

Elite Localism and Inequality:

*Understanding affluent community opposition to
rail network expansion within the political economy
of Sydney.*

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Statement of originality:

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of another degree or diploma in any university, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due references is made in the text of the thesis.

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Introduction:

General Introduction: Affluent opposition to rail in Sydney.

Sydney is a global city experiencing a surge in the expansion of public transport infrastructure (Transport for New South Wales, 2014). It is an unequal city, with a greater ratio of inequality between suburbs than any other major city in Australia (Baum, 2008, p.16). This state of inequality has a long history. The colonial city was split between free, elite 'exclusivists' and poorer, rough 'emancipists' of convict origin, a rift that would begin the wealthy eastern Sydney/poorer western Sydney divide (Davison, 2006, p.745). From its historic origins to the present day, the presence and absence of public transport has served to entrench inequality in the city (Hurni, 2005, pp.1-5). Those areas with greater access to employment and education tend to be wealthier than those without, and public transportation is a key provider of accessibility and mobility in the city (Baum and Hassan, 1993, p.150).

With this in mind, one would expect to see the best public transport links existing in the wealthiest suburbs. In a city experiencing a wave of major rail construction one could expect to see rail links to any wealthy areas lacking such connections prioritised by government and welcomed by residents. This is not the case. Residents of some of Sydney's most affluent areas, the Eastern Suburbs and Northern Beaches¹, have fiercely resisted government attempts to extend rail links into these suburbs (Casey, 2007; Kay, 2015).

This resistance has taken the form of well attended protests, media campaigns and concerted legal actions. These were popular, organised and successful local movements, which succeeded in preventing rail expansion twice in the 20th century. They may yet succeed into the 21st century, through the ongoing anti-rail movement on the Northern Beaches (Kay, 2015). The first attempt at

¹ For the sake of concision and readability I have elected to capitalise 'Eastern Suburbs' and 'Northern Beaches'. In this I follow the example of Transport for New South Wales, with the 'Eastern Suburbs Line' and the (proposed) 'Northern Beaches Line'.

building an Eastern Suburbs Line was wound up in a flurry of legal action, terminating at Bondi Junction, far below its planned length (Gunn, 1989, p.503). A second attempt in the 1990's to extend the line only to Bondi Beach failed, again in the face of staunch local opposition (Dinham, 1999, p.596; Enders and Jennett, 2008). These successful actions have led to serious consequences extending beyond the affluent suburbs in question to the city as a whole.

The failure of the government attempt to extend the Eastern Suburbs Line to its planned dimensions helped bring down the Liberal Party state government of Premier Askin, bringing an end to an era of investment in the expansion of rail infrastructure (Gunn, 1989, pp.455-457). We see here a series of affluent protests that have impacted the development of rail lines in the city of Sydney, affected the trajectory of transport policy in New South Wales, and contributed to the downfall of a government. Yet despite this, there has been no serious attempt to understand this phenomena of affluent opposition to rail lines from a scholarly perspective.

We can see what is going on at the surface – affluent locals opposing rail lines – but the motivations, dynamics, effects and meaning of this phenomenon has not been investigated. When we take into account the effect these movements have had on rail policy and development, it is clear that they must have important relationships with the political economy of inequality in the city, but no scholarly work exists that investigates these relationships. Some criminologists have used these protests to discuss fear of 'outsiders' bringing crime into affluent suburbs (Enders and Jennett, 2008). While engineers and planners have tended to dismiss them as naught but the work of disgruntled NIMBY's², an unhelpful and indistinct analysis at best (Dinham, 1999).

What is missing, and what is needed, is a serious investigation from a political economy perspective. This thesis aims to supply this. The following chapters will identify the dynamics, effects and meaning of this elite local opposition –

² A pejorative acronym of 'Not in My Back Yard', referring to stereotypically short-sighted and selfish anti-development locals. Usually deployed to describe opponents of rail lines, freeways, homeless shelters and the like.

this elite localism – and bring a level of clarity to the relationship between elite localism and inequality in the city.

Theorizing elite localism: thesis aims and structure.

Aims:

This thesis will seek to investigate, identify and understand the phenomena of affluent local opposition to the expansion of rail networks. For the sake of brevity and accuracy I will use the term ‘elite localism’ to refer to this affluent local opposition through the thesis. This thesis does not aim to come to a neat solution to the problem of elite localism, or to prove a wider theoretical point through elite localism. Rather this thesis aims to develop a conceptualisation of elite localism that is useful for scholarship on the broader question of the political economy of inequality in the city, as well as for policymakers attempting to develop more equitable transport policy.

Through these aims I align this project with an Australian tradition of spatial political economy that seeks to understand and respond to the questions of inequality and space in the city. Stilwell’s (1989) examination of ‘structural change and spatial equity in Sydney’ is a guiding example of this tendency, applying the concerns of political economy to events and developments in the city with questions of equity and inequality in mind. This tradition has long concerned itself with questions of public transport and accessibility, Stilwell and Hardwick’s (1973) examination of ‘social inequality in Australian cities’ includes a detailed analysis of the different effects of different kinds of infrastructure investments (railways versus highways) on the city.

In a similar vein, Badcock (1995, pp.196-199) emphasizes the relationship between underinvestment in public transport and increases in inequality. This thesis aims to contribute to this tradition by identifying and analysing a phenomenon, elite localism, which has affected the development of transport policy and the shape of accessibility and mobility in the city. Chapter four in particular will apply the insights garnered from the case studies in the second and third chapters to this existing literature, drawing out the connections between the concept and reality of elite localism and the scholarly work mentioned in this section.

Along with making a theoretical contribution, this thesis aims to provide a conceptualisation of elite localism that is useful from a policy perspective. This does not entail creating a blank justification for all government developments (transport related or otherwise). I use the term policymaker in the broadest sense, inclusive of government and institutional actors like Transport for New South Wales, but not limited to them. Following Anderson's (2014, pp.58-65) inclusion of 'official' and 'unofficial' policymakers, I include radical and activist groups and individuals in this 'policymaker' definition. In chapter four I will discuss how progressive, activist and radical groups can benefit from a detailed analysis of elite localism.

This thesis is an attempt to identify and understand elite localism conceptually through investigating its historical development and consequences in the city of Sydney. Although the insights gleaned are applicable in a general sense, this thesis will concern itself with Sydney for every case study and example. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, when attempting a project of this scale, it is important to have established parameters. By restricting this analysis to Sydney the important goal of understanding elite localism does not get swamped in layers of necessary but voluminous contextual explanations for different cities. Secondly, I follow Stilwell (1989, p.3) in describing Sydney as a 'capital city' in three ways, administratively as the seat of the NSW government, normatively as a beautiful and enjoyable location, and economically as a city whose development is shaped by private capital, in this sense 'the capital city of Australia'. It follows that Sydney is in itself a space worth taking seriously and engaging with at the deepest level. This thesis will use this deep engagement to generate insights that are generally applicable, without compromising the integrity of its analysis of Sydney.

Structure:

After this introduction the thesis consists of four major chapters with a shorter conclusion. The first chapter is a literature review. In this chapter I will discuss the historical and theoretical sources that I have drawn on in the development of this thesis. I will outline the paucity of scholarship that deals directly with questions of elite localism and evaluate the usefulness of political geographic, Marxian, and elite social movement theories in developing a useful

conceptualisation of elite localism. This chapter will also include an extended discussion of the 'Publics and the City' thinking pioneered by Kurt Iveson (2011). This approach involves considering all 'public' spaces as necessarily contested by groupings of local 'publics', and allows for a nuanced understanding of how and why locals – local publics – conflict with the state and other publics over issues of access, ownership and exclusion. This 'publics and the city' approach forms the core methodology of this thesis.

The second chapter is a case study of the Eastern Suburbs. This will include an extended historical account of the origins and development of Sydney's publically accessible urban beaches, notably Bondi. This section will draw from Caroline Ford's (2010) work on the subject and illustrate how local public action pressured government into making beaches accessible in the first place. This will be followed by a study of the elite localist opposition to the Eastern Suburbs Line. This case study will provide the core insights into the dynamics and importance of elite localism as a phenomenon, and through such insights significantly develop the concept of elite localism. The particular importance of local feelings of ownership over legally public spaces, notably beaches, will form a core theme of this conceptual development. This chapter argues that elite localism is a distinct, important phenomenon which has had lasting impact on the development of the city, and cannot be dismissed as wealthy NIMBYism or some variant of simple snobbery.

The third chapter is a case study of elite localism on the Northern Beaches, centred on the elite local opposition to the Northern Beaches Line. This chapter will focus upon the relationship between racism, xenophobia and elite localism. This relationship is very clear on the Northern Beaches, where overt racial animus is present in commentary by local residents (in the form of letters to the editor/comments on articles). By exploring the relationship between elite localism and racism, this chapter will make the argument that elite localism can be motivated by racist attitudes, and that the effects of elite localism in hampering transport links and reinforcing suburban isolation have negatively contributed to the state of racism and xenophobia in Sydney today.

As with the thesis as a whole, this chapter does not argue that elite localism is the only factor at play, but that it is a factor which has gone unnoticed and

under-theorized. This chapter also discusses the legacy of the Cronulla riots and the demonization of public transportation to beaches following the riots. This is particularly relevant given the fears of ‘another Cronulla’ found in the discourse of Northern Beaches residents. This chapter will argue that if racism is important, and racism affects inequality, then elite localism is important too, and should be included in analyses of the spatial dynamics of racism in the city.

Chapter four will draw on the insights into the nature, dynamics and importance of elite localism gleaned from the case studies, and apply them to political economy scholarship and several contemporary issues. By drawing connections between the tradition of Australian political economy discussed earlier and the concept of elite localism, this chapter will demonstrate how a conceptualisation of elite localism can contribute to understanding inequality and the political economy of the city. This chapter will reinforce the importance of elite localism as a factor in the development of the city and the usefulness of the concept of elite localism from scholarly and policymaking standpoints.

By examining some contemporary (as of 2016) issues of protest around infrastructure in Sydney (the light rail protests in Randwick and the WestConnex protests) the nuanced capabilities of elite localism as an analytical tool will become clear. In moving beyond the generalised pejorative category of ‘NIMBYism’ elite localism not only allows for greater specificity in critique but greater strength in the defence of legitimate, non-elite-local protest. In identifying elite localism, this thesis also identifies what is *not* elite localism, which is a positive development for radical and progressive protestors and activists.

This thesis will conclude by reinforcing the central insights developed in the four main chapters: that elite localism exists, that it is important, and that a detailed scholarly conceptualisation is necessary for understanding where, when and how it affects urban political economies. This conclusion will reflect upon how the insights into elite localism identified and developed in this thesis can be extended, and identify some further avenues for research.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Introduction:

This literature review aims to give an overview of the major theoretical currents surrounding the political economy of localism, public transport, mobility and exclusivity. This shall provide the scholarly context for the thesis, illuminating the pre-existing debate on these issues that will inform the scholarly direction this thesis takes. This will demonstrate the space for a more detailed conception of elite localism within the literature, and thereby reinforce the use of providing a criteria for identifying and analysing elite localism, which is the purpose of this thesis.

The following chapter shall proceed in five sections, along with a brief discussion of the role of government sources and official literature, due to the importance of these government publications in setting the context for the actions of elite local movements.

The literature review proper will begin with a discussion of the historical accounts of the development of rail in Sydney. This will highlight the paucity of attention paid to elite localism, and the persistent lack of serious analysis of protest against rail expansion in affluent areas even in those few sources where it is mentioned at all. This will be followed by a consideration of the tradition of scholarship focusing on spatial political economy and inequality, drawing the initial connection between the focus of this thesis and that body of scholarship. This relationship will be explored in greater detail in the fourth chapter.

The second section will discuss new institutionalist and political geographic approaches to public transport and localism. This will be followed by an examination of scholarship from the Marxian political economy of space/political geography tradition. From here I shall closely examine Iveson's work on multiple publics and the contestation of public space. Iveson's work is

central to the methodology of this thesis, so a detailed examination of his scholarship is essential.

Finally I will pull together much of the extant work on locality, localism and the idea of 'elite localism', this will be followed by a discussion of the notion of 'elite social movements' as a useful theory for developing our understanding of elite localism. This will make clear the underdeveloped nature of 'elite localism' in contexts beyond the decentralisation of state institutions, as well as relaying its potential for expansion into a more broadly useful analytical tool for scholars and policymakers. This is, along with identifying the origins and dynamics of elite localism as a phenomena, the purpose of this thesis.

A Note on Government Sources -

Due to the nature of this thesis the data used will be predominantly qualitative and speculative. This speculative characteristic is because the case study examples of affluent equality averse groups mobilising against public transport are either ongoing (in the case of the Northern Beaches line and the Surry Hills tram extension) or ended with the success of the equality averse actors (the Bondi Beach extension and the full Eastern Suburbs line).

That said, speculative data from governmental sources and action plans (particularly Transport for New South Wales) should provide a solid determinant of the expected results (both in terms of economic and commuting speed benefits as well as increased numbers of people accessing the areas of proposed rail construction) of railway extensions (Transport for New South Wales, 2013).

As these numbers are what state governments have proposed they also represent the vision that affluent community groups oppose, making them very useful for determining exactly and numerically (in terms of increased visitor numbers) what kind of changes in spatial access these elite locals oppose.

Historical accounts of rail development and inequality-

The history of railway development in Sydney has not been subject to much scholarly attention, and such accounts as there are tend to be limited in their analysis. Questions about the broader role of railways and public transport in urban development and inequality are often neither asked nor answered (Herni, 2005, p.1). The most exhaustive historical account of the development of Sydney's rail is Gunn's (1989) history of railway development in New South Wales entitled 'Parallel Lines'. This work goes into great detail over troubles which afflicted the 1967 attempt to build the Eastern Suburbs Line. Despite this, Gunn tends to gloss over the role and substance of the protests against the Eastern Suburbs line, not even mentioning the use of mass private lawsuits to halt construction in Woollahra. Gunn's consistent focus on industrial action and union strikes as the key to the failure of rail transport in Sydney may reflect an ideological bias but, whatever the cause, his otherwise magisterial work is let down by a blind spot around elite localism.

