Urban informality: the production of informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney

By

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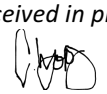
This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.



Craig Lyons

Acknowledgement of Country

This thesis was researched and written on the land of the Cadigal and Wangal people of the Eora nation, and the Wadi-Wadi people of the Dharawal nation. I pay my respects to their elders, past and present. I acknowledge that sovereignty over this land was never ceded, and that the process of invasion and colonialism is brutal and unjust.

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Abstract

In Sydney, a variety of informal spaces of musical production and performance exist, from autonomously-organized public performance spaces, to top-down, hierarchical, closed spaces, and any number of configurations in between. Are these informal spaces an enactment of progressive rights to the city? Do they contribute to gentrification and urban renewal processes? This thesis critically interrogates the urban politics of these different expressions of informality in the Sydney music scene. Following McFarlane and Waibel (2012), I consider informality as a multi-dimensional concept that can be conceived of in four ways: spatial categorization, organizational form, governmental tool, and negotiable value. In my own contribution to the literature, I seek to understand the relationship between informality and the State, based on these criteria. Drawing upon an ethnographic study of several informal performance spaces and events in Sydney, I have devised a typology of informal spaces. These are: (1) informal spaces, (2) informally formal spaces, and (3) formally informal spaces. This typology allows us to differentiate between the urban politics of different kinds of informality in globalizing cities, in order to understand which processes subsume informality into neoliberal modes of urban governance, and which processes aim to create more socially just cities.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In September 2009, I lost my job. For the previous 18 months I had been working at the Hopetoun Hotel, in Sydney's inner eastern suburb of Surry Hills, working bar and door shifts at a venue that hosted live music seven nights a week. Without warning, the pub was boarded up, all upcoming shows were cancelled, and all staff were dismissed (Tovey, 2009). The "iconic" venue was something of a local institution, having hosted live music nearly continuously since the early 1980's, and was noted for its importance in the formative years of many now-successful Australian artists (Campbell, 2013, p. 50). Similarly, in February 2013, the "revered" Annandale Hotel, where I had worked until the end of 2012, went into foreclosure (Gallan & Gibson, 2013). Despite a community fundraising campaign that tried to save the venue and which had raised over fifty thousand dollars, the venue remained insolvent and was placed into administration (Levy, 2013). The closure of iconic "pub rock" venues is a trend noted in other Australian cities, including Melbourne (Homan, 2011), Perth (Ballico, 2016), Brisbane (Rogers, 2008), and Wollongong (Gallan & Gibson, 2013). Over time, instead of socializing and performing in traditional pub and nightclub spaces, I found myself more often than not in a variety of unauthorized, DIY, informal live music spaces. Found in warehouses, shopfronts, private homes, and public spaces around the city, these spaces were rapidly changing the landscape of performance in Sydney, as well as other Australian cities, yet had received surprisingly little attention (Bennett & Rogers, 2016). Intrigued, I set out to try and understand the dynamics of these spaces.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the forces driving the production of informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney, Australia, and to reveal the differing forms of socio-spatial organization, as well as claims to urban space, that these informal landscapes express in the process of production. Based on an insider ethnography conducted within informal spaces in Sydney over a period of eighteen months, this thesis will explain how informal landscapes of musical performance are produced, both at a structural and everyday level. The spatial dynamics of musical performance in Sydney have changed considerably since the 'golden era' of Oz Rock in the 1970's and 1980's. The intensification of development and the resultant gentrification has seen the conversion of space to highest and best use in and around central areas of the city (Bounds & Morris, 2006). Live music, as a relatively low-margin economic activity, has been pushed to the margins in this transformation process, despite efforts at regulatory reform to preserve or rehabilitate the industry, or incorporate it into placemaking discourse (Rowe & Lynch, 2012). In response to this marginalization, there has been an extraordinary proliferation of DIY and informal spaces, which provide social and cultural space for groups experiencing reduced access to traditional spaces of performance (Easton, 2013). These spaces exist in a variety of relationships to the state, and assert a different type of claim to urban space. Approaching the study of music scenes from the position of critical urban geography, this thesis contributes to methodological and theoretical literature of both popular music studies and studies of urban informality in neoliberalizing cities of the over-developed world.

In recent years, several major regulatory and governance initiatives have dramatically altered the political landscape of live music production in the Sydney area. Primarily, these initiatives can be broken down into several categories. Firstly, reforms to the *Liquor Act 2007* that have become known as "the lockout" have restricted access to venues within a designated CBD

area after 1:30am, restricted alcohol service after 3am, stopped take-away liquor sales after 10pm in the entire state, and introduced mandatory minimum sentencing for "one-punch assaults" (Perks & Maruyama, 2016; Schreiber, Williams, & Ranson, 2016). These measures have drastically altered the entertainment patterns of many people, and changed the nature of policing in the nightlife and entertainment precincts of the Sydney area (Perks & Maruyama, 2016). This punitive policing approach to the social problem of alcohol abuse and related violence has had a dramatic effect on the urban political economy of inner Sydney, with many nightlife venues closing, freeing up both physical and auditory space to make the way for speculative residential development. An organized campaign to repeal the lockout laws, named Keep Sydney Open, has mobilized in the form of several large rallies in the centre of the city, but to date has not been successful in their aims (Race, 2016).

