounded' (Anderson, 2002, p. 387). As argued in relation to Campsie, localities in the city are involved in the production of local as well as national citizens. This forms a tension: neighbourhoods are social formations that 'produce anxiety' in case they do 'not meet the needs for spatial and social standardisation that is



prerequisite for the disciplined national citizen' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 191). I would suggest then, scaling up the potentialities and optimism implicit in everyday spaces of negotiating difference. In other words, in the fine-grained socio-spatial practices of innovation, creativity, transversal interactions and 'making do', lie possibilities for navigating diversity more generally, beyond the set categories, conditional belonging and social hierarchies that underlie many contemporary iterations of multiculturalism in Australia.

This finding supports other researches into urban diversity (Amin, 2012; Castles, Hugo & Vasta, 2013; Hall, 2012; Wise & Velayutham, 2009a), that argue that the combination of an ethos of ordinary difference with rethinking cities as relational, translocal spaces is critical for rethinking belonging in an age of transnational migration. This recalibration of multicultural belonging does two things. Firstly, it reinserts forms of urban and translocal citizenship into frames of belonging that are otherwise almost always scaled at the national level. It recognises that people have many spatial registers of belonging, and adds other avenues for feeling at home and contributing to Australian society. As Holston and Appadurai argue, this is critical because 'it may even be... that there is something irreducible and non-transferable, necessary but not quite sufficient, about the city's public street and square for the realisation of a meaningfully democratic citizenship' (1996, p. 202).

Secondly, reframing belonging in this way loosens the discursive hold that ethno-cultural identity has on articulations of legitimate belonging in the national space – whether this is Anglo-Celtic settler identity or Vietnamese, Lebanese or Bangladeshi identity. It destabilises assumptions that ethnicity and national identity are the primary grounds for claiming rights. Furthermore, it unsettles the social and racial hierarchies implicit in tolerance-based discourses of Australian multiculturalism, and the profoundly spatial implications of such myths (Anderson, 2002; Hage, 1998). Focusing on inhabitation as the basis of belonging potentially weakens associations of the stranger with processes of ethnic and racial othering. Indeed, the conflation of a racial model of strangerhood with

discourses of securitisation and risk management (which Amin calls ‘catastrophic biopolitics’) creates the most fertile ground for the rooting down of public cultures of incivility (Amin, 2012; 2013).<sup>133</sup> To avoid perpetuating cultures of xenophobia, the value of transversal interpersonal relations and public spaces that facilitate such encounters ‘must ultimately be expanded into a valuation of communal plural in all spheres of life’, to create a new model of care in cities of difference (Amin, 2012, p. 78).

### **Further challenges**

In taking a place-based approach, this thesis was less focused on a full exposition of the temporalities involved in migrant incorporation processes in the city. While my analysis did sketch the many rhythms and temporal dimensions involved in the production of the pedestrian mall, library and park (from the historical to the everyday), as well as individual’s experiences of place according to their length of residence, there are many other temporalities impacting on individual migrants’ lives that intersect with place. For example, the timeframes of migrants’ actual migration trajectory or their specific visa status and its legislated time periods based on residence or relationship status. Moreover, there are multiple locality-specific timeframes that shape migrants’ place making efforts that have been only touched on: from the temporalities of the funding cycles for settlement and migrant support services, to the electoral cycles of local government.

Indeed, the temporalities of migration is an under-researched area, and one that begs multiple questions about the shifting definitions of time in the context of migration, and the definition of the ‘migrant’ itself (Hage, 2005; Robertson, 2013b). This is highly relevant in contemporary immigration policies that have seen temporary migration in its various forms vastly outnumber permanent migration in Australia, which has profound impacts on the global city (Koleth & Williamson, 2014), on spatial claims in the national sphere (Robertson, 2013a), and on multicultural policies (Robertson, 2013b).

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<sup>133</sup> This tendency corresponds also with Gilroy’s (2004, p. 24) discussion of a postcolonial melancholia that has reinvented cultural homogeneity and ‘shared values’ that can easily slip into ‘ethnic absolutism’ and racism.

Throughout the thesis I have touched on transnational dimensions of place and how residents' sense of place was interwoven with translocalities. I was not able to develop these forms of connectivity in more depth due to time and word length constraints. Tracing tangible connections – through communication, bodily mobility, flows of finance (e.g. remittances) etc – between Campsie's local spaces and the myriad localities that migrants psychologically and physically traverse on a daily basis and through their lifetime would provide an even clearer picture of Campsie as an interspersed, 'glocal' space.

While the preceding work has focused on substantive and subjective aspects of citizenship associated with spatial practice, there remains a significant amount of work to do to systematically extend such ideas into notions of formal citizenship – particularly in relation to the city (see, for example, Isin, 2000). The current study has examined many ways that residents stake a claim to ordinary suburban spaces – claims that are entangled with a sense of belonging to the national social body and the 'Australian public' more generally. Yet, there is ample room to interrogate how liberal democratic traditions might engage with an implementation of formal urban citizenship and rights to the city (that is, beyond voting in local elections) particularly in the context of temporary and undocumented migrants and their right to the participate in city life (Robertson, 2013a; Varsanyi, 2006).

Finally, the results of this study could benefit from comparative analysis with other urban areas in Sydney that are undergoing rapid transformation through international migration. Of particular interest are the inner city areas that have served as arrival cities for significant numbers of working-holiday makers, international students and people on temporary work visas. The socio-spatiality of these urban locales in Sydney (and other Australian cities) are being visibly transformed through forms of translocal place making, vertical communities and other spatial appropriations (Collins, 2010a; Dunn, 2010; Fincher, 2011; Fincher & Shaw, 2009; Martin & Rizvi, 2014; Robertson, 2013a). In

addition, comparing the place making strategies of migrants in some of Sydney's outer/edge suburbs that have little history and policy experience with diverse populations would reveal another layer of complexity to these dynamics of belonging. Theorists in the UK have characterised these neighbourhoods as 'new spaces of multicultural' (Kesten et al., 2011; Neal et al., 2013). Reignited debates over the development of mosques in the outer suburbs of Sydney (e.g. Penrith) would suggest an urgent need for this type of comparative research.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has argued for the value of critical and fine-grained examinations of how people make place and how, ultimately, these practices can lead to urban conditions of mutuality and respect. It highlights the relevance of evacuating the micro-spaces of the city – but always within a multi-scalar view of how belonging is forged in an age of increasing human mobility. It thus contributes to a body of work that embeds the virtuality of the city in the prosaic vernaculars of the everyday while also recognising its resonances in other spheres and potential future of the diverse city. As such, it has explored something akin to what Thrift and Amin, drawing on Agamben, speak of when they refer to the community of the everyday: 'the community of the banal and the mundane, but also the community of improvisation, intuition, play... the community that cannot be classified. The community without an identity in which 'humans co-belong without any representable conditions of belonging'... The community we have in common. The coming community' (Agamben, 1993, p. 86). The possibilities inherent in the widespread acceptance and lived reality of multiculturalism in Australia are promising, but are too easily subverted by narrow criteria of belonging demanded of a fearful nationalism. Drawing energy from and revaluing everyday conditions of shared space in the city can reinvigorate more extensive, just, hospitable and more deeply democratic modes of living together with difference in a mobile and transforming world.

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