Some further information on rail development can be found in general histories of Sydney like Spearritt's (2000) 'Sydney's Century'. Again however the role of elite localism is downplayed and a simplistic 'conservative government supported by eastern suburbs votes = money for eastern suburbs line' argument is advanced. One which bears little resemblance to the actual dynamics of rail development and opposition in the eastern suburbs (Spearritt, 2000, p.151).

While not an account of elite localism per se, Ford's (2010) scholarly work on the origins of public beaches in Sydney and the development of the early tramlines from the city to the beach is very useful for understanding the origins of elite localism. The account of the role of public protest and action in developing both legally public beaches and a popular feeling of a 'right to the beach' is invaluable for establishing the historical context for elite localism in Sydney. Further useful histories of social division and elitism in colonial and early Sydney can be found in Dawson's (2006) work on 'exclusivists and emancipists' and the origin of the eastern/western suburban divide.

Spatial Political Economy and Inequality -

This thesis is part of the tradition of scholarship examining spatial political economy of Sydney and the development of inequality in Sydney. Scholars like Stilwell (1989), Boum (1997; 2004; 2008), Badcock (1995), Forster (2006) and Maher (1994) have explored how spatial inequality and transport inequality contributes to the general political economy of inequality in Sydney. Of particular interest is Stilwell and Hardwick's (1973) discussion of the importance of rail investment over expressways in terms of alleviating inequality. Baum and Hassan's (1993) work on the nature of spatial inequality and inequalities of access is another piece that has influenced the development of this thesis. Though from differing methodological and conceptual perspectives, these scholars are united in investigating inequality in Sydney. By exploring elite localism this thesis aims to contribute to this tradition of investigation.

The conceptualisation of elite localism developed in this thesis is one that complements the understanding of inequality developed by these scholars. The fourth chapter in particular is focused upon applying the analysis of elite localism developed in this thesis to this broad tradition of spatial political economy and work on inequality.

Political Geographic and New Institutional Approaches:

Conceptually expanding and practically identifying elite localism is the purpose of this thesis. The work of political geographers and new institutionalist political economists is crucial for the conceptual expansion of elite localism. By exploring the scholarship surrounding issues of access, mobility, space and governance the conceptual incorporation of these issues into elite localism is made possible.

As a discipline, political geography tends towards categorising issues within international, national, regional or urban contexts. The local is not ignored but is often in practise replaced by urban or rural as a description, and specific discussion of the concept of locality is rarely extensive (Jones et al, 2014; Jeffery, 2009; Short, 2002). I have elected to use the word 'localism' for a variety of reasons mostly discussed in the fourth section, but also because while

the case study of Sydney is 'urban', the specific suburb-based character of elite localism in Sydney is perhaps more 'suburban', and acceding to either category would seem to imply the impossibility of a rural or coastal elite localism. This is a line I do not think one can draw.

With this in mind, it is the political geography of urban space that furnishes us with much of our useful concepts for expanding our understanding of elite localism. Given the centrality of opposition to rail transport in this project, the work of Stone and Legacy (2012, p.154) on the importance of rail to facilitate public mobility is vital. Mobility can be conceptualised as key to public space, as mobility (or lack thereof) determines access, and hence is important to the preservation (or erosion) of exclusivity that elite localist projects cherish (Whitzman et al, 2014, p.117; Low, 2013, pp.6-8).

The questions of diversity and racism are bound up in Sydney's elite localism, political geographic work on diversity and the city has emphasised the importance of allowing a diverse range of people to experience a 'right to the city' while simultaneously avoiding normative prescriptions about exclusiveness and inclusiveness due to the use of places of cultural/ethnic/religious identity as safe havens among the city (Kihato et al, 2010, pp.5-8). Diversity is often discussed as a positive feature for cities due to the connection between diversity and 'vibrancy' with the hypothesised effect that such diverse, vibrant cities necessarily attract a 'creative', affluent crowd (Florida and Gates, 2003, pp.200-206).

It is disappointing that these broad statements are not followed up with any more specific policy recommendations for balancing these concerns or dealing with racism and racial tension, especially given the importance of exclusivity for elite localism.

Governance and governments, particularly in the local government context, is a well-trod topic. Debates are often framed in terms of 'democratisation or decentralisation' and so on, and elite influence is often recognised but not in terms of non-governmental pressure (media, legal challenges, social movement, protests and the like) (Stren, 2000, pp.1-14).

New institutionalist political economy also deals with questions of infrastructure, governance and space (Ostrom and Ostrom, 1977; Ostrom et al, 1993). In order to deal with competing demands over the construction and use of infrastructure (as well the commons more generally), Ostrom proposes a 'polycentric' approach to governance, whereby multiple interdependent institutional and communal bodies govern the infrastructure in question at multiple levels (local, regional, national and so on) (Ostrom, 2010). In terms of Sydney rail provisioning and elite localism, one could apply polycentric thought to explain how local concerns could be ideally assuaged through the introduction of a polycentric rail provisioning governance structure that better incorporated institutional knowledge and trust.

The issue here is that in terms of attempting to create a criteria for the identification of elite localism, there is only so far that Ostrom's thought on governance can go aside from providing a positive alternative to compare. More importantly, Ostrom's work is heavily focused upon institutions, but the issue of elite localism is more complicated than that, while local institutions (councils, newspapers) have played a role, elite localism does not originate with them. It cannot be identified through only their presence, absence or actions.

Elite localism as a phenomena is not restricted to certain institutions, but it is expressed distinctively in different spatial and class contexts. In building an understanding of elite localism an approach that recognizes material and class forces is vital. For this I look to the Marxian tradition of political geography and political economy.

Marxian Approaches:

The Marxian approach to political geography and the political economy of space emphasises the importance of class and class struggle within urban and local space. For Harvey, urban space is a site of contestation and class struggle, with the question of the "right to the city" central to the dialectics of struggle that urban space mediates (Harvey, 2003). Lefebvre (1991) (who coined the term) is concerned with the notion of the 'production of space' within the urban environment.

Public transport has also been the subject of useful Marxian analysis. Whitt (2014, pp.5-15) emphasises the importance of public transport debates as arenas for political contestation, dominated by political power. Though Whitt's approach is predominantly from an institutional/governmental vantage point, it is not hard to apply those insights to the elite localist opposition to public transport.

Lefebvre's analysis is extended by Stanek (2008, p.74) who emphasises the role of 'strategic investments in the built environment that render particular areas in the city central while excluding others'. This connection between space and strategic investments to create spaces of centrality and exclusion can be seen in the tension between elite localism and state governments. Governments have attempted to extend rail infrastructure into elite suburbs, aiming to increase the centrality of the city as a rail and transport hub. They have met elite local opposition where affluent suburb residents have attempted (and often succeeded) to exclude others through limiting accessibility.

Harvey's (2010, p.168) emphasis upon the socially constructed and relation aspects of space adds further nuance to the concept, particularly the notion of the 'monopolistic' aspects of space, heightened under capitalism through private property relations. This has potential for incorporation and extension through an elite localism centred framework. This possible connection to questions of elite localism is strengthened by Harvey's (1995, pp.73-76; 1996, pp.7-11) injunction against the 'militant particularism' of localist struggles.

Though 'militant particularism' is primarily intended as an attack on the tendency for myopia among left activism and a promotion of a more holistic perspective, it does have useful insight in a broader sense. The injunction to accept the messy, complex and contested nature of what appears to be a simple class conflict (in his example the closing of a car factory and workers struggling against it) has resonance for those attempting to understand and identify elite localism. We must accept that elite groups will be conflicted and unable to be reduced to simply "elites being localist" but rather are complex enough to warrant a project of identifying criteria.

It is at the level of recognising complexity that Marxian political geography and political economy of space proves itself insufficient for this project. The struggles that constitute elite localism are not reducible to class struggles as they often form an intra-class struggle pitting affluent interests against a state controlled by the party of said interests

Accounting for the conflicts that characterise elite localism is important both for theoretical clarity and practical utility. While the Marxian approach provides many useful tools for understanding the spatial in political economy, the dynamics of elite localism are better explained through the ‘publics and the city’ theory pioneered by Kurt Iveson.

Iveson’s Approach – Publics and the City:

The work of Kurt Iveson and the concept of multiple, conflictual publics contesting urban space is well suited to this task, providing a method for understanding and thus drawing out identifying criteria from elite localism. Iveson (2011, p.4) distinguishes between ‘topographical’ and ‘procedural’ approaches to public space. Topographical approaches emphasize places in the city that are/ought to be public space (streets/parks/squares etc.) This approach is often paired with nostalgia about a pre-riot/pre-neoliberalism time of peaceful truly democratic spaces (Iveson, 2011, pp.4-5. Iveson notes that this interpretation is wrong – access to public space has *always* been circumscribed and conflictual – with the source of the conflict often the “publicS” (contra ‘public’) themselves (ibid).

By contrast, the ‘procedural’ approach proposes that public space is any space in which a certain kind of action – public address – takes place. “Public address” meaning anything from text, speech, imagery, or performance, as long as it is communicated to “a public”. This includes letters to the editor, televised speeches, street corner addresses, and art (Iveson, 2011, pp.15-16). The city is a ‘public city’ produced through the ‘particular political labours which seek to make particular publics’ (Iveson, 2011, pp.14-18). It is this concept of competing publics that ensures the centrality of Iveson’s method and scholarship to this thesis. By emphasising the production and contestation of public space(s), the historical context of struggles for public access to Sydney’s beaches take on a

new relevance and their historical content is better understood in light of the effects of elite localism (Iveson, 1998; Ford, 2010).

Bennett's (2011) work on these conflicts over public space, in particular Museums, can serve as a guide to understanding these tensions that arise in relation to traditionally elite dominated spaces that are nonetheless designated public. Arabindoo's (2011; pp.380-383) work on 'bourgeoisie citizenship' and struggles over the use and access to beaches in Chennai includes useful discussion over the role of the beach as public space/site of conflict between publics. Likewise, Tyndall's (2010; 127-135) work on multiple publics in Sydney (though within working class south-west Sydney) is a useful demonstration of the applicability of the multiple, conflicted publics approach to a distinctly local context.

This notion of the public city, and these distinctions between the traditional 'topographic' and the more modern 'procedural' approach are useful in our understanding of ways that certain publics exhibit and deploy elite localism against the extension of public transport. By broadening the definition of 'public space' Iveson allows for a more critical approach to 'public transportation' and the 'public beaches' that are such a strong common denominator among Sydney's elite localist suburbs. Though Iveson never explicitly engages with 'elite localism', his analysis of elitism and snobbery in his case study of Perth (2011, pp.148-186) and his discussion of a positive local exclusivity regarding a women's only pool in Bronte (2011, pp.187-205) provide excellent sources to draw on in understanding and identifying elite localism. Iveson's work allows then for a critical appreciation of local spatial concerns as they actually exist and affect policy.

This is at variance with some of the more abstract approaches to procedural and critical geography. Brickell and Datta (2011, pp.4-10) posit a "translocal" approach to locality which is 'both de-territorialised and situated' and focuses more on understanding the local as a means to constructing a 'global ethnography'. A similar approach is taken by McFarlane (2011) in analysing the 'translocal' as central to understanding how individuals 'learn the city' through urban encounters both within and between their localities.

While interesting, these approaches, and the broader concept of the ‘translocal’ is too abstract for the concerns of elite localism and Sydney public transport. Lacking in the specificity that characterises Iveson’s approach, it engenders a focus upon personal mobility in the individual or diasporic sense (inter/intranational migration, migrant spaces) and is limited in its analytical strength in terms of understanding the specific localness (not just otherness) that characterises elite localism.

By contrast, the more concrete emphasis upon conflict and interest that characterises Iveson’s method allows for both specificity and material, political and economic analysis. An over-emphasis upon broader concerns with ethnography or otherness as concepts can detract from successfully navigating the political, economic, social, spatial and infrastructural relationships that this thesis aims to explore towards identifying elite localism.

By positing competing, conflictual publics contesting and variably making public spaces Iveson’s method allows for a more nuanced, more local, more accurate investigation of elite localism than traditional political science, economics or geography. The issues of conflict, agency and equality are highlighted, issues central to political economy and particularly political economy concerned with policy issues.

Localism, Elite Social Movements and Elite Localism:

Understanding locality (and its social/political expression through localism) is key to determining why affluent opposition groups are equality averse with access to some spaces and unconcerned with access to others.

Clarke’s (2013) work on locality and localism within the context of British geography provides an helpful resource for developing the concept of locality in a manner adaptable to the Sydney context, with his development of Taylor’s (1982, 2011) concepts of the ‘class politics of location’ and the congruence of localities with spatial divisions of labour (Clarke, 2013, p.496) easily applicable to this thesis.

The major issue with the literature on concepts of locality and localism is the predominance of work on proletarian and progressive localism as a platform for

the development of resistance to neoliberalism and capitalism (Featherstone et al, 2012; Purcell, 2006). Some go so far as to locate localism as always and inherently opposed to elitism and liberalism (Hess, 2012, p.1-5). I suggest these views are either implicitly or explicitly too narrow in their approach to localism in their assumptions of an intrinsic progressive or anti-elite stance.

As a term, elite localism is most often used to describe neoliberal and corporate-backed projects that aim to abet (generally through undemocratic means) the liberalisation and privatisation of urban and local governance under the guise of enhancing local autonomy, generally in the British context (Peck, 1995; Peck and Tickell, 1995; Cochrane, 1989). In more recent years much of this work has emphasised the rhetorical purposes of championing the local – the consequent undermining of ‘big politics’ and the diffusion of tensions to do with class, nationality, distribution and so on.