Secondly, in response to the closure of several iconic "pub rock" venues between 2009 and 2012 (including the Sandringham Hotel, the Hopetoun Hotel, and the Annandale Hotel) (Walker, 2012), and in response to growing community activism surrounding these venues both in Sydney and in other states, the Federal Government appointed a National Live Music Coordinator in 2013. This would then morph into the National Live Music Office (NLMO), a two-person office based in Sydney, that would advocate for regulatory reforms sympathetic to the creation of live music venues nationwide (Vincent, 2013). Finally, on a local government level, the establishment by the City of Sydney of a Live Music Task Force allowed the state to experiment with forms of consultation that would placate various stakeholders whilst essentially pursuing a pro-development program aligned with "creative city" strategies (A. Taylor, 2013). The task force "model" allowed for relatively minor regulatory recommendations and amendments, as well as some experimentation with future spatial forms of performance landscapes (particularly the idea of the *precinct*), whilst tacitly accepting the current form of urban spatial reorganization. This form of governance structure, along with many of the same regulatory reforms, were then transferred to other local government areas, most notably to Leichhardt and Marrickville and Wollongong (Shaw, 2013b).

Despite these state initiatives to rehabilitate the live music sector (or at least ameliorate the more negative effects of urbanization upon it), the rapid increase in land values over the last decade in the inner suburbs of Sydney has made gaining access to space for live music increasingly difficult. Coupled with this, the extraordinary costs of compliance – often running into six figures – create serious problems for those seeking to gain the necessary approvals to run a live music venue. Instead, what has occurred has been a proliferation of unapproved, unlicensed, *informal* venues, that draw upon Sydney's distinct history of DIY spaces. With regular shows taking place in shopfronts, warehouses, living rooms, back gardens, and other marginal spaces of the city, informal spaces provide evidence of alternative and emergent forms of socio-spatial organization in the city. Furthermore, they demonstrate not only new, hybrid forms of spatial governance, but how different conceptions of value compete, merge, and contrast in the contemporary city.

Systems of urban restructuring in increasingly globalized cities like Sydney – loosely characterized as "neoliberal urbanism" – have exacerbated socio-spatial inequality (Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2009). As cities continue to globalize and densify, struggles over access to amenities and scant spatial resources will only be exacerbated. Commensurate with this

increasing socioeconomic and spatial inequality is a turn towards informality of urban practices, as the mechanisms of neoliberal capitalism are unable to provide marginal urban inhabitants with appropriate socio-spatial resources (Sassen, 2005). Recent academic discussions of informality have emphasized the *relational* character of informality, which views space as in continual construction and reconstruction due to a variety of forces. This thesis will attempt to demonstrate the driving forces behind the informalization of musical performance in Sydney, as well as attempts by the state to engage with informal space. Using Raunig's (2013) model of "soft gentrification," we will see how informal and alternative ways of organizing space are incorporated into or excluded from the process of urban renewal. Additionally, we will see how participation in neoliberal systems of urban governance often operates as a form of subservience to elite interests, perpetuating socio-spatial inequality. In spite of this, activities of informal urbanism can point a way towards creating a new and different kind of city.

McFarlane and Waibel (2012) have identified four ways in which informality may be conceptualized – as spatial categorization, organizational form, governmental tool, and negotiable value. This framework distills many of the recent debates concerning informality, as well as providing an important organizing principle for this thesis. Additionally, in my own contribution to the theory of urban informality, I have identified three particular typologies of space – *informally informal*, *informally formal*, and *formally informal*, that describe the forces driving the production of space, as well as the nature of space in interactions with broader social structures. These typologies will be developed in subsequent chapters, taking on the form of case studies, using local examples gleaned from ethnographic material.

Given this context, my research project was developed with the over-arching aim of understanding the production and politics of informal landscapes of musical performance in contemporary Sydney.

Embedded within this aim were a set of research questions:

- What are the spatial characteristics of informal spaces of musical performance?
- What role do informal spaces of musical performance perform in the functioning of the city?
- How do informal spaces of musical performance relate to each other?
- How are informal spaces organized? What role do these forms of organization play in informal spatial governance?
- What is the nature of the relationship between informal performance spaces and sites of regulatory authority, or the world of the formal?
- How has this informed possibilities for the construction of alternative ways of doing urban politics?

Driving these research questions was an opportunity to open up studies of musical "scenes" (Straw, 1991) to a distinct critical geographical approach – an approach that would ground networks of musical production in their embedded socio-spatial context. The literature review in Chapter 2 discusses how a critical geographical approach differs to the way that popular music studies has previously understood space. It also provides the theoretical basis that underpins the rest of the thesis. Understanding space as something that is socially

produced and relational allows us to account for the *everyday* ways in which informal spaces come into being and interact with broader socio-spatial structures (de Certeau, 1984; Massey, 2005). Furthermore, it outlines how debates regarding neoliberal urbanism have emerged over the last twenty-five years, providing a useful account of changes in political-economic and spatial governance of cities. Particularly, the distillation of neoliberal governance into 'creative city' strategies and regimes has had observable effects on the function of live music in the contemporary city.

This thesis draws particularly upon the wealth of scholarly literature concerned with *urban informality.* Central to this literature is the understanding that the majority of social life is lived outside of the structured, rule based, world of the formal. This applies as much to the everyday survival strategies of the disenfranchised urban poor as it does to the clandestine operations of the urban elite. There have been a number of typologies of informality that try to account for the spatial, cultural, political, and socioeconomic aspects of urban informality. Many of these typologies view informality as relational – as a form of *assemblage* that emphasizes the indeterminacy of the formal-informal relationship. In tracing the "lines of flight" that informal practices establish on their way to creating new socio-spatial configurations, we also come into contact with the "apparatus of capture," which seek to direct potentially anarchic forms towards the project of building social order (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). In understanding the ever-shifting relationship between informal and formal space, we are better able to understand not only the politics of informal spaces of musical performance in Sydney, but how these political lessons may be applied elsewhere.