This is perhaps best expressed in Clarke and Cochranes (2013, pp.14-15) concept of ‘localism as spatial liberalism’. While these projects do not entirely ignore the questions of exclusion, access, public space and mobility, they are rarely given much attention due to the institutional focus of the scholarship (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013, p.474; Cowie and Davoudi, 2015; Bianco et al, 2014).

Part of this may be down to the evasiveness of locality and localism as a term, much of the work on cities is rarely considered to be in the arena of ‘localism’. While its preponderance as a rhetorical device in conservative and liberal politics has led to analyses the focus upon affluent rural and township based localism, as both the heartlands of British liberalism and conservatism and often the target of such political rhetoric (Clarke, 2013, pp.473-475; Clarke and Cochrane, 2013, p.15).

That said, there are still numerous useful insights within the literature on localism, Clarke and Cochrane discuss the way in which elites dominate ‘local’ and ‘democratic’ planning and governance, noting that such structures end up

Favouring the educated, the wealthy, the ‘responsible’; excluding the inarticulate, the poor, the ‘extremists’...participation has also had little

effect on decisions because elites, often unelected, set the procedures and agendas - (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013, pp.474-476)

It is these sorts of insights that justify the usage of the term 'elite localism' in reference to Sydney rail provisioning and social movements, the recognition of the power of local elites not only 'economically' or passively but in terms of their active participation in governance and democracy.

The body of theory on the topic of 'elite social movements' provides a way of re-centring elite localism away from a narrow institutional approach towards an outlook better suited to analysing the role of protest and contestation, which are vital components of the development of elite localism in Sydney.

Elites are often present in social movements, and access to elites is often considered vital to the success of social movements (Meyer, 2004, pp.125-130). An historical example would be the role of the affluent 'ladies of Kelly's Bush' in the success of the 'Green Bans' movement in the 1970's in Sydney (Burgmann and Burgmann, 1998, p.54). An elite social movement, then, is not merely a social movement that contains elites, but rather a social movement that is deployed by and for the interests of elites (Boies and Pichardo, 1990, pp.1-3).

Boies and Pichardo (1990, pp.6-7) give some examples of these, anti-unionisation farmers associations in California, the mid-20th century southern U.S "White Citizens Councils" and other movements characterised by their elite construction and goals in situations where 'legitimate' power (local, state or federal government) was politically of the same strain but made itself unhelpful or unavailable (Pichardo, 1995). The situation in Sydney, where right wing governments have faced strong opposition from safe right-wing seats through social organising by the elite inhabitants of such suburbs is an obvious parallel.

This connection between elite social movement theory and elite localism is easily drawn, Castell's (1983, p.524) emphasis on the understudied nature of bourgeoisie and elite-centred social movements, which he explored through the notion of 'social movements for capitalism' is an example of this. Elite social movement theory is quite narrow, it does not deal with the actions of elite localism outside of 'social movement' structures, lobbying, media action, and

individual legal protest are outside its grasp. It is as an extension and adjunct to elite localism that elite social movement theory is useful.

Conclusion:

The institutional and British centred usage of elite localism does not preclude its extension and wider application. Through incorporating the political economy and methodology of Iveson, and acknowledging and utilising aspects of Marxian and critical materialist political geographers and political economists like Harvey, Legacy, Low and Whitt, it is possible to successfully develop the theoretical range of elite localism to the extent necessary to be applicable to issues of public transport and anti-rail protest in Sydney.

The broad gaps in the literature, chiefly due to a general focus on institutions and a neglect of non-progressive localism present ample opportunity for the scholarly investigation of elite localism, with positive outcomes both in a scholarly and policymaking sense.

In attempting to practically and conceptually identify and understand elite localism through analysing struggles over rail transport in Sydney, it is vital to be able to untangle sentiments, tendencies, social movements and social actors. A balance must be struck between a broadly applicable abstract definition and a practical, material analysis useful for policymaking purposes. To achieve this, this thesis will call upon a range of influences; the theoretical insight of existing elite localism scholarship, the Marxian emphasis upon a material approach to spatial concerns, the methodological and analytical awareness of the conflicted publics approach, and the example of the tradition of political economy of inequality in Sydney. By developing these conceptual insights through case studies, we can arrive at a strong, practical analysis of elite localism, which identifies its characteristics and explains its effect upon policy in a Sydney context.

Chapter Two: Exclusivity and Accessibility –The Eastern Suburbs and Elite Localism

Introduction:

This thesis aims to investigate and understand the phenomena of elite localism. By identifying the features of elite localism as a phenomena and identifying its effect upon the development of the city of Sydney, this thesis will develop a robust, useful political economic analysis of elite localism. The first chapter established the gaps in the literature that necessitate an analysis of elite localism. This chapter will trace the historical origins and role of elite localism through a case study of the Eastern Suburbs, demonstrating its importance as a factor in urban development and infrastructure policy. This case study will identify the key features of elite localism, demonstrate the importance of elite localism as a phenomena affecting transport policy and the development of Sydney as a whole. Through this, the importance of taking elite localism seriously and developing an analytically useful conceptualisation of elite localism will become clear.

This chapter will discuss the role of exclusivity as a hallmark and defining feature of elite localism. Exclusivity and exclusivism are powerful motivators for elite localism. A desire to keep “our” public spaces (beaches, high streets etc.) free from the discomforting presence of undesirable outgroups is a consistent feature within elite localist discourses (Ender and Jennet, 2008). As part of this discussion of exclusivity, this chapter will analyse the question of access and accessibility within elite localism, drawing heavily from Iveson’s insights into the contestation of public space (Iveson, 2011).

Further, this chapter will give a brief overview of the history of Sydney’s beaches into the 20th century, drawing from Caroline Ford’s (2010) landmark work on the subject, highlighting the important role of local agitation and social pressure on the making public of the beaches in the first place, and the development of a

specific Eastern Suburbs public. In particular this will introduce and expand upon Ford's notion of a 'right to the beach', drawing on Harvey's (2003) 'right to the city'.

This will be followed by a discussion of the two failed Government attempts to expand rail transport in the Eastern Suburbs, exploring the policy proposals, the local opposition, and how these proposals were defeated by concerted elite localist agitation and action. Followed up with a discussion of the effects that these policy defeats have on public space and accessibility, concluding with an exploration of how relationships of exclusivity, accessibility and public space contribute towards identifying and understanding elite localism.

Exclusivity and the Suburbs -

We cannot simply equate exclusivity with elite localism as a direct and permanent correlation. Exclusive suburbs within the city of Sydney such as Woolloomooloo and Pott's Point have maintained their exclusive character without engaging in the kind of elite localist anti-rail-expansion activities of the further Eastern Suburbs and Northern Beaches.

This is due to the difference in geographical contexts between these two groups of suburbs. In the inner suburbs transport expansion does not fundamentally impinge upon the spaces considered 'local', these spaces are mostly private and hard to access without wealth and the right clothing, as such the fear of uncouth interlopers does not feature so strongly. A further pointer towards this is that such public spaces that are considered 'local' for these urban elites, such as Museums, are places where multiple publics do collide and conflict (Barrett, 2011).

By contrast, the 'local' public spaces in the outer Eastern Suburbs (Bondi, Woollahra, Double Bay, Rose Bay, Watson's Point and the like) are predominantly beaches. The importance and centrality of beaches to Australian culture in general and beach-suburb culture in particular has long been known and praised (Barclay and West, 2006, p.76; Green and Hartley, 2006). Where other cultural touchstones of Australian identity such as 'the bush' may be praised and occasionally visited, 'it is the beach we want to live at' (Bonner et al, pp.270-272).

Desired universally but accessed locally, the beach represents an obvious space of local pride and ‘ownership’, quite at odds with the democratic accessibility expected of public space. In order to better understand the role of exclusivity and beach geography in motivating elite localism and anti-rail agitation, it is worthwhile to examine the history of these Sydney beaches and see how they became public spaces in the first place.

Making the Beaches Public: The Right to the Beach.

The idea of publicly accessible Sydney beaches for ‘health and recreation’ within the colonial context dates back to at least 1754, when the Surveyor General of New South Wales (NSW), Thomas Mitchell, lobbied Governor FitzRoy for a land exchange to make Bondi Beach open to the public (Ford, 2010, p.253). This attempt was unsuccessful and the mid-19th century saw the Sydney beaches home to wool-washing (Maroubra), sand-mining (Coogee) and road metal extraction (Bondi) operations. They were sites of private production off-limits to the public (ibid, p.254).

By the 1850’s, local coastal residents and their newly formed councils and municipalities began agitating for the end of privately owned beaches and the opening up of transport options in order to allow public access to these beaches. Though they were rebuffed initially, local action continued with illegal trespassing and illicit beach bathing becoming more common (ibid). As Ford (2010, p.254) notes this is vitally important not only as part of the establishment of our ‘iconic’ beaches but more because these acts were framed in the language of ‘rights’. Ford echoes Lefebvre and Harvey’s notion of the ‘right to the city’ in speaking of a ‘right to the beach’ (Ford, 2010, pp.254-255; Lefebvre, 1991; Harvey, 2003, pp.939-941).

Such demands were intensified by the opening of coastal roads to South Head, allowing for picnics at (if not on) the beach (White, 2004, p.102). After two decades of agitation and illicit use of private beaches, in the early 1880’s the NSW government bought, and made public, Bondi beach (until then part of the privately owned ‘Bondi estate’, whose owner challenged this forced governmental acquisition in court).

The gazettement of the beaches for recreation and the policy of public beach access over private ownership led to the rapid development of 'surf-bathing' and a beach culture. A culture whose accessibility was improved by the NSW governments mid to late-19th century project of extending public transport to the beaches. A development achieved only after strenuous lobbying from the Waverley and Randwick councils – a very different line to their mid-late 20th century successors (Ford, 2010, p.266; White, 2004, p.103).

Later, in 1911, the NSW government decided to link the Maroubra beach tramline with the inner-west Dulwich line, the Minister for Public Works arguing that the working people in the city needed access to spaces of recreation (Ford, 2010, pp.266-267).

As this brief overview demonstrates, the beaches of Sydney were sites of contestation and conflict even before they were officially 'made public'. The vocabulary of natural rights utilised by the locals and local institutions agitating for public beaches emphasized the centrality and importance of beaches and beach access for Sydney citizens. It is important not to, as Iveson warns, blinker ourselves and perceive a 'golden age' of equitable and accessible public space (Iveson, 2011, pp.4-5). Though the late-19th/early-20th century Eastern Suburbs councils did prove markedly more welcoming than their later incarnations, Ford (2010, p.265) notes that the initial public transport development was accompanied by 'opposition to the transport of the masses, by those whose favourite resorts were transformed', a tell-tale sign of exclusivism and localism.

Though the beaches were made public, and a notion of a public 'right to the beach' established, the later struggles over the expansion of the rail lines in the Eastern Suburbs beg the question; which publics are the beaches for? Who has the right to the beach?

Exclusivity and the Beach in the mid-late 20th Century:

The Eastern Suburbs have been associated with wealth and exclusivity since the early colonial era, indeed 18th and early 19th century Sydney was famously divided between the 'emancipists' – convicts and former convicts, and the 'exclusives' – free-settlers, soldiers, and officials (Partington, 1994, p.16;

Davison, 2006, p.747). The exclusivists were said to make their homes east of the Tank Stream, while the dangerous Rocks district was the heartland of the emancipists (Davison, 2006, p.747). Even so, it was with the opening of the beaches and the establishment of new public spaces that the arrogation of the right to the beach to a distinct local public began. Leading to the consequent development of Eastern Suburbs public and elite localism (inclusive of but beyond simply exclusivity/snobbery).

Following Iveson's methodology, we can examine the characteristics of this Eastern Suburbs public. Central to Iveson's approach are the notions that there are multiple, conflicting publics contesting public spaces and that public space is any space in which a certain kind of action – public address – takes place. "Public address" is defined broadly, and consists of any text speech, image or performance that is communicated to "a public". Examples include letters to the editor, televised speech, interviews in newspapers/television and the like. (Iveson, 2011, pp.15-16).

Spatially located within the Eastern Suburbs, informed by a network of local newspapers (like the Wentworth Courier), closely associated with 'their' neighbourhood beaches and increasingly becoming wealthy and more 'elite', the 20th century saw the development of not only a distinct Eastern Suburbs local public, but of an elite local public (Davison, 2007, p.750). For while in the earlier centuries the rich east/rough west segregation had been 'more fetish than real', by the mid-20th century economic development and town planning had made real a separation that was initially mainly rhetorical (Barnard, 1961, p.40; Davison, 2007, pp.747-748).

Demographic records bear this out. In 1921 the population of professionals in the Waverley Council area was 1446 out of a total population of 17,187 (ABS, 1921, p.662). By 1996 this had increased to 8878 (professionals) and 4119 (associate professionals) out of a total population of 61,674 (ABS, 1996, p.19). This was accompanied by a 16% reduction in manufacturing and construction workers as a proportion of the population from 3736 out of 17,187 in 1921 (21.75%) to 3558 out of 61,674 in 1996 (5.77%) (ABS, 1921, p.662; ABS, 1996, p.19). This trajectory has continued to increase, with the Eastern Suburbs

becoming more and more elite and removed from the average Sydney suburb to the point of seeming to 'secede altogether' (O'Neal and McGirk, 2002, p.313).

While tracking the changes in the proportion of professionals does not tell us everything about demographic shifts, it is a useful example as professionals are central to the development of the elite local public, their high rate of pay and prestigious position serving as an encapsulation of the 'elite' in elite local. In this I echo Stilwell and Hardwick's (1973, p.21) use of a 'blue collar to white collar ratio' as a metric for analysing urban inequality. The comparison between 1921 and 1996 is used due to the availability of employment data for both years and because 1996 was the year of the first local protest against the proposed Bondi beach line.