In light of these theoretical considerations and the development of my research questions, I conducted an ethnography of informal spaces of musical performance in Sydney between December 2014 and April 2016. Having been a participant in these spaces as a musician, volunteer, attendee, and activist for a number of years, my position as an "insider" within the scene allowed me social proximity and a shared understanding with participants. I collected ethnographic material and triangulated it with other forms of data, developing a case study approach which would allow an understanding of informal spatial production. Chapter 3 discusses these methodological considerations, and makes the argument that insider ethnography and case studies are an extremely valuable tool when researching urban informality.

In order to account for the production of informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney, and as a result of my own interactions within the field, I have developed a four-part typology for understanding informal space to organize my discussion of the research findings. This typology accounts for important differences in both the structural conditions under which informal music spaces are established, as well as the nature of the relationship of those spaces to both sites of regulatory authority and their immediate communities. This approach – a relational understanding of informality that is typified by indeterminacy, process, and flow, views these categories as overlapping and conflictual, yet distinct and useful for investigating the nature of informality in the case studies presented in this thesis. Furthermore, these categories have allowed me to operationalize my understanding of informality as gleaned from the literature, and will inform the organization of the chapters that follow. The four categories are:

1. *Formally formal* space (compliant space): Space that makes a concerted effort to comply with required regulation. Totally compliant space is not possible – there are always cracks in the veneer, there is always resistance. As Brillembourg et al. (2005, p. 19) state, "the planned city can neither eliminate nor subsume the informal qualities and practices of its inhabitants… The informal persists; its inherent strengths resist and deflect efforts to impose order. The totally planned city is, therefore, a myth." As this thesis is specifically investigating the production of informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney, *formally formal* space is beyond the scope of this thesis, but warrants further investigation in subsequent studies.

2. *Informally informal* space (autonomous space): constituted informally (circumventing or avoiding regulatory compliance), and based upon temporary and autonomous uses of space. *Informally informal* spaces, due to a lack of will or resources, do not engage with the state on a regulatory level, and are often subject to repression. Quite often based on forms of *immanent organization* (Purcell & Born, 2016), *informally informal* spaces allow us to envisage what a self-organised city may look like, and offer a real-world critique of the formal world of urban planning.

3. *Informally formal* space (tacitly compliant space): constituted informally, space that is required to engage with the state due to the soft gentrification process, which triggers regulatory intervention from the state. Unable to become compliant space due to a lack of (social, political, financial) capital, such spaces are the product of tacit agreements with formal authorities who command space. *Informally formal* spaces are thus able to operate with some degree of autonomy, however, due to the informal nature of their agreements with the state, this autonomy is precarious. In this form, *informally formal* spaces are "defending" themselves from incursions of the formal world by making claims about the social value of their activities, which are neither shut down nor approved by formal systems of regulatory compliance.

4. *Formally informal* space (the space of subsumption): constituted formally, space that draws informal spatial practitioners into its milieu, creating new forms of legally precarious space, such as incubators, hubs, and pop-up spaces. A form of "reaching down," these spaces bring informal practitioners into a marketised system, producing new forms of neoliberal subjectivity. These spaces reduce the conflictual social relations of neoliberal urbanism into a relatively stable, regulated framework, that reduces precarity but does so in a manner that ultimately replicates patterns of socio-spatial inequality.

This typology emerged through the research process and is used to organize the case studies that will be presented in chapters 4, 5, and 6. A full chapter will be devoted to each typology, with case studies drawn from the informal landscape of musical performance in Sydney. Each of these case studies will follow a similar structure, investigating and providing empirical detail along the lines of McFarlane and Waibel's (McFarlane & Waibel, 2012) four conceptions of informality. Each typology will be broken down and analyzed according to these four conceptions:

1. *Spatial categorization:* How the space is categorized according to the legal, social, economic, environmental and political structures of the city;
2. *Organizational form:* The way that communities and groups of people within particular spaces are organized;
3. *Governmental tool:* The way that the informal/formal distinction allows for particular forms of intervention in urban space;
4. *Negotiable value:* In the lived experience of informality, we are able to determine multiple and overlapping systems of value, and forms of urban sovereignty.

Chapter 4 will investigate *informally informal* spaces, which predominantly occur in public space and "rent gap" locations awaiting redevelopment. This chapter will introduce the case studies of DIY Harder, a four-day punk festival that occurred in various spaces in and around the gentrification frontier suburb of Marrickville in January 2015, as well as Birdrib, a short-lived warehouse space that was located under the flight path in the inner-western suburb of Sydenham. These spaces, in their innovative and alternative socio-spatial practices, provide evidence of "commoning" the city (Stavrides, 2014), as well as of the generation of forms of "immanent organization." (Purcell & Born, 2016) These spaces are the *product* and are *productive* of counterpublic space, having clear links with other alternative spatial practices in the city.

Chapter 5 will be dedicated to the production of *informally formal* spaces in Sydney, which are non-compliant spaces that develop tacit agreements with local authorities, due to their perceived social value. This chapter will focus on the case study of Black Wire Records, a volunteer-run record store located in the inner western suburb of Annandale, which has become a locus of activity for the DIY punk community in Sydney for a number of years. The chapter will examine the connections between musical community and *immanent organization*, and how those forms of organization generate new modes of spatial governance. This chapter will also examine Black Wire Records' ongoing relationship with the local Leichhardt Council, who have invited the space to participate in initiatives concerning urban planning and live music, despite formally denying the venue consent to operate in its current formation.

The final case study, presented in Chapter 6, will explore the emergent typology of *formally informal* spaces. As a form of "informality from above," these space seek to subsume informal practice into new, formalized, highly structured socio-spatial arrangements (Tonkiss, 2012). This chapter examines Tempe Jets, a former sports club located on the banks of the Cooks River, in Sydney's inner west. It is currently home to a "live music business hub," operated by Brand X, a not-for-profit agency that specializes in temporary activations of space for arts and community purposes. The space, operating via rolling temporary agreements, reduces but also formalizes the precarity of spatial access typical of informal spaces of musical production, in turn producing new forms of neoliberal subjectivity in the contemporary city.

This thesis sheds important light on the operation of informality in globalizing cities, contributing to current debates concerning the application of this way of thinking to new areas. This thesis also seeks to extend the scope and depth of investigations into the spatial nature of local music scenes, providing an important new area of study for the discipline of popular music studies. By investigating the production of informal landscapes of musical

performance in Sydney, we are able to learn important lessons about the functioning of urban politics, and conceive of new and emerging ways in which this politics may form a part of the urban experience in years to come.

Chapter 2: The Production of Informal Landscapes of Musical Performance: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In order to understand how informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney are produced, it is important to develop a robust theoretical framework that draws upon the existing literature, whist acknowledging its shortcomings. This framework should be able to account for the production of socio-spatial inequality in contemporary cities generally, and how this is reflected in informal spaces of musical performance specifically. In establishing a case for the study of informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney, the purpose of this chapter is threefold. Firstly, I will provide an overview of the relevant literature concerning key terms, as well as an overview of the literature surrounding DIY music, geographies of music, and music in Sydney. Secondly I will seek to define and explain some of the key terms that will be used throughout my case studies, and to place them in their historical and philosophical context. Finally, towards the end of the chapter, I will introduce the framework I have developed to understand informal spaces of musical production, and to make a case for further interrogation of landscapes using this framework.

The term *landscape* has been a central explanatory concept in geography, and the debates and struggles over the meaning of the term have closely followed the contours of debates in the discipline more broadly. For the purposes of this thesis, I will be adopting the approach of scholars such as Mitchell (2008) and Rose (1993) who understand landscapes as a form of power. This mode of inquiry takes a critical approach to understanding space, emphasizing the historical and material nature of the production of landscapes under capitalism. This position is informed by currents within critical geography that emphasize the *socially produced* (Lefebvre 1974), and *relational* (Massey 2005) nature of space. A foundational understanding of the *production* of the landscape allows us to more deeply interrogate the spaces of musical performance in Sydney.

Following this will be a discussion how geographies of music and performance in cities have been treated in the scholarly literature. The purpose of this is to show that despite numerous attempts by geographers and sociologists to reveal the spatial character of musical production in urban environments, to date there is scant work that investigates these dynamics through the lens of urban informality – a potentially innovative and productive way to think about music in the contemporary city.

I will then discuss the central concept of "neoliberal urbanism," engaging with debates over the meaning and influence of neoliberalism as a mode of political-economic and socio-spatial organization. A major part of the contemporary neoliberal urbanism debate involves a critique of the "creative class" model of urban economic organization that has allowed these forms of governance to subsume an increasing proportion of everyday life, deploying musicians and artists in the service of urban capitalist growth.

Theories of everyday life can be useful in interpreting how our social reality is constituted via an assemblage of a multiplicity of factors, and the interactions contained within. The lived experience of neoliberal urbanism is reflected in the way individuals and small groups create and participate in musical activity in urban space. When performance landscapes are produced in everyday interaction, they are subject to a large degree of improvisation, or informality. Urban informality has come to be a subject of increasing scholarly concern in recent years, and informs the theoretical thrust of this thesis. Literature on *urban informality* highlights the limits to urban planning, as well as the limits of state control over urban life more generally, in emphasizing the *everyday production* of social life. Understanding the space between the formal world of planning and the everyday informal practices of city-making allow us to more fully grasp the totality of the experience of contemporary urbanism. Following McFarlane and Waibel (2012), I consider informality as a multi-dimensional concept that refers to spatial categorization, organizational form, governmental tool, and finally, as negotiable value. These four conceptions allow for an understanding of urban informality that accounts for the *relational* character of the production of space. This understanding, as one that emphasizes relationality and multiplicity, must also then lead to a discussion of *assemblage* urbanism, a conceptual device that allows us to hold together sometimes disparate elements of the urban fabric in order to understand the nature of the production of space.

Finally, I will offer my own contribution to the development of the theoretical literature in critical urban geography. In thinking through the relationship between formality and informality, and its role in facilitating the production of new uneven urban geographies of musical production in Sydney, I have developed a four-part typology of informality. This typology places at its core an understanding that (in)formal space is (in)formally produced. The dialectical movement that results creates three specific types of spaces – *informally informal, informally formal,* and *formally informal* – that provide the frame around which this thesis is constructed. This typology allows us to differentiate between the urban politics of different kinds of informality in order to understand which processes subsume informality into neoliberal modes of urban governance, and which processes aim to create more socially just cities.