This elite local public enjoyed the 'right to the beach' in full, the beaches were easily accessible to most residents of the Eastern Suburbs and the lifesavers and even the (initially considered concerning) surfers became icons of the local culture and mythology (White, 2001, p.106; Huntsman, 2001, pp.56-59). The valorisation of the lifeguard in particular, as a muscular, noble and profoundly middle-class archetype, perhaps presaged the later self-identification of Eastern Suburbs 'surfies' in their often violent clashes with proletarian 'westies' (Gwyther, 2008, pp.1-2).

Although these fights were a feature of the mid-late 20th century Sydney scene, there is little evidence that they directly inspired the anti-transport opposition in the east, whose first flickers (as we have seen) arose in the late 19th century, and which would come to the fore in the (successful) local opposition to the extended Eastern Suburbs Line (abandoned in 1976) and the proposed Bondi Beach Extension (abandoned in 2001). Rather, it was the beach itself that motivated these attempts, an exclusivity that extended to the local public spaces in such a way that increasing access and mobility was intolerable. Though valorised by all as a 'public space' the actually existing beaches were in fact more a private space, legally public but functionally open to a particular local public.

This state of exclusivity maintained by the relationship between private spaces (the beachside homes of the elite local public), institutions (the NSW Government and Transport for New South Wales, decision makers in terms of

public transport and rail expansion) and public space (the beaches in question) echoes Harvey's (2006, pp.30-33) description of the 'crucial symbiosis' between private, institutional and public spaces and spheres.

Elite localism as a force is one that seeks to preserve this symbiosis in favour of private access. In this sense we can compare the Eastern Suburbs beaches to the Boulevards of Second Empire Paris that Harvey describes, where bourgeoisie sensibility was defended through the exclusion of the 'eyes of the poor' (ibid). However, while the boulevards were built through imperial policy as instruments of control and profit, the opposition to rail expansion has set elite locals against "their" governments in favour of exclusivity at the cost of investment. It is this disharmony between local bourgeoisie sentiment and state policy that necessitates the use of Iveson's publics and the city approach to untangle, but Harvey's insight into the necessity of a relational approach to the contestation of space and the 'symbiosis' is still vital.

It is this combination of exclusivity and contested public spaces that serves as an identifying criteria for elite localism, and accounts for its power in mobilising the local public against rail expansion.

Opposition to Rail Expansion in the Eastern Suburbs:

The 20th century saw two major government proposals for the expansion of the Eastern Suburbs Line. The first was in fact part of the initial design of the line itself, though delayed, in the initial NSW government plan (originating in 1947) the railway would extend to Coogee and Bondi, further tracks would then go to North Bondi and Rose Bay (Spearritt, 2000, pp.131-135). Due to a depression in the 1950's, construction was halted near Bondi Junction Station and did not resume until the mid-1960's (Gunn, 1989, p.452).

In 1967 (under the Liberal Party government of Premier Robert Askin) the plan was reviewed and extra stops planned for Randwick, Waverley, Kingsford and the University of New South Wales with a further feeder line to Erskville to add a connection to the main metropolitan rail network (Gunn, 1989, pp. 450-455). With cooperation from the unions and federal government support including the release of engineers from the Snowy Mountains hydroelectricity

scheme, Premier Askin felt the state poised on the verge of a 'second age of rail' (Gunn, 1989, p.457). The failure of the eastern suburbs line, due in large part to elite localism, would end that dream.

Opposition to Rail in the East in the 1960's-70's -

From 1967 onwards the NSW government encountered significant delays in construction. Most notably because the inhabitants of Woollahra had mobilised to prevent construction of the line. They heavily lobbied the state government and took more action through filing lawsuits to prevent round the clock tunnelling, leading to complex legal action not concluded until 1982 (*Codelfa Construction Pty Ltd v State Rail Authority of NSW*, 1982; Greenwood, 2002, pp.1-8). The spiralling costs and legal issues led to the abandonment of the project. In 1976 the NSW government curtailed development on the Eastern Suburbs Line beyond Bondi Junction and Edgecliff (Gunn, 1989, p.503).

Here we see an elite localist public utilising both their wealth and connections (through extensive, expensive private lawsuits) and social agitation (letters to the editor, letters to parliament, lobbying) to help retard development of much needed transport infrastructure. The use of multiple private legal actions and the role of legal knowledge in these proceedings reflects the (already discussed) predominance of professionals in the Eastern Suburbs.

Despite Sir Robert Askin's right wing premiership, the blue-ribbon liberal voters of Woollahra took action against his government, helping to scupper the wider development of Sydney's rail infrastructure for a generation (it is only now in 2016 that the long planned rail – now light rail – to Randwick and UNSW is being built). This combination echoes Boies and Pichardo's (1990; pp.1-3) work on elite social movements, deployed by and for (and often consisting solely of) elites, particularly in situations where the 'legitimate' power (in this case the right-wing NSW government) is unhelpful or impotent.

Opposition to Rail in the East in the late 1990's -

A similar case occurred in the 1990's, though the impetus was initially from the Federal government. In 1998, the Federal government proposed a public-private partnership rail line extending from Bondi Junction to Bondi Beach, a resurrection of the initial 1947-1967 idea. Again, local opposition was fierce and

numerous social movement type groups, most notably 'Save Bondi Beach', led rallies and lobbying campaigns against the proposed line (Ender and Jennet, 2008, p.204). Again, we see the techniques and characteristics of elite social movements deployed for an elite localist goal of denying mobility to 'their' beach, and preserving the exclusive access and 'right to the beach' that the elite local public had come to expect.

Finally, in 2001, the government dropped the plan, further preventing the expansion of rail lines planned more than half a century ago.

As we have seen, the role of elite localist movements and the fundamentally exclusivist aims of the elite localist public has been integral in the failure of major transport and infrastructure policies and projects. This is not to blame every aspect of their failings upon elite localism – the increased fares of the public-private partnership in the 1999 proposal and ethnic tension within the workforce in the 1967 attempt are clearly not their fault – but it is notable how little this demonstrable elite localist interference has been recognised in accounts of Sydney's rail transport woes.

In a 2009 Sydney Morning Herald article on the repeated failures of Sydney's rail transport projects and policies, the then Labour government is blamed repeatedly for failing to deliver these projects and the article is illustrated with a mock-up of the never-completed Woollahra station (whose half-built remains are a reminder to all in their vicinity of the power of elite local action) (West, 2009). Yet nowhere in the piece is the role of protest, lawsuits and agitation from locals mentioned, either in reference to the 1967 or the 1999 project. Likewise, Norley's (2011, pp.5-6) academic review of the history of transport policy in Sydney and Melbourne described the Eastern Suburbs line as an embarrassment and a symbol of Sydney's "inability to follow through on plans", the impact of sustained local protest goes unmentioned, again.

Similarly, in O'Neill and McGuirk's (2002, pp.306-307) account of the history of planning and infrastructure in Sydney, the rail system is described as being hamstrung by "transport authority decisions and a powerful road-users lobby". The content and context of these 'transport authority decisions' and the critical

role that elite local groups played in hampering the development of rail not from a 'pro-road' position but rather an anti-rail, localist position is not mentioned.

This is evidence of the lack of attention paid to this serious phenomenon, which as the failures of the 1967 and 1999 projects show, policy makers and political economists ought to take into account.

The Question of Accessibility:

The development of elite localism in the Eastern Suburbs has been centred on beaches, and has manifested chiefly in terms of accessibility. By limiting the expansion of rail transportation into the east, the possibility of mass access to these 'local' beaches is curtailed. This is not to say the Eastern Suburbs in question are inaccessible. In addition to a developed road system for private car use, numerous bus services go to and from the Eastern suburbs. Three go to Bondi Beach and North Bondi directly, while a further three allow access to Double Bay, Rose Bay and Watsons Bay accompanied by another three that allow access to Bronte, Randwick, and Clovelly. (Transport for NSW, 2016). Alongside these bus links, the three ferry stops at Double Bay, Rose Bay and Watson's bay allow a further fast link to the east (Transport for NSW, 2016).

Such a quantity of public transport can give the impression that there is no shortage of accessibility in the Eastern Suburbs. This is not the case. A qualitative discussion of the character of these different kinds of public transportation, particularly compared to rail, points towards to the specific intensity of accessibility and mobility provided by rail transport, and illuminates why rail is above all the target of elite local action in Sydney.

The ferries are the most expensive mode of public transportation available in Sydney. A trip from Circular Quay to the Eastern Suburbs peninsula costs \$5.74, and for anyone commuting from the Sydney's west this would be on top of a train and possibly a bus fare (Transport for NSW, 2016). Additionally, the ferries run to a short schedule – outside of certain major events (such as the Vivid Festival) they stop running at 8pm on weekdays. Finally, the ferries only provide access to Rose Bay, Double Bay and Watson's bay, the major beaches of Bondi, Bronte and Clovelly have no ferry terminals.

The ferry is an iconic symbol of Sydney, and features heavily in tourism advertising and media (Beyond the Wharf, 2016). In practical terms it is a form of access that is expensive, limited and often inconvenient. Materially and symbolically the ferry is the transport of tourists and local elites, the access it provides is restrictive and does not threaten the broader paradigm of elite local accessibility and mobility regarding beaches. This echoes Wardman's (2014, p.6) work on convenience and public transport, the ferry epitomizing the kind of 'long O-V-T (out of vehicle time)' public transport whose inconvenience in location, wait time and route make it impracticable for all but the most local or, of course, tourists.

The bus system is cheaper, more convenient (in terms of routes and running times) and far more widespread than the ferry system. The Eastern Suburbs are extensively serviced by buses including a special Bondi Junction Station to Bondi Beach express bus (the 333). No protests have accompanied the development of the bus system, and no elite local movements have sought to tear up bus stops. The buses are limited in capacity and efficiency, they move only on the roads and are subject to the rights of other road users and the vagaries of traffic. While bus lanes and bus stops may mark a road and change the street scenery they do not fundamentally impinge upon the landscape. They are public transport, but not mass transport.

The Consequences of Elite Localism in the East:

Having helped knock down two major attempts at extending rail transport into the Eastern Suburbs, the elite local public was free to maintain their exclusive expectations of their 'right to the beach'. While further proposals for rail links in the east would be made throughout the Bob Carr premiership beyond 2001, these fell victim to professional lobbying from the RTA and other road-transit authorities, as well as the scepticism of large parts of the ALP right faction (most notably former minister Matt Costa) (West, 2009). Though not mentioned in the media of the time, it is hard to believe that the legacy of failure in the Eastern Suburbs due to elite local opposition did not also play a role in the failure of these proposals.

These victories for elite localism did not lead to – nor did they ever portend towards – a retreat into hermitic isolationism. The Eastern Suburbs have long been the heart of ‘global Sydney’, a centre for tourism and cosmopolitan travel (O’Neill and McGuirk, 2002, p.247). The mid-late 20th century (and beyond) were not marked by any attempts to curtail this. This points to another aspect of the relationship between exclusivity, public space and elite localism. It is not merely that elite localism attempts to maintain an exclusive hold over public spaces (beaches in Sydney’s case), but that it attempts to maintain this hold against specific other publics. The tourist is a transitory, profit creating figure often of wealthy or ‘exotic’ extraction (Winter, 2006, pp.103-104). The suburbanite or westie by contrast is a definable threat, a harbinger of the ‘transit of the masses’ that some 19th century coastal residents feared (Ford, 2010).

Thus the exclusivity within elite localism cannot be seen as solely *for* one public, but rather *for* one public *against* another. The divide between the welcomed, wealth-bringing tourist and the disconcerting, boundary impinging ‘westie’ is further pointed to by the treatment of backpackers, who occupy a between-position as both tourists and often (at least within their time in Australia) poorer, liminal figures (Allen, 2004, pp.51-53; Wilson et al, 2008). Here we see again the association with poverty and otherness that exercised the 18th and 19th century ‘exclusives’. A concern that led to the first opening up of the suburbs (initially Woolloomooloo) with the express intention of escaping the western Sydney ‘emancipists’ (Partington, 1994, pp.16-18). The same cultural current, though in modern form, still affects the treatment of visitors and the attitude towards major infrastructure projects and policy in Sydney today.

I have stressed already the importance of understanding how exclusivism functions to generate elite localism only in certain contexts, in the spatial context (providing for the localism) and as deployed by elite communities. A hotel with a vast cover charge and expensive dress code is both elite and exclusive, but does not exhibit elite localism. Likewise a surf break off an impoverished coastal town which requires ‘locals only’ knowledge to get past local surfers exhibits localism and exclusivity, but not elite localism (Ludeke, 2006, pp.158-159).

To add to this appreciation of nuance, it is important not to reactively dismiss all exclusivity, as Iveson's work on the women and children only beach pool at Bronte demonstrates, positive exclusivity (in this case excluding men over the age of 12) is both possible and desirable in the attempt to create a democratic city (Iveson, 2003, pp.215-217). The dynamics are similar – the pool is kept exclusive *for* women and children and *free from* adult men – but the ultimate goal is to enrich the accessibility, mobility and freedom of all people, beyond men, to experience the beach space. Through restricting some publics they in effect make the beach space more authentically public (Iveson, 2003, p.226).

A further complexity is added through the means by which Eastern Suburbs elite localism has attempted to traduce access to “their” localities and beaches. Instead of the obvious symbols and technologies of exclusivity (dress codes, walls, gates, fences etc.), the beaches are kept exclusive through the lack of mass transit rail technology. The slower, less reliable and far smaller carrying capacity bus routes are welcomed, but the faster, more efficient and vastly larger railways are forbidden. Indeed, the permanent bus service from Bondi Junction to Bondi Beach, forever jam-packed with tourists and day-trippers unwilling to pay the exorbitant parking fee, provides a striking example of why the train line was considered initially.