Landscape, the production of space, and everyday life

One of the central concerns of this thesis is to demonstrate how landscapes of performance are informally produced, as a result of the myriad of interactions between individuals and collectives, institutions, the state, and other groupings. In order to do this, we need to come to an understanding of the term landscape, as well as the social production of space. In the struggles that take place over the production of space and the inscription of meaning in the landscape, we are able to see a complex relationship between visibility, agency, materiality, and technologies of power that all play a major part in producing informal landscapes of musical performance. Informal spaces exist within complex urban systems that are best understood by using landscape as an explanatory concept.

Landscape has been one of the central concerns of geographic thought for nearly a century, and debates over the term continue to shape major debates within the discipline. Early

proponents of the term such as Sauer (1925) focused on the "facts and objects" that make up the physical and visible landscape. This understanding of the phenomenology of landscape – one based in positivist, materialist objectivity – would be the dominant mode of understanding cultural landscape until at least the 1970s, when radical geographers began to approach landscape by using a revised meaning of phenomenology, one which emphasized human agency and experience (Herbert & Matthews, 2004, p. 219). By the 1990s through developments in radical geography, cultural studies, and art history, a general consensus had emerged that landscape representation, both through signification and through the built form, "was a form of power: a power to determine what is and what is not seen." (D. Mitchell, 2008, p. 31) This position was informed by that of feminist geographers such as Rose (1993, p. 87), who claimed that "reading the landscape" in a way emphasized by Sauer functions as a "sophisticated ideological device" that invisibilises complex histories of struggle.

Moreover, it was understood that a theory of "*capitalist* landscape" would need to be "as supple and complex as the world it sought to describe" (D. Mitchell, 2008, p. 32). Rather than simply observing immediate surroundings (which may not provide direct evidence of transformation), a theory of landscape would need to describe the complex set of changing relations that actively produce the landscape (D. Mitchell, 2008, p. 32). Because the *appearance* of landscape void of context seeks to *obscure* the real basis of its value, a study of landscape needs to turn from focusing on the meaning of landscape, and instead focus on its *production* (D. Mitchell, 2008, p. 33). In assisting us to do this, Mitchell offered six axioms for reading the landscape, providing a critical reappraisal of previous axioms:

1. *The landscape is produced; it is actively made: it is a physical intervention into the world and thus is not so much our "unwitting autobiography but an act of will.*
2. *Any landscape is* (or was) *functional*.
3. *No landscape is local.*
4. *History does matter*.
5. *Landscape is power*.
6. *Landscape is the form that social justice takes*.

These axioms are useful because they tie together a number of important strands of critical and radical geography into a framework through which we can understand social theory's 'spatial turn,' and thus the increasing importance of critical geographical literature to understanding how cities and societies work. Fundamental to this turn was Henri Lefebvre's work on the *production of space*, which attempted to account for the spatial dimension of the development of capitalism, contrary to orthodox Marxist positions that, through their historical materialist approach, tended to almost exclusively focus on temporal dimensions of political economy. Lefebvre views inquiry into the production of space as the study of *spatialization* – not just in terms of "physical arrangements of things but also spatial patterns of social action and routine as well as historical conceptions of space and the world" (Shields, 1999, p. 146). This is reflected in Mitchell's first axiom – landscape is not only "physical intervention," but "an act of will."

It is useful at this point to understand Lefebvre's dialectic of *production*, as it is this definition that will be deployed throughout this thesis. Whilst Lefebvre's famous dictum "*(social) space is a (social) product*" has been interpreted in a variety of ways, part of his intention was to

steer our idea of *production* away from Marxist orthodoxy (Lefebvre 1991b, p. 26). Lefebvre's work on space sought to reunite overspecialized areas of academic inquiry – architecture, sociology, law, urban planning, geography, philosophy, and others – by emphasizing the inherently spatial nature of our everyday life. To understand the historical development of competing forms of spatialisation is to understand class struggle. In creating a unitary social theory of space, Lefebvre extends his analysis into *trialectics*, or a three-fold dialectic that can account for spatialisation processes. The trialectic is as follows:

1. *Spatial practice,* performed in everyday lived experience, cohesive but not coherent "in the sense of intellectually worked out or logically conceived." In a dialectical fashion, spatial practice assists in social reproduction and at the same time is slowly appropriated and repurposed as those practices are deciphered. Later Anglophone interpretations would emphasise physical and material "flows, transfers, and interactions," (Harvey, 1990, p. 218) the "perceived" or "commonsensical" aspects of lived experiences (Shields, 1999, p. 160) that take place in space that is *real,* or "generated and used." (Elden, 2004, p. 190) Lefebvre divides this concept of the "real" into *daily reality*, and *urban reality*, emphasizing the routes and networks that join together the two across different spatio-temporal scales (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 38).

2. *Representations of space,* which are concerned with discourse *on* space, are "discursive regimes of analysis, spatial and planning professions, and expert knowledges that conceive of space." (Shields, 1999, p. 161) These practices allow space to be understood in either everyday or specialized, technocratic ways (Harvey, 1990, p. 218). For Elden, this is understood as *imagined* space (Elden, 2004, p. 190). Lefebvre sees this space as the dominant form of space in any society, for its conception frames the way the space is perceived and thus lived (Lefebvre, 1991b, pp. 38-39).