Instead of preserving their elite localist public spaces through positive exclusivist policies and investment like a gated community or private guards, the elite Eastern Suburbs local public has worked through the prevention of policy. This is not to propose some kind of ideational or conspiratorial grand narrative, but rather to draw from the previously discussed historical examples. In every case where rail transport has threatened to upset the status quo in these beach suburbs, locals have mobilised to ensure the policies and projects behind these rail extensions have been defeated. By preventing mobility, they restrict access.

Right to the Beach Revisited –Exclusivity and Elite Localism:

This section will discuss the role of exclusivity within elite localism. It is clear that elite localism is motivated by an exclusivist sentiment and has exclusivist goals such as the limitation of access to beaches. Exploring exactly how this exclusivism comes about and is made manifest in the phenomena of elite localism is key to developing a useful conceptualisation of elite localism.

In Ford's (2010) discussion of the history of Sydney's beaches, she refers to the development of a 'right to the beach' sentiment among Sydney's locals. We can naturally compare this to Harvey's (2003) work on the 'right to the city', and at this juncture it is necessary to expand upon this earlier comparison. For Harvey, the right to the city is fundamentally a question of class struggle, a common right held by all as a crucial part to the making and remaking of human society and the development of a more equitable world political economy. The 'right to the beach' that arose in late 19th century Sydney was not explicitly socialist, but the demands that Ford describes (the necessity of beach access by all for the recreation and health reasons, the unjustness of private beach ownership) are certainly within the same strand of egalitarian, radical and communal thought (Ford, 2010, pp.266-268).

Something of the rhetoric and the spirit of this 'right to the beach' endures within the elite localist campaigns of the Eastern Suburbs. The "Save Bondi Beach" campaign, with its social mobilisation through rallies and protests, even its name – with its connotation that the building of an underground railway station would somehow destroy it – draw upon that heritage (Ender and Jennet, 2008, p.204; Casey, 1997). But it differs in one crucial respect; where the Sydneysiders of the 19th century acted with an increasing confidence that the beach and foreshore was the 'rightful heritage of all Australians', their mid-late 20th century Eastern Suburbs successor's actions implied that the beach was the rightful heritage of a specific, wealthy, exclusive group of Australians – elite locals (Ford, 2010).

What the rail line represents then, functionally and materially, is a permanent breach of the exclusivity and 'ownership' of public space by the elite localist public. Where the buses make little impact upon the street space beyond bus shelters, the presence of the train station is a far more concrete sign of the interconnectedness of the city and a bridgehead for alternate publics to head in numbers to the quasi-private, exclusive territory of the beach and local spaces. In short, the rail signifies mass mobility and mobility for the masses (Whitzman et al, 2013, p.154).

Conclusion:

By exploring the history of struggles over beaches and rail expansion in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, this chapter has demonstrated the power of elite localism in hampering the development of rail infrastructure and rail policy across the city. By examining the role of public beaches in light of the multiple publics' methodology, this chapter has shown how exclusivity is a necessary but not sufficient aspect of elite localism. This chapter has shown how elite localism manifests only in specific conditions – where exclusive space and public space intersect with elite local publics we see elite localism arise.

It is important to take such care and specificity in the discussion of exclusivity, for it would be too easy to reductively abstract all elite localism into 'rich people being exclusive'. This would be a disservice that ignores the centrality of space and access to elite localism, and provide little help for policy makers attempting to identify and work around elite localism.

There are still other aspects and identifying criteria for elite localism as yet undiscussed. In the following chapter we will look at Sydney's Northern Beaches, whose anti-transport opposition flared up as recently as 2015, and engage with the role of racism and xenophobia with particular historical reference to the Cronulla riots and the after effects upon elite localism and transport policy.

Chapter Three: Racism, Xenophobia and Elite Localism – Elite Localism on the Northern Beaches

Introduction:

This thesis has a threefold aim, to firstly establish the existence of elite localism as a phenomenon, secondly to establish its importance, and finally to demonstrate its usefulness as an analytical frame for understanding the political economy of the city. The first two chapters have established the existence of elite localism, and much of its characteristics and importance, and this chapter will contribute to that understanding by exploring how racism and xenophobia relate to and strengthen (and are strengthened by) elite localism.

Racism is one of the central contributors to discord in urban spaces, in Sydney it forms a constant semi-visible screen of 'everyday racism', damaging the lives of many residents, harming social cohesion and any attempt at the creation of democratic space (Bloch and Dreher, 2009). Racism is also one of the strongest motivations for the creation of zones of exclusivity and the establishment of the 'locals only' public spaces discussed in chapter two (Gershewitz, Lamoin and Dawes, 2010 p.205). In light of this, and bearing in mind Fainstein's emphasis on how racism motivates exclusionary publics and damages urban solidarity and democracy, the necessity of engaging seriously with racism and elite localism in the Sydney context becomes important (Fainstein, 2005, p.126)

While not identical, the importance of racism as a cause of tension and social strife in Sydney, along with the access-denying exclusivity of elite localism, necessitate an investigation of how elite localism reinforces and is reinforced by racism (Bloch and Dreher, 2009). By investigating elite localism on the Northern Beaches in relation to the Northern Beaches line, the importance of this racism/elite localism relationship in affecting transport policy will become apparent. This will reinforce the need for the inclusion of elite localism into academic and policymaker thinking about racism, xenophobia and exclusivity in the city.

The Manly/Northern Beaches suburbs of Sydney (sites of the proposed Northern Beaches Line) provide a useful case study for observing elite localism outside of the Eastern Suburbs with a more pronounced racial animus than in the east. The concept of elite localism identified and developed in this thesis is enhanced by examining xenophobia and racism as motivators of and aspects within elite localism. By further extending the analysis of space, access and mobility within this context it is possible to further develop an appreciation of the role elite localism has played in reinforcing (and being reinforced by) the racial tensions and bigotries of the city of Sydney.

As part of this analysis I shall discuss the interplay of public space and racism in Sydney's history, focusing particularly on the Cronulla riots of 2005. These riots still form a major reference point in the context of racial politics and the spatial politics of Sydney's beaches. By drawing together these historical, political, economic and geographic strands, the relevance of elite localism as a reactionary force in the city and a roadblock to progressive transport policy will become apparent.

Through this, this chapter will demonstrate the important relationship between elite localism and racism in Sydney. By bringing this relationship to the fore, the importance of taking elite localism into account in the development of policies addressing racism and xenophobia will become apparent. This chapter will show where the relationship between elite localism and racism fits into the broader question of racism in Sydney, reinforcing the importance of taking elite localism seriously as a problem for scholars and policymakers.

Race and Public Space in Sydney: An Overview.

Colonial Origins -

Sydney's history is a colonial history, and the development of elite localism is necessarily one steeped in the violent, racist history of the development of the British colonisation of Australia. In Sydney's north, this racial history is apparent in the name of its most famous beach. 'Manly Cove' (and consequently Manly Beach) was so named by Captain Arthur Phillip out of admiration for the 'confidence and manly behaviour' of the 'natives' (members of the

Caregal/Garegal people) he saw on the beach (Hughes, 1987, p.15). At Bondi too, the development of 'surf bathing' was traced to settlers imitating the local indigenous people, who had used the beach and waves for fishing, ceremony and recreation for millennia before white colonisation (Booth, 2012, p.36).

The rapid extirpation of the indigenous people of the east has left much of their history unknown to modern scholarship, even the name of the local clans is unknown. Some scholars suggest they were members of the Darug people, others the Eora, others the Biddigal. This is testament to the rapidity and intensity of the colonial violence in the inner Sydney area in the years immediately following the First Fleet (Meadows, 1999, pp.4-6). Though we know more about the original owners of the Manly/Northern Beaches area, they too were forced off their lands quite soon after colonisation. The first major colonial land developments took place in 1853 and regular ferry services followed in 1855 (Pittwater Library, 2015; Prescott, 1984).

The Continuing Relevance of Colonialism -

Although the racial animus present in the Northern Beaches/Manly elite localism is not directly anti-aboriginal – it is generally anti-Islamic/Lebanese in its specifics – the colonial history of the imposition of white Australia and white settlers on the beaches of Sydney must be kept in mind (Bloch and Dreher, 2009, p.196). As Jayasuriya (pp.41-42) notes, the history of white supremacism and racism in Australia is one of continuity, originating in the violent expropriation of indigenous land. The beach remains central in all of this, it is after all the stereotypical site of Australia day. The commemoration of the British invasion is a particular bugbear of the extreme right due to indigenous efforts to have the date of "invasion day" marked by something more solemn than a public holiday of flag waving and nationalism (Evers, 2008, p.415; Moreton-Robinson and Nicoll, 2006, p.150).

While, per Forrest and Dunn (2007, p.705) its expressions can be split into 'Old' and 'New Racisms', the fundamental violence of colonisation is perpetuated in Australian racism. The national anxiety over both Asian immigration and aboriginal land rights acts in the 1990s (both used by Pauline Hanson's One

Nation party) demonstrates the way that the initial act of colonial land theft is reflected in fears of a foreign ‘other’ coming into to ‘take our jobs/land and so on (Jayasuriya, 2002, p.43; Dunn et al, 2004, p.411). With this historical grounding in mind, we can then explore the specifics of the Northern Beaches Line and the manifestations of a particularly racially inflected strain of elite local opposition to it.

The Northern Beaches Line:

First proposed in its current form in 2014, the Northern Beaches Line proposal envisages a rail line extending from the CBD to Manly and the Northern Beaches, making the affluent beachside suburbs of Mosman, Neutral Bay and Manly available by rail. The 2014 Transport for New South Wales ‘Northern Beaches Transport Action Plan’ described the Northern Beaches Line as “the vital next step following the north west rail link”, suggesting that it would be an economic boon to the area. It has also been proposed as the solution to the infamously bad traffic on Military Road, the main route for travel from the northern beaches/suburbs to Sydney city proper (Transport for New South Wales, 2014).

Elite Local Opposition to the Northern Beaches Line-

Despite the economic and commuter-convenience benefits that were to flow from it, the Northern Beaches Line has met with consistent elite local resistance. The institutions of local government in the Manly council area have come out strongly against it. With Mayor Jean Hay promising that the line would be built “over my dead body” rejecting it on the grounds that Manly ‘couldn’t cope’ with the increased number of visitors (estimated at 20 million compared to the current level of 8 million) (Kay, 2015, p.1).

This level of vitriol is interesting particularly given that the proposed date for any work on the line has yet to be offered. The creation of a ‘B-Line’ of rapid transit buses has been the government’s first priority (and has seen actual construction work) (Transport for New South Wales, 2014). Of further interest is that the specific news article that Mayor Hay was reacting to was not only about the government’s plans for the rail line but rather the role of the NRMA in

producing a report endorsing such a line (Kay, 2015, p.1). This demonstrates the 'localness' of elite localism in defying powerful state and non-government institutional wishes. Importantly it also demonstrates that the "road-users lobby" decried by O'Neil and McGuirk (2002, pp.306-307) as the doom of the mid-century rail projects cannot be blamed for all current moves to hinder the development of rail in Sydney.

Local residents have consistently come out against the proposed line, the letters pages (and Facebook/online comment threads) of the Manly Herald (local newspaper) provide numerous examples of local aggravation with any proposed rail link. – **See Appendix I: Comments from local Northern Beaches residents on an article about the proposed Northern Beaches line.**

While there are many more comments to be found in this vein in the comment sections and letters pages of Manly related local newspapers and articles, the selection above provides a useful look into the mindset of elite localism. The theme of rail lines 'bringing in the trouble', acting as a 'fast link for crime' and bleak portraits of 'once idyllic' Cronulla (with the attendant spectre of the 2005 riots) combine to give us a picture of why local opposition to accessibility, mobility and the democratisation of public spaces on 'their' local beaches exists.

Of particular note is the comment by 'Clair': "...never mind how trains help residents, they just bring trouble". This illuminates one of the pillars of elite localism, the convenience of accessing the wider spaces of the city is not considered worth the possibility of the inhabitants, the publics, of these wider spaces accessing elite spaces. The fear of crime in these statements, and the connection drawn between railways and criminal intrusion into local spaces echoes Ender and Jenet's (2008, pp.203-206) finding's in Bondi, where fear of crime (typically attributed to non-locals) helped motivate anti-rail action. The broader desires of planners and governments do not tend to take these desires into account. This discord between elite local desire and government policy is key to the development elite local resistance along the lines proposed by Boies and Pichardo (1991, pp.1-7). As in the Eastern Suburbs, the perceived failure of the normally elite-friendly state to act in the 'right' way necessitates the mobilisation of an elite resistance (ibid).

Thus far the Northern Beaches elite public has displayed less mobilisation and resistance than their Eastern Suburbs equivalents did in the 1990's and 1970's. But we must keep in mind that the Northern Beaches Line is likewise far less developed than either of the Eastern Suburbs projects. Should it ever begin construction then we should not be surprised to see angry local councils and aggravated commentary within the public spaces of the Northern Beaches. In such circumstances we may well observe the same combination of public protest, lobbying and expensive litigation that sank the Eastern Suburbs rail extension projects.

Racism's Role in Elite Localism:

According to the 2011 Census, the Northern Beaches area is the most mono-ethnic part of Australia (ABS, 2011, pp.16-17). According to the 'constructing racism in Sydney' research carried out by Forrest and Dunn (2007, p.708), the Manly area scored low for 'old' (sociobiological/social Darwinist) racism, but showed strong susceptibility to 'new' (anti-multicultural/non-biological) racism and xenophobia. As Forrest and Dunn (2007, p.709) point out, this is interesting given that the other wealthy beach area in the survey, the Eastern Suburbs, had the lowest rate of racist attitudes and highest approval for multiculturalism of all the suburbs surveyed.

Iveson (2011, pp.166-170) discusses a connection between racism, fear of crime and rail transport in his case study of public space in 'neo-liberal Perth'. Fears of young people (predominantly cast as aboriginal) heading from the outer suburbs into the 'Central area' led to demands from Perth residents that the government 'do something' about them. Railways were slated as a conduit for crime and parents encouraged to restrict their children's access to the train system. Teenage 'louts' were touted as a major election issue. This led to the commitment of millions of dollars towards reinforcing the transport police and enhancing security systems on the Perth rail network (ibid).