3. *Spaces of representation (representational spaces),* or discourses *of* space, are the intersection between the previous two spaces, or space as *real-and-imagined*. (Elden, 2004, p. 190). This space incorporates "mental inventions… that imagine new meanings or possibilities for spatial practices." (Harvey, 1990, pp. 218-219) Within this conception, historical and everyday spaces coincide with utopian elements, and erupt via 'moments' of presence (Shields, 1999, p. 161). For Lefebvre, this is the most dominated form of space, passively experienced, and more often expressed in less coherent non-verbal systems and signs. In spite of this, it is the form of space that seeks to appropriate and change space.

This approach is important because it creates a space in between phenomenology and structuralism, by introducing the concept of *everyday life* (Lefebvre, 1991a, 1992, 2008; K. Ross, 1988, p. 9). As a result, the "always political and strategic" nature of social space in its everyday production (K. Ross, 1988, p. 9) emphasizes the *open* nature of space. A similar approach and view is held and adopted by Massey (2005, p. 9), whose three propositions on space follow similar themes:

1. Space is the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny.

2. We should understand space as the sphere of the possibility of multiplicity in the sense of a contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity.
3. That we recognize space as always under construction… always in the process of being made… never finished, never closed.

Thus, following on from an understanding of the role of the production of space in the landscape, we are thus able to view space as a *relational* product. Relational space "is a 'power-filled' space in which some alignments come to dominate, at least for a period of time, while others come to be dominate*d*." (Murdoch, 2006, p. 20) Space therefore, like identities, are constituted through "engagements, [and] processes of interaction," which are "not rooted or static, but mutable ongoing productions." (Massey, 2004, p. 5) It has been argued that what interests Massey, more so than a deeper understanding of space itself, is "a theorization of spatial rhetoric and spatial imagining as this forms the core of a *spatial politics*." (Malpas, 2012, p. 228, emphasis added) Thus Massey's principal work, *For Space* (2005) can be seen as an attempt to reinvigorate social theory with a renewed interest in the spatial. In understanding the constantly evolving nature of socially produced spatial reality, its expression through landscape, and the open and interconstitutive relationship between the two, we are better able to understand the ways in which space and landscape shape and are shaped by everyday life. The relational conception of space has become extraordinarily influential (Jacobs, 2012; Jones, 2009), and has influenced the development of theories of assemblage urbanism that form part of the primary theoretical basis for this thesis.

Grounding these conceptions of space is an understanding that space is constituted in *everyday* interaction. The concept of everyday life, as defined by Lefebvre, is viewed as "a set of functions which connect and join together systems that appear to be distinct" (Lefebvre & Levich, 1987, p. 9). Similar to his concept of space, everyday life can also be considered as a *product*, something that is, in a classically dialectical fashion, social and individual; obvious, yet hidden; unique yet somehow universal. This technique allows us to once again bridge the gap between phenomenology and structuralism, to show how changing urban conditions affect musical practice via its relational effect upon everyday life, and vice versa. As Lefebvre explains:

> There can be no knowledge of society (as a whole) without critical knowledge of everyday life in its position – in its organization and its privation, in the organization of its privation – at the heart of this society and history. There can be no knowledge of the everyday without critical knowledge of society (as a whole). Inseparable from practice or praxis, knowledge encompasses an agenda for transformation. To know the everyday is to want to transform it.
>
> (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 98)

Using this variety of ideas and concepts about the nature of everyday life in urban environments, we will now turn our attention to works concerning the role of music in this milieu. It is possible that an application of critical urban geographical concepts to domains previously considered the work of popular music studies scholars could be of vital importance to understanding recent changes in both disciplines. For now, we will turn to the discipline of popular music studies in order to understand how geographies of musical production have historically understood the spatial.

Popular music studies, scenes, and geographies of music

To continue our investigation into the production of informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney, we should now interrogate how musical performance has been treated in the literature. The fourth axiom in Mitchell's schema – *history does matter* – invites us to delve into the history of popular music studies to understand how the discipline has dealt with the problem of the spatial. In understanding the historical production of particular landscapes, we are better able to understand the spatial contexts in which musical activity takes place. Furthermore, we are able to look specifically at how live music production in Sydney has been treated by scholars, and how that history has shaped the contour of current debates. "Landscape is a repository of memory, both individual and collective," claims Mitchell (2008, p. 42), memories that may be constructed, challenged, erased, and re-constructed. Furthermore, landscape is also the site of conflicting systems of value as the social values of individual and collective memory often stand in the way of the advance of capitalist urban development through "creative destruction" processes (Berman, 1983; Harvey, 1990; Smith, 1984) This means that the history of contests over urban space, and the contests over the history of urban space, have had a key role in shaping the landscape of performance. This section will look at how popular music studies has dealt with the spatial, particularly by utilising the concept of "scene," before discussing how histories of performance landscapes in Sydney and Australia have been treated in the literature. I will then argue that a modification of the scenes approach – one that looks at the ways in which the *spaces* of music activity are *socially produced*, and that views landscape as a form that is constituted *informally*, and in *everyday* practice, is the most appropriate way of investigating the production of informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney.