Though in this instance there was no elite local reaction, there was no need for one to develop. Drawing on Boies and Pichardo's (1991, p.1) analysis, the state (in this case the state government of Western Australia) was performing its 'correct' role in policing the Perth CBD of undesirables and restricting their

access to the transport network that provided them with the mobility to infringe upon the 'proper' operation of the CBD (Iveson, 2011, p.172). Those undesirable youths face what Iveson (2011, p.185) describes as the dual 'denial of symbolic enrolment in the city' as well as 'denial of access to public space'. This is encountered within a 'public' space – the Perth CBD – which is understood to have 'proper uses': 'inner city living, employment and tourism'. Any deviant behaviour (in this case, suburban aboriginal teenagers 'loitering' or 'cruising' around) is thereby made improper and forcibly stopped (Iveson, 2011, p.172).

The same phenomena can be observed in elite localism, in an inverted form. The elite local publics of the Eastern Suburbs and Northern Beaches actively deny *others* the symbolic enrolment of their suburbs with the city. Through the halting of rail expansion policies, elite local publics deny access to 'their' public spaces and beaches. This denial is more subtle than heavy police presence, private security and the spectacle of youths being "herded" aboard trains, but no less effective for all that (Iveson, 2011, p.169).

Indeed, by denying the rail access to 'troublesome' suburbanites in the first place, these more visible and expensive means of access restriction need never be deployed. One is reminded of McGuirk and O'Neal's (2002, p.313) comment about the Eastern Suburbs "seeming to secede from the city". Though made in reference to economic inequality, the image of a suburb seceding from the city is powerfully resonant with the access denying activities of elite localism in Sydney.

The samples of local commentary in Manly related media presented above demonstrate Iveson's insight into public address, as has been discussed in Chapter two. The media contributes to the construction of public space, it is public address combined with accessibility that makes a space public, not some easy legal or purely geographic definition (Iveson, 2011, p.11). The power of media representation and access for the proliferation and combating of racism in the spatial context has been emphasized by Castillo and Hirst (2000, pp.120-129). Though they write in the context of Sydney's west, the same dynamics apply (though the protagonists differ) in the Northern Beaches.

This is the insight that allows for a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of public beaches and the role of local media, and the comments presented above. These comments do show some contestation - “you just don’t want westies on your local beach” - but there is as a whole a broad elite localist consensus. There is a notable lack of real dissenting voices from outside the elite local public. This aligns with Iveson’s (2011, p.185) comment that

“We must not only ask: how accessible are ‘public spaces’? We must also ask: how accessible are the public fora through which the identities of urban places are shaped and debated?”

This lack of access to public fora was visible in the Bondi rail link campaign as well. The voices of elite locals and government spokespeople were present, but the others whose rail access was being prevented had no say or acknowledgement. This imbalance is clearer still in the Northern Beaches case. Where instead of a vague pro-localness (i.e. ‘Save Bondi Beach’), more definite others are themselves named through geographically derived derogatory sobriquets as ‘westies’ and associated with that ultimate symbol of racism and beach culture: ‘Cronulla’.

Though not exact, and not a manifestation of elite localism, Iveson’s case study of mid-late 1990’s Perth provides us with a useful comparison due to the parallel interrelationships of racial prejudice, public space and rail transport. In a sense the Perth case represents what elite local publics want from the state; active assistance in circumscribing access to “their” spaces. Sydney’s elite local actions have occurred in the absence of this assistance.

With this in mind, there is another vital case involving beaches, public-space, racism and public transport: the Cronulla riots. Again, this was not an example of elite localism, but as the comments above demonstrate it is a vital touchstone in the Australian cultural memory. Fears of its resurgence or spread, and fears of “another Cronulla” are a key aspect of elite localism in Sydney.

The Cronulla Riots:

Cronulla beach has long been a space of contestation. Much like the beaches of the Eastern Suburbs, Cronulla in the mid-20th century was characterised by violent brawls over turf and access between ‘surfers, bikers and rockers’, and again, like the Eastern Suburbs fighting between locals and ‘westies’, these antagonisms were predominantly class based (Evers, 2008, p.414; Gwyther, 2008, pp.1-2).

While Cronulla was once a predominantly working class “battler” area, the 21st century has seen a marked shift into the middle class and a consequent decline in the sort of class-based brawls that marked the mid-20th century experience (Evers, 2008, pp.414-415). For Evers (ibid), this shift into middle class and ‘aspirational’ class identity is what decisively turned the Cronulla riots of December 2005 into an explicitly racial affair. The feelings of solidarity and local ownership of ‘their’ beach were manifested in feelings of racial solidarity, of Cronulla as a “white, Christian heartland”, faced by an ‘other’ characterised as ‘gangs of Muslims’ who were behaving in an ‘un-Australian’ manner (Moreton-Robinson and Nicoll, 2006, p.150; Babacan and Babacan, 2007, p.147).

As a white, middle-class and ‘suburban’ beach suburb, often contrasted with the ‘cosmopolitan’ and backpacker-packed Bondi, Cronulla presents strong similarities with the Northern Beaches. Indeed, both areas have been captured with the sobriquet “the insular peninsula” (Barclay and West, 2006, p.77). Aside from their geographical separation (the Northern Beaches in the north and Cronulla a part of the southern Sutherland Shire region), the great divide is one of access, for Cronulla is the only suburban beach with a railway station (ibid).

It was this railway station that provided, or was felt to provide, access for the “men of middle-eastern appearance” whose anti-social behaviour (offensive remarks, scuffles outside the pub, an assault on a lifesaver) was held by the Cronulla locals to warrant a violent response (Evers, 2008, p.416). Of particular note is the assault on a lifesaver, as mentioned in Chapter Two the lifesaving

movement is of particular symbolic importance within Australian beach culture, and to engage in violence towards lifesavers is a “very provocative act” (Huntsman, 2001, pp.56-59; Barclay and West, 2006, pp.77-78; Evers, 2008, pp.416-418).

The subsequent riots, egged on in part by a complicit, sensationalist and often (as in the case of Alan Jones) blatantly racist media, took several days to die down (Gershewitz, Lamoin and Dawes, 2010, pp.205-209). Dozens of people (including Police Officers) were injured, many severely, and 285 charges were made against 104 people. Though decried afterwards as a tragic and criminal event by many cultural and governmental authorities, a strain of pride in the events remains. This was most recently evidenced by the extreme right Party for Freedom’s successful attempt to hold a ‘halal-free’ 10th Anniversary Barbeque on Cronulla beach in December 2015 (ABC News, 2015).

It would be inaccurate to call the Cronulla riots an example of elite localism. The non-elite nature of those involved and the means used (disorder and violence) are a far cry from the campaigns in the Eastern Suburbs and Northern Beaches. However, there are several important commonalities between the Cronulla riots and elite local sentiment. The notion of ownership of public space and the violently contested space of Cronulla beach has obvious parallels with elite localism. As does the centrality of the railway station as the bridgehead for transgression, the entry point for the ‘men of middle-eastern appearance’ into spaces claimed by another public. This characterisation of public transportation as an access point for despised outsiders is key to understanding the hostility which rail access to beaches is viewed by the non-elite and elite locals of these areas alike. As Evers (2008, pp.418-420) notes, the notion of “ownership” and the contest of publics was widely discussed immediately before and after the riots. During the riots, accusations flew that a Lebanese man had been heard to say “we own the beach”. Older Cronulla locals described the event as one of reclamation; the young taking the beach back for ‘real’ locals in defiance of 30 years of change (ibid).

The Shadow of Cronulla:

Seen in the light of this history of violence and racism, the elite localist demand that their suburb must not see 'another Cronulla' could be interpreted charitably as a call for the furtherance of multiculturalism and an end to racist violence. This is not the case. From an elite local perspective, the prevention of 'another Cronulla' is not about ending racial tension but about preventing the possibility of the kind of contestation and mixing of publics that occurred prior to the riots. Exclusivity of access must be preserved not only out of a sense of elite public ownership but a real fear of 'trouble'. The violence of Cronulla is not seen as a racist outburst egged on by young male egos and media spin but rather as the natural consequence of allowing mobility and access to these 'men of middle-eastern appearance', these outsiders who (as in Perth) do not fit the bill of locals, workers or tourists.

With this in mind, we can see that the use of the spectre of Cronulla to mobilise elite localism is both myopic and racist. It is also a conservative example of Harvey and William's (1995, pp.7-71) 'militant particularism'. Where reluctance to deal with attitudes of racism, xenophobia and insularity are allowed to supersede the concerns, even of right-wing governments, relating to the expansion of vital rail infrastructure for a global city.

Conclusion:

The elite localism of the Northern Beaches displays perhaps even more strongly than in the Eastern Suburbs the power of publics to guard access and mobility to public spaces considered the exclusive and insular property of 'locals' and fit only for certain, 'proper', usage. The elite local suburb is envisioned as a half-seceded entity apart from the city, a quiet place, separated by horrible traffic and kilometres of water, guarding itself jealously against the wrong kind of visitor. It is a violation of the democratic vision that characterises Lefebvre's notion of the 'right to the city', what Fainstein describes as the ability to 'access places of employment and culture' (Lefebvre, 1967; Fainstein, 2005, pp.120-126). In Australia, in Sydney, where the beach is so important a site of culture and national myth, the actions to restrict and deny access to a racialized and

despised 'western suburbs' population is surely a fundamental violation of any notion of a democratic city.

This chapter has deepened the understanding of elite localism set out in the first two chapters. By dealing with the historical and contemporary relationship between elite localism and racism, the necessity of acknowledging the role of elite localism as manifestation and supporter of racism and xenophobia has been made clear. Further, by examining these entanglements through the specific case study of the Northern Beaches Line, the contemporary importance of having a strong conceptualisation of elite localism becomes clear.

Racism is a problem, and a challenge for anyone attempting to understand or resolve issues of urban inequality and tension (Collins and Poynting, 2000, p.132). This chapter has made clear the role that elite localism can play in strengthening and deepening racism in the city. This chapter has demonstrated that if racism matters, then elite localism matters too. As such any attempt at a comprehensive analysis of the role and effect of racism on urban inequality must necessarily include an awareness of elite localism. Understanding elite localism is vital then for understanding racism, transport policy and the development of Sydney as a whole. It is not the only factor in these issues, far from it, but to ignore it means losing a vital sense of how publics and public space in the city is contested and shaped. To overlook it is to miss a key aspect of the history and continued development of transport policy and infrastructure in the city of Sydney.

The Northern Beaches and Eastern Suburbs have provided insightful case studies into the nature, history and development of elite localism, we have seen its existence, its forms, its importance and its relationship with institutions, publics, the state, the media and the broader political economy of space. These cases studies have identified the nature, dynamics and importance of elite localism. With this established it is important to widen our lens beyond two regions and look at Sydney as a whole. The next chapter will explore how elite localism has contributed to inequality in Sydney and demonstrate the broader applicability of elite localism as an analytical frame for scholars and policymakers.

Chapter Four: The Impact of Elite Localism

Introduction:

In order to fully understand the political economy of Sydney, particularly the spatial political economy of Sydney, elite localism must be incorporated. So far this thesis has established the space within the literature for the development of elite localism as a concept. Through case studies of the Eastern Suburbs and Northern Beaches, this thesis has explored the character of elite localism and demonstrated its influence over the development (and underdevelopment) of the Sydney public transport system. Through this the key relationships between elite localism and issues of racism, exclusivity, accessibility and mobility have also been explored.

Having established the concept of elite localism and the existence of elite localism, this chapter will now reinforce the importance of elite localism for understanding inequality in the city, and further establish the usefulness of elite localism for academic and policymaking purposes.

Drawing on the conceptual insight and development explored in the case studies of the Eastern Suburbs and Northern Beaches, this chapter takes a broader look at the city of Sydney and the ramifications of elite localism for the city as a whole. By incorporating and examining the wider scholarship on Sydney and its inequalities, this chapter will demonstrate how and where elite localism fits into an understanding of the political economy of Sydney.

This chapter will firstly explore literature on the political economy of inequality in Sydney and demonstrate how an understanding of elite localism enriches and strengthens scholarship in this area. This will involve analysing scholarship on economic inequality, spatial inequality and social division and highlighting how elite localism aids our understanding of these issues. This chapter will include the application of this conceptual understanding of elite localism to some contemporary policy questions within the Sydney context, drawing on scholarship, journalism and government sources. This will provide evidence of the usefulness of the concept of elite localism developed in this thesis.

It is not my intention to portray elite localism as an all-important ‘trump card’ concept, nor as the be-all and end-all explanation for all of the ills of the political economy of Sydney (or cities in general). Rather I will take a holistic, measured approach, demonstrating how elite localism has contributed to Sydney’s status as an unequal city, a divided city and an inefficient city. Furthermore I will explain how, conceptually, it can be incorporated into existing scholarly perspectives in order to produce a fuller understanding of the dynamics and development of spatial political economic issues in Sydney.

Perspectives on Inequality in Sydney:

The problem of inequality in Sydney has been the subject of investigation by political economists since the mid-20th century. This section will detail some of the important contributors to this literature, focusing particularly on the importance of space, access, and public transport. This will provide a vital academic context to which we can apply the insights into elite localism gleaned through the case studies in chapters two and three.

Baum’s (1997; 2004; 2008) work provides a valuable entry point into the literature on inequality in Sydney. In a broader look at urban inequality across Australia’s cities, Baum (2008, p.16) notes that Sydney is the most unequal city in Australia, both in terms of raw income difference and as part of a broader social metric of ‘relative deprivation’ or RD (incorporating demographics, housing, engagement with work and income), with Milson’s Point (the highest rated) and Claymore (the most disadvantaged) both being parts of the Sydney region. The suburbs examined in the case studies in Chapter’s two and three all fit into Baum’s ‘Band Six’ suburbs, the wealthiest and most privileged places in Sydney.

With this acknowledgement of the scale of inequality in mind, we can examine Baum’s more Sydney specific work, which highlights several major contributing factors to the “scarring” of inequality (2008, p.1). Within this understanding on urban inequality, the specific issue of spatial inequality is of paramount importance. As Baum and Hassan (1993) note, spatial inequality is abetted by inequalities of access. If people cannot access employment and services in their

home suburb, and find it difficult to access other areas, then inequality is worsened (Baum and Hassan, 1993, pp.150-154).

To Baum's concerns with access to spaces of employment we can add access to public spaces of recreation and beauty, which are no less important for both individual wellbeing and the creation of a democratic, equitable city. This notion of a democratic city includes not only a diversity of peoples but a parity of participation among them, where social polarisation is reduced by meaningful, equitable participation in the use and benefits of city spaces (Fincher and Iveson, 2008, pp.13-23; McCormick, 2010, pp.702-705).

Stilwell and Hardwick (1973, pp.18-23) examined inequality in Sydney in the mid-1960's, exploring particularly the notion of urban expansion and sprawl, a hot topic at the time given governmental and academic concerns over 'the link between urban size and social inequality'. This analysis notes that Sydney can be best divided into suburban categories of similar geographical location and economic situation, notably two of these categories encompass the Northern Beaches and the Eastern Suburbs, the subjects of chapters two and three of this thesis. Further, Stilwell and Hardwick (1973, p.29) identify the importance of urban planning and transport policy in the maintenance and strengthening of urban inequality. The effects of high rail fares and government prioritisation of expressway construction are pinpointed as examples of governmental neglect of the consideration of social goals in urban planning.

The inequality-heightening expressway/public-transport trade-off brings to mind both the current controversy over the WestConnex project as well as bringing to mind Stanek's (2008, p.74) focus on the way that 'strategic investments in the built environment...render particular areas in the city central while excluding others'. This connection will be discussed further in the latter sections of this chapter.

In a later paper from 1989, Stilwell (3-14) explores both the intensification of spatial inequalities in terms of income variance and spatial equity. Though this work is focused more upon the economic base of the city of Sydney and the threat of 'pauperisation' in the face of late 1980's de-industrialisation, the

emphasis upon the political economy of space as central to equality in the urban context is enduringly relevant.

Spatial equity rates alongside concern with sexual and racial discrimination as a criterion of social evaluation. (Stilwell, 1989, p.4).

Similar concerns with inequality in Sydney emerge in Maher's (1994; pp.185-191) work on 'locational disadvantage'. Maher suggests that urban inequality arises through a twofold process, being both

“Structural, and spatial; structural in that social processes, particularly those related to the labour market, provide an unequal allocation of material resources; and spatial in the sense that some localities are better resourced than others with services, facilities, or access, and that these very differences compound existing inequalities.” – (Maher, 1994, p.187).

Along with Stilwell (1989) and O'Neill and McGuirk (2002, p.306), Maher (1994, pp.187-188) suggests that locational disadvantage and urban inequality cannot be reduced to a crude geography of distance, where peripheral suburbs are necessarily worse off by dint of being more kilometres away from the CBD. Rather Maher suggests an approach that highlights access to transport, employment and public service as being a more effective way to understand locational disadvantage. The emphasis upon transport and access over distance is echoed by Clifton and Lucas (2004, p.15), who describe 'transport inequality' as a contributing factor to broader spatial inequalities. Hurni (2005, pp.1-5) reinforces the importance of transport for reducing inequality, while pointing out that there is no simple one for one correlation between poor transport access and inequality, something the case studies in this thesis have demonstrated convincingly.

This emphasis upon the increasing complexity of the spatial distribution of inequality is strengthened by Forster (2006, pp.173-174), who suggests that both official policy and the broader planning community have failed to understand the consequences of gentrification and the changing character of formerly working class areas, along with the political development of conservatism in the western suburbs. Much like Maher (1994, p.188) and the other scholars discussed in this section, Forster (2006, p.178) blames

government decisions backed up by an out of touch planning ‘establishment’ for the proliferation of unrealistic and unhelpful policy that does little to address the realities of inequality in Sydney. Forster particularly criticises Baum’s tendency to ‘oversimplify’ the realities of suburban inequality and to ignore the agency of suburban residents (ibid).

Through this overview of the literature on inequality and Sydney, we can observe a broad scholarly consensus on the importance of public transport and public space in constituting, aiding and combating inequality. The next section will discuss how elite localism can contribute to this body of scholarship, and to our understanding of inequality

Elite Localism – Conceptual Contributions:

This section will draw upon the case studies of the Eastern Suburbs and Northern Beaches in chapters two and three, and apply the insights into elite localism garnered through those case studies to the issues raised by the body of scholarship discussed in the previous section. This will demonstrate the applicability and usefulness of the conceptualisation of elite localism developed in this thesis.

The importance of access and mobility in poverty reduction and reducing social polarisation is a consistent theme within the urban inequality literature. This provides a key entry point for the contribution of elite localism as a concept and, (as the case studies earlier demonstrate) a major arena of elite localism as a phenomena (Stilwell, 1989; Iveson, 2011). The usefulness of this contribution is heightened in the light of Forster’s critique of inequality literature, as elite localism necessarily acknowledges the importance of agency outside of government. Where Forster focuses upon the agency of those in poorer suburbs, elite localism (drawing on Iveson’s emphasis upon agency in the publics and the city methodology) provides a useful analytical frame for analysing the influence and actions of residents of affluent suburbs (Forster, 2006, pp.177-178; Iveson, 2011, p.40).

As this analysis of the literature demonstrates, scholars have often attributed the blame for key aspects of inequality-deepening factors to government action

(or studied inaction) (Stilwell and Hardwick, 1973, pp.27-29; Baum, 2008, p.34, Forster, 2006, p. 178). This is sometimes allied with criticisms of the power of corporate and institutional lobbying (particularly that of the road lobbies – the RTA and NRMA – in the case of Sydney public transport). The conceptualisation and historical account of elite localism developed in this thesis allows us to examine some of the causal phenomena behind the decline in rail public transport policy in Sydney, deepening our understanding of these developments.

Further, given the relationship between racism and inequality, the role of elite localism in preventing the kind of ‘just diversity’ and enforcing social polarisation through resisting equality of access (discussed in chapter three) suggests a new avenue of research and policy development for scholars and policymakers interested in the development and perhaps reduction of racism and racial tension in the city (Iveson and Fincher, 2006, pp.3-8). Gleeson and Randolph (2002, pp.101-102) emphasize the role of transport poverty in reinforcing urban inequality. While elite localism is found in affluent areas, the knock-on effects of elite localism on the transport network as a whole (as described in Chapter two) suggests a need for scholarship on transport inequality to incorporate an awareness and analysis of elite localism. This is reinforced by Badcock (1995, pp.214-217), who notes that the switch from a rail-based to a private motoring-based concept of state infrastructure has led to a decline in public transport which is ‘highly inequitable’. The role of elite localism as one of the causal factors of the decline in rail development is therefore linked with the inequitable results of that decline in poorer suburbs.

The decline in development of Sydney’s rail transport system is directly linked to the defeat, by elite localist forces, of the Eastern Suburbs line proposals in the 1960s, and again in the late 1990s (as discussed in Chapter two). Of course, the ultimate body responsible for building rail is the government, but the decision to give up on substantial sections of the rail network expansion program, something so valuable for the task of increasing equality of access and space, was substantially the result of elite localist action (Low, 2013, pp.6-8). The conceptualisation of elite localism that this thesis offers is one that allows for a more nuanced conception of the agency of elite publics in effecting government

policy, and elite localism can be understood as a crucial causal contributor to regressive, inequality-worsening government policy.

The example of the knock-on effects of the Eastern Suburbs line is emblematic of this. It is both the most obvious example of elite localism in Sydney thus far and is a rebuttal to any temptation to dismiss the need to think about elite, affluent suburbs and communities as part of the broader question of urban inequality. The actions of the elite localist publics in the eastern suburbs directly damaged equality of access and space within their own area of concern, by preventing rail to the beaches and environs of the east. This then led to damaging consequences within the broader city, by helping to end the broader scheme of rail construction in the 1960s, and again by helping to turn the 1990s labour governments away from their most promising attempt at rail expansion (Gunn, 1989; West, 2009).

If equality of access is important to reducing inequality, and if public transport is important to reducing inequality, then elite localism must be acknowledged as an important factor in struggles over inequality in the city. Given this importance of elite localism as a phenomena, then a strong conceptualisation of elite localism is necessarily of great use too. By providing an academic and analytical way to understand elite local publics, their motivations and methods (as discussed in Chapters two and three), this elite localism theory can allow for useful analysis of the role of elite local publics in the city, that recognises the agency and specificity of such publics without reducing them to amorphous NIMBY's or ignoring their influence upon policy development entirely.

Elite Localism – Policy Contributions:

The main purpose of this thesis is to conceptually establish and understand the concept of elite localism in a way that is useful in both scholarly and policymaking contexts. Through the case studies of the Eastern Suburbs and Northern Beaches, the nature and historical effect of elite localism as a phenomena has been established. This thesis has further developed a

conceptual understanding of elite localism drawing from the ‘publics and the city’ methodology developed by Iveson (2011).

The previous section discussed how the phenomenon of elite localism has affected the city as a whole and how this understanding can be applied to the existing scholarship around inequality in Sydney. The following section will focus upon applying the insights into elite localism to some current issues of transport policy in Sydney. Namely the light rail developments in the inner east of the city, and the WestConnex project. This will demonstrate the practical worth of the conceptualisation of elite localism developed in this thesis. As well as pointing towards further opportunities to develop and apply understandings of elite localism into the future.

Light Rail – Protest and Progress:

The recent (2012-ongoing) development of light rail routes across much of inner Sydney has been feted by government as the next step for Sydney. It has been complained about by commuters due to the closing of busy roads and the pedestrianisation of George Street, and rejected vehemently by protestors in Surry Hills and the inner eastern suburbs of Randwick and Kensington. By applying the nuanced concept of elite localism developed in this thesis, we can evaluate the claims of the protestors and the government actions they protest.

There have been two major outbreaks of protest against the CBD and South East Light Rail project (its official title). The first positioned itself as the voice of the residents of the suburb of Surry Hills and was organised around the group “People Unite for Surry Hills” or ‘P.U.S.H’. The second is less organised and has involved coalitions of concerned residents and organisations such as Sydney Light Rail Action Group. These protestors have been concerned with environmental issues (particularly the removal of fig trees from Anzac Parade) and Aboriginal heritage issues (following the discovery of a significant archaeological site in the path of the light rail development).

People Unite for Surry Hills -

On their 2014 website (defunct as of 2016 but still accessible through archives), P.U.S.H decries the light rail development as an example of ‘poor planning and design’, suggesting that the expansion of the light rail network into Surry Hills

represented a threat to local homes, parks and businesses (P.U.S.H, 2014). This claim echoes much of the complaints advanced by the 'Save Bondi' movement in the 1990s, and indeed Surry Hills as a suburb has some strong resemblances to Bondi. It is a wealthy, gentrified area with a lack of public transport access outside of the bus network (Sydney Buses, 2016). It was this paucity of public transport, and the negative effect of large numbers of buses on CBD traffic, that spurred the development of the light rail network into Surry Hills (Campion and Wood, 2012).

While the suburb of Surry Hills lacks the particular attraction of beaches it nevertheless possesses substantial public space in terms of parks and green space, as well as a thriving street scene with many cafes, boutiques and the like. Recalling Iveson's (2011, p.6) formulation of public space as spaces and subjects of public address and contestation it follows that P.U.S.H was a classic expression of elite localism. Representing the interests of spatial equality averse local publics, who by attempting to 'preserve' their suburb, are in effect attempting to restrict access and mobility by those people and publics who do not live within the suburb.

The complaints about the effect of the 'intrusive' light rail on 'one of the most sought after residential areas in Sydney' echo the complaints by the Eastern Suburbs elite locals about the intrusiveness of the rail stations. In both cases the physical embodiment of mass access in the form of a station is considered to be a violation in a way that the less intrusive, less efficient bus stops are not (P.U.S.H, 2014).

Although the P.U.S.H group did propose a counter option – involving digging a tunnel underneath Foveaux Street, Transport for New South Wales disregarded this option as it would add more time and money to the project. The P.U.S.H group suggested that this was unfair as it had been drawn up by local engineers (a use of elite local professional talent not dissimilar to the mass lawsuits of the Eastern Suburbs in the 1960's-1970) and would 'preserve the street'. An interview with a P.U.S.H member who described the 'concerning' impact light rail would have on the value of her investment property on Devonshire Street exemplifies the character of the movement (Nicolls, 2013, p.1).

Through using the insights into elite localism developed in this thesis, we can examine the actors (wealthy residents of an affluent suburb), their aim (to stop the development of light rail transport) and their motivation (to prevent an increase in the accessibility of their suburb) and confidently describe P.U.S.H as an example of elite localism, an elite local public mobilising towards spatial equality averse outcomes.

The Randwick Light Rail Protests –

There have been two major protests around the development of the light rail in the suburb of Randwick. One centred on a large find of aboriginal artefacts uncovered during the development of the track, the other concerning the destruction of historic fig trees during the development of the Anzac Parade leg of the light rail track. Though both of these involve protests and an attempt to halt or redirect the development of public transport, neither of them are examples of elite localism. By comparing these instances with the understanding of elite localism developed in this thesis we can establish a sharper understanding of what differentiates elite localism from other phenomena. Through this enhanced understanding scholars, activists and policymakers can better combat attempts by government and media to smear protestors under the derogatory abstractions of being slavishly ‘anti-development’ NIMBY’s.