Throughout the history of popular music studies, there have been numerous attempts to examine the everyday, embedded, spatial nature of music as a form of collective social practice. Early attempts at understanding production through the lens of "art worlds" (Becker, 1974, 1982) or "subculture" (Hebdige, 1979) made clear that the task of cultural studies and popular music studies was to unpack to different forms of social organisation that allowed for particular cultural forms to occur. What was missing from the analysis, however, was an understanding of the ways in which the changing forms of spatial organisation would in turn affect those collective social practices. By the 1980's, scholars approaching popular music studies from disciplines other than cultural studies were beginning to unpack the ways in which musical activity was linked to urban systems generally:

> Far from music-making taking a peripheral role for individuals and society… music can equally well be seen as playing a central part not just in urban networks but also more generally in the social structure and processes of our life today.
>
> (Finnegan, 1989, p. 6)

Whilst Finnegan's study took an empirical survey of all forms of musical activity in UK city of Milton Keynes in the early 1980's, and with Cohen (1991) conducting a similar exercise amongst rock bands in Liverpool, the most influential attempt in accounting for the spatial character of popular music activity was Straw's (1991) development of *scene theory*. Contrasting the idea of "scene" from that of "musical community," Straw claims that the conservatism and heritage focus of the latter is challenged by the former, typified by a "cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other

within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization" (1991, p. 373). The central logic of unity within this cultural space was not located in demographic or musical uniformity, but "in the way in which spaces of musical activity have come to establish a distinctive relationship to historical time and geographic location" (Straw, 1991, p. 375). This change in focus is important, as it shifts popular music studies towards an understanding of the social production of space.

This approach is important because previously the cultural popular music studies approach to the understanding of music scenes had predominantly focused on networks of cultural production and consumption, taking cultural artefacts – the art work, the musical album – as the main by-products of music scene interaction. This approach did not pay attention to the many and varied ways that scene participants influence and are influenced by changing spatial logics. In this spatial approach, the task no longer becomes to 'decipher' the *hidden meanings* in *music as text*, but to understand the "situated practices" (Kruse, 2003) that allow music to be understood as both *spatial product* and *spatially productive*, as a form of cultural cartography (T. Mitchell, 1997). Despite the development of the scenes perspective into three interlinked strands – *local, translocal, virtual* (Bennett & Peterson, 2004) – that emphasise the glocalised nature of musical activity, Kruse (2010) has demonstrated that in many cases these dynamics have actually reinforced the importance of shared histories and local spaces in music scene activity. As will be demonstrated, interpreting scenes through the lens of critical geography allows us to understand the spaces of scenes as relational spaces, produced informally, and through everyday interaction. Far from urban and technological change rendering the spatial irrelevant through space-time compression (Harvey, 1990), it has only reinforced its importance in contemporary cities – particularly when related to the *mobility* of contemporary musical production (J. Connell & Gibson, 2003).

Scene theory has now, in many ways, become dislodged from its role in popular music studies and has taken on a wider importance in cultural studies – there are now numerous articles applying the concept to non-musical scenes (Deveau, 2014; Eichhorn, 2014; Grimes, 2014; Yoshimizu, 2014). Concomitant with this broader application of scene theory, theoretical developments are beginning to reinforce fundamental geographical concepts like scale, mapping, and power (Woo, Rennie, & Poyntz, 2014). Part of the popularity of scene thinking is its malleability, with Straw (2014) no longer wishing to define scene, but rather suggest some things that a scene *might be*. In his articulation of what a scene *might* be, a scene emerges to be a number of overlapping, co-constitutive spaces (of assembly, of labour, of mediation, of ethics, of traversal or preservation) that reinforce the distinctive spatial character of the term. This approach almost reverses the traditional approach of cultural studies when dealing with music and space, concurring with Krims (2012, p. xv), who states in a discussion of a music stores in Amsterdam, that "music can spatialize... in a context in which it has already been spatialized."

Using *scene* as an entry point to a discussion of the intersections between popular music studies and geography in contemporary Australian cities, a useful starting point is a 2008 special issue of the journal *Continuum,* devoted to the scene concept in Australian cultural studies. Studies focus on the distinctiveness of a local network in sustaining or hindering musical activity (Luckman, Gibson, Willoughby-Smith, & Brennan-Horley, 2008; Rogers, 2008), on the struggles of marginalised local scenes such as the Brisbane queer scene (J. Taylor,

2008), or the socio-cultural determinants of a historical music scene (Stratton, 2008). Homan (2008a) discusses the decline of the Oz Rock scene in Sydney as a function of various regulatory changes throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This analysis is predominantly carried out on a citywide level, with the everyday spatial practices of participants (which often occur outside of its relationship to regulation) often overlooked.

In the Australian context, there has been something of a boom in the breadth of study of live performance and live music, arguably led by the work of Homan (Gibson & Homan, 2004; Homan, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2008a, 2008b, 2010, 2011, 2013a, 2013b; Homan, Cloonan, & Cattermole, 2013; Homan & Gibson, 2007; Johnson & Homan, 2003). The broad focus of Homan's work centres on the development, encouragement, and subsequent decline of the "Oz Rock sound," and the variety of engagements with regulation this entailed – cultural policy, building code, fire safety, liquor licensing, noise abatement, and other intersections between legal structures and musical cultures. Whilst generally operating in a cross-disciplinary manner, straddling cultural studies, popular music studies, history, and geography, other Australian scholars such as Shaw (Porter & Shaw, 2009; Shaw, 2005, 2013a) have approached the issue from a critical geographical context, mapping the decline and subsequent clustering of subcultural space in inner-city Melbourne, for instance. Shaw frames the "third-wave gentrification" of Melbourne in a context of a "driving neoliberal imperative for highest and best use of land," offering policy and planning reforms as a lever to achieve more socially just cities. Whilst Shaw's mapping approach can be useful from a policy perspective, other approaches such as that of Tironi (2012, p. 185) attempt to map the *everyday geographies* of participants in a music scene (in this case in Santiago, Chile). These approaches focusing on the everyday show that the relational geographies of a live music venue or scene are in fact "decentred, episodic, and itinerant."