On the fourth of April 2016, engineers working on the light rail line through Randwick uncovered a large Aboriginal archaeological site full of numerous artefacts dating to pre-colonial and early colonial times (O’Sullivan, 2016). Although initially hailed as significant, government figures and spokespeople for the light rail were quick to brush over the find and attempt to continue with construction, even in the face of protests from aboriginal elders and academics. Heidi Norman, Associate Professor of Aboriginal History at University of Technology Sydney, suggested that insufficient time had been allocated to excavate and evaluate the site (Small, 2016).

These complaints were backed by a strong coalition of local indigenous groups. With local indigenous elder Ken Canning joining a protest at the site and suggesting that the government’s plans to continue with work over the site

demonstrated a 'lack of regard' for the feelings of local aboriginal communities. In other words, this suggests that the rush to develop the site displayed a racist disrespect for the legacy of the local aboriginal people and the continuing importance of such sites in their spiritual and emotional life (Small, 2016).

When petitioned by protestors and NSW Greens MP David Shoebriidge, Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt responded dismissively to these protests. Hunt suggested that the protestors demands (a halt in the development of the rail line in order to carry out a proper excavation and consult with local aboriginal groups) were not supported by the artefactual evidence and that the site was 'not significant' (O'Sullivan, 2016).

Similar accusations were levelled at the protestors attempting to halt the destruction of six large, historic fig trees along Anzac Parade. The protestors, some associated with the 'Sydney Light Rail Action Group' organisation, physically climbed the trees in an attempt to prevent their destruction (Aubusson, 2016). NSW transport minister Andrew Constance called the protestors 'irresponsible', and the removal of trees a 'necessary evil'. He stated that "the reality is you've got to [remove the trees]... Otherwise, things don't get built, you don't see progress". Here the minister suggested that by prioritising the trees over the establishment of a new public transport route the protestors were attempting to retard progress and development (Hobart Mercury, 2016).

In the face of such accusations, it is important to be able to respond to them in an effective manner. By applying the conceptualisation of elite localism developed in this thesis, we can effectively refute such claims without denying the possibility for anti-development and anti-public transport actions that are regressive, reactionary and on the whole negative.

Neither of the protests discussed in this section bear the hallmarks of elite localism, though the local public involved in the tree protests are inhabitants of the affluent east, their motivations for protest (stopping the destruction of beautiful old trees) is not about denying accessibility, preventing mobility and preserving exclusivity. It is an attempt to maintain a beautiful and historic stand of trees from destruction. This is not to say they are beyond critique. On balance if there must be a trade-off I would support the extension of rail over the

preservation of the Anzac Parade figs, but the protest however incorrect is not an example of elite localism.

The aboriginal artefacts protest is an even clearer cut example of a non-elite localist protest. An attempt to preserve aboriginal archaeological heritage for proper examination and care in the face of a deadline-driven government suggesting that a possible massacre site does not rate as ‘culturally significant’ bears no resemblance to the exclusivity driven, access denying actions of elite local publics that characterise elite localism as a phenomena.

The WestConnex Protest –

Even more controversial than the light rail protests, and still ongoing as I write (October, 2016), the struggles over the WestConnex expressway plan have dominated contemporary media discussion about transport and equality in Sydney. Though touted by government and car lobby sources as the solution to Sydney’s congestion woes, the WestConnex project, particularly the “stage 3” construction (passing through the inner-west) has been subject to fierce condemnation and opposition. It has faced criticism from community organisations, local residents, activist groups, academics and local councils (AAP, 2016; Hannam, 2016; Williams, 2016; Leggett, 2012). The contest between local councils and the NSW state government of Premier Mike Baird was the leading factor in the decision to forcibly amalgamate much of the dissenting councils (in the process sacking their anti-WestConnex members) (Visentin, 2016).

The heated controversy and intensity of opposition (including ongoing occupations of areas slated to be demolished, such as Sydney Park) has prompted strong denunciations from government figures and conservative commentators. NSW Roads Minister Duncan Gay decried the protestors as believers in ‘suburban myths’ and users of ‘scare tactics’ (Gay, 2016). This insistent rhetoric has been backed by state action. In June Premier Baird stated that whatever happens he would push the WestConnex project through, and work has continued since, only slowing due to protests and occupations (Williams, 2016).

Again, through applying the conceptualisation of elite localism developed in this thesis we can assess these allegations and determine the character of the protest. By utilising insights from the literature discussed in this chapter it is possible to assess the relation to inequality (spatial and otherwise) of the policy being opposed.

With this analytical frame in mind, it is clear that the WestConnex protests represent a firm example of progressive activism, and do not resemble either elite-localism or even the pejorative “NIMBY”. The WestConnex protestors have been distinguished by their diversity (of origin, political affiliation, and suburb) and their commitment to a more public transport orientated solution. This would prevent the destruction of homes and parks, and have a reduced impact upon the urban environment. This stands in stark contrast to WestConnex’s proposed expressway, a vast concrete ribbon pulsing exhaust from cars in the open and large vent stacks from the tunnels.

Per Stanek (2008, pp.70-78), WestConnex is a ‘strategic investment in the built environment’ that serves to despoil multiple communities. All in the service of an idea of transport provisioning – expressways for individual cars – that represents the worst of inequality heightening, socially dividing infrastructure (Stilwell, 1973, p.29; Penalosa, 2007, pp.318-319; Badcock, 1995, p.215).

Elite Localism and Nuance -

The previous section demonstrated the nuance and fine-grained capabilities of elite localism as an analytical framework through examining four controversial, contemporary, questions of transport policy and protest. These analyses proved the capability for nuance and general applicability of the conceptualisation of elite localism advanced in this thesis.

The methods for describing and identifying elite localism developed through the first three chapters have been shown to be capable of specificity and subtlety, able to recognise examples of elite localism in the case of P.U.S.H, examples of ill-conceived but not elite localist action in the case of the trees of Randwick, and examples of courageous local opposition to profoundly disrespectful and inequality deepening policy actions in the case of the aboriginal artefact protest and (especially) WestConnex.

In the course of these analyses, the usefulness of elite localism as conceptualised in this thesis is apparent. It is useful both as a frame for critiquing the phenomenon of elite localism and as a way of providing critical support to positive protest movements that may share outer characteristics with elite localist publics and actions. By identifying and describing what elite localism is, it gives scholars, policymakers and activists a stronger chance to defend those movements that are not elite localist.

Conclusion:

This thesis has advanced three major claims: that elite localism exists, that elite localism matters, and that a developed conceptualisation of elite localism is necessary for understanding where, when and how it affects urban political economies. Though consciously developed within the Sydney context, the insights into elite localism developed in this thesis are applicable to almost any context involving anti-development activism in affluent communities. As well as, on a broader scale, the political economy of inequality and space in general.

This chapter has demonstrated the applicability of elite localism to a range of situations. By applying the insights into the nature, development and importance of elite localism drawn from the first three chapters to contemporary transport protest, the nuance and applicability of elite localism has been made clear. While elite localism is not the only force that affects urban inequality, it is one of the most under-acknowledged and under-theorised. By developing the understanding of elite localism gleaned from chapters two and three and comparing it to the wider literature on inequality in Sydney, the necessity of an analysis that considers elite localism becomes apparent.

This thesis has demonstrated the historical and contemporary relevance of elite localism as a phenomenon that affects inequality in the city, and providing a detailed conceptualisation for understanding elite localism. Further it has established a useful and nuanced analysis that can aid scholars and policymakers in recognising and understanding elite localism.

Conclusion:

In this thesis I have aimed to demonstrate that elite localism exists and that elite localism matters. In order to demonstrate this, I have developed an analytical conceptualisation of elite localism which draws from the examples of the case studies to create a more broadly applicable frame for identifying and understanding elite localism. The concept of elite localism I have developed is one that continues the tradition of investigation into the political economy of Sydney found in the work of scholars like Stilwell and Hardwick (1973).

By drawing from Kurt Iveson's 'publics and the city' (2011) methodology, I have attempted to understand anti-development protests in affluent suburbs in a way that goes beyond blanket praise for protest or generalised 'NIMBY' pejoratives. The investigative nature of this thesis has necessitated the use of a broad range of sources from multiple disciplines, but the core aims, methods and influences can all be located within the political economy tradition and literature.

Summary of the thesis:

In Chapter one I discussed the conceptual need for an analysis of elite localism. I have argued that the attention paid to affluent suburban resistance to government transport policy has been totally insufficient from both an academic and a policy perspective. I began by outlining the inadequate and often non-existent acknowledgement of elite localism within the historical literature on railways in Sydney. I followed this with a discussion of the broader academic literature on issues of transport, inequality, political geography and elite action.

From this discussion I aligned this project conceptually with the tradition of political economy on urban inequality found in the work of Stilwell and Hardwick (1973), and methodologically with the 'publics and the city' thinking pioneered by Iveson (2011). Along with these two guiding influences I acknowledged the usefulness and influence of scholars from the Marxian tradition like Lefebvre (1991), Stanek (2008) and Harvey (2003), as well as the

work of the British critical geography tradition exemplified by Clarke and Cochrane (2013).

In the second and third chapters I applied these scholarly influences to case studies of elite localism in the Eastern Suburbs and Northern Beaches. Through these investigations, I have highlighted the historical impact of elite localism on the development of rail in Sydney, and therefore on issues of spatial equity and inequality in Sydney. By tracing the development of elite localism from the more egalitarian days of 'the right to the beach' I have presented an account that recognises the role of popular protest and agency as well as changing demographic and cultural forces leading to the capture of this 'right to the beach' by an elite local group. The third chapter's particular focus on racism and xenophobia demonstrated how elite localism reinforces and is reinforced by racism, and examined the Cronulla riots as a totemic 'warning' against rail access to beaches. Through these case studies the importance of elite localism as a force affecting policy has been made apparent. These chapters demonstrated clearly what elite localism is: elite local publics asserting an exclusivity of ownership over legally public space through the denial of access by the prevention of policy.

The final chapter applied these insights to the literature on the political economy of inequality in Sydney, as well as some key contemporary issues. This analysis of the literature made apparent the useful theoretical contribution of a conceptualisation of elite localism. In attempts to account for the development of public transport in Sydney as a way to understand questions of spatial equity and inequality, an analysis of elite localism provides an understanding of some of the causal factors behind developments in rail network expansion in Sydney. It also provides a nuanced frame for understanding the dynamics, motivations and effects of spatial equality averse actors – elite localists.

Applying the analysis of elite localism developed in this thesis to some contemporary issues makes apparent the nuance and practicality of elite localism for policymakers. The brief vignettes of current protests followed by an elite localism analysis demonstrated how, once we've identified the nature of elite localism, the resulting analysis can concisely and briefly identify what is, and what is not elite localism. Engaging with issues of progressive, radical

protest (such as those involving WestConnex) makes clear that radical and activist forces can benefit from an elite localism analysis. Which again highlights the message of this chapter and this thesis as a whole. Namely that elite localism exists, that elite localism matters, and that a developed conceptualisation of elite localism is necessary for understanding where, when and how it affects urban political economies.

Reflections and further research opportunities:






This thesis has primarily involved investigation and identification with a view to understanding elite localism. With that understanding achieved the door is open to a range of further avenues for research. One approach would be to take the insights into elite localism developed in this thesis and apply them to anti-development protests in other cities or regions, examining the dynamics at hand, identifying whether they are examples of elite localism, and if so what effects these protests have had, will have, or are trying to have on issues of equity and inequality in the region. An analysis of recent protests over the 'sky rail' in Melbourne would be a good place to start with this.

Another avenue for further research is one that deals more heavily with activist and radical applications of the analysis of elite localism developed in this thesis. I see this as one of the richest opportunities opened up by this thesis. One example would be the current swathe of protest against coal seam gas (CSG) mining in Australia. These movements have often been tarred with the NIMBY brush (Moran, 2011; Lloyd, 2013). Applying an elite localism analysis to these protests could highlight the progressive character of the movement and undermine this reactionary narrative.

A final range of research opportunities lie in exploring elite localism through different scholarly approaches. A more solidly Marxian examination of elite localism as a concept could lead to some interesting insights, and subject the concept developed in this thesis to constructive critique. An attempt to analyse the intra-bourgeois struggle aspect of elite localism by bringing in Miliband's (1969) theory of the state would be one example. Exploring the relationship between elite localism's impacts on state provisioning of rail infrastructure in light of Harvey's (2001) notion of the 'spatial fix' would be another.

What all of these research opportunities have in common, from exploring other cities to other scholarly traditions, is the need for a detailed, nuanced, practical analysis of elite localism. This thesis has provided that analysis by identifying and examining a serious phenomenon, elite localism. In doing so, this thesis has contributed to our understanding of spatial inequity and inequality in the city.

Appendix 1 – Comments from local Northern Beaches residents on an article about the proposed Northern Beaches line.

-  Clair Jul 22, 2015
Those trains better finish at Seaforth. I'm sure Cronulla was once an idyllic, quiet paradise too. Manly, as we know it, will be ruined if trains go anywhere nearby. Never mind how trains help residents, they just bring in the trouble.
2 👤👤 Like Reply
-
-  jeb Jul 22, 2015
Faster link for crime more like it.
3 👤👤👤 Like Reply
[Flag](#) [Share](#)
-
-  Luke Jul 22, 2015
Rather sit in traffic than have a northern beaches rail line. I think it's called NIMBY.
2 👤👤 Like Reply
-
-  Saint Mike II Jul 22, 2015
@Luke I think more than 90% of it is going to have to be underground so you not likely to see trains (of any description) on the Manly promenade any time soon!
Like Reply
-
-  Mark Jul 23, 2015
No, it's called 'I don't want westies coming to my local beach'
Obviously you don't commute.
Like Reply

These comments (edited to ensure no real names were included in the screen-cap) were left under a Manly Daily (the Northern Beaches local newspaper) article entitled “Early planning under way for possible northern beaches rail line” (Bell, 2015).

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