What emerges when looking at the current literature on live music in Australia is a sense that understanding the world of regulation and policy, as well as the situated, everyday practices of participants, will allows us to take a rounded view of the production of performance landscapes in Australia. Very recently, Bennett and Rogers (2016) have discussed the important role that "unofficial" live music venues have played in the creation of collective memories regarding popular music. What they teach us, by way of engagement with notions of space and the everyday, is that the everyday embedded spatial practices of actors in the performance landscape is what produces a scene, via the creation of memories rooted in emotional geographies. Of central importance to this is the idea that a substantial portion of musical activity takes place *outside* of formal policy and regulation – in other words, it is *informally* produced. Whilst the formal world of policy and regulation plays a role in shaping the landscape upon which musical activity takes place, it does not have the final say – participants in a scene are constantly finding ways to evade the formal. An understanding of musical scenes as a product of urban informality, existing in relational assemblages that work to produce a landscape of performance, is the best approach to take, and will be the approach adopted in subsequent chapters. Crucial to this approach is an understanding of how governance operates in contemporary cities, the *representations of space* that constrict or enable particular forms of musical activity to take place (Lefebvre 1991b, p. 33). To reach this understanding, we must begin to unpack the idea of neoliberal urbanism.

Neoliberal urbanism

In order to understand the way that informal landscapes of musical performance are produced, it is vital to situate them in their political-economic urban environment. One way to do this is to explore the changing function of cities under neoliberalism. Mitchell's (2008, p. 35) second axiom for reading the landscape states that "any landscape is (or was) functional." Often the primary function of landscape is either the realization of value, or the creation of the conditions for that realization. Landscape can also be viewed is as a "lived space, that is crucial in the reproduction of labour power" (D. Mitchell, 2008, p. 36). In other words, by understanding the changing conditions of capital circulation and accumulation, as well as the changing dynamics of urban labour and housing, one is better able to understand structural changes in the political economy of cities, and how this is reflected through changes in population, culture, governance, and the built environment itself. What we arrive at is a "palimpsest of landscapes fashioned according to the dictates of different modes of production at different stages of their historical development… a geographically ordered, complex, composite commodity." (Harvey, 1982, p. 233) This section will outline current scholarship over the last quarter century exploring what has become known as *neoliberal urbanism*, and in particular look a specific iteration of this urbanism, the post-millennial "Creative City" discourse, in which the arts and culture play an extremely important role.

Methodologically, studies of neoliberal urbanism originally followed a "regulation school" of inquiry. Harvey, quoting Lipietz, summarizes the approach of the regulation school as follows:

> A regime of accumulation "describes the stabilization over a long period of the allocation of the net product between consumption and accumulation; it implies some correspondence between the transformation of both the conditions of production and the conditions of reproduction of wage earners." A particular system of accumulation can exist because "its schema of reproduction is coherent." The problem, however, is to bring the behaviours of all kinds of individuals - capitalists, workers, state employees, financiers, and all manner of other political-economic agents - into some kind of configuration that will keep the regime of accumulation functioning. There must exist, therefore, "a materialization of the regime of accumulation taking the form of norms, habits, laws, regulating networks and so on that ensure the unity of the process, i.e. the appropriate consistency of individual behaviours with the schema of reproduction. This body of interiorized rules and social processes is called the mode of regulation."
>
> (Lipietz 1986, as cited in Harvey, 1990, pp. 121-122)

Whilst tracing out this methodological line, theoretically Harvey also describes the injection of inter-urban market competition into systems of governance in the 1980s, a shift he described as one from *managerialism* to *entrepreneurialism*. In doing this he was able to explain how a "seemingly autonomous entrepreneurialism" had become pervasive in city administrations by the late 1980s as a result of crises in the capitalist economy. Importantly, influenced by Lefebvre and in anticipation of Massey, he would note that an analysis of urban "governance" does not necessarily mean urban "government," (Harvey, 1989, p. 6) and being able to trace out the relational geographies of urban governance would be one of the key tasks of the urban geographer. Harvey states that "the power to organize space derives from a whole complex of forces mobilized by diverse social agents," and that understanding the way that political alliances and coalitions form in order to organize space is one way in which geography can understand the shift to entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989, p. 6). Tracing these

alliances, noting the heightened inequality as a result of entrepreneurialism, and attempting to make an argument for increased socio-spatial justice, Harvey would later make use of Lefebvre's term "the right to the city," or "a right to change ourselves by changing the city" (Harvey, 2003, 2008). This right, collective rather than individual, is a global struggle as cities are increasingly shaped by the demands of finance capital and continued accumulation, with its attendant dispossession and alienation.

Whilst Harvey was using the term "neoliberalism" by early in the new millennium, this was due to the work of himself and others that investigated the history, meaning, and varying applications and uses of the term over almost half a century. Around the turn of the millennium, *urban entrepreneurialism* had now been superseded by the term *neoliberal urbanism,* as a number of key urban scholars had produced a large amount of work unpacking the concept. Before we begin to discuss the wealth of literature relating to neoliberalism, it is important to provide an overview and acknowledge the contested, problematic nature of the term *neoliberalism*. Most of these definitional issues arise from the space between definitions of neoliberalism as theory, and processes of neoliberalization that "depart significantly from what that theory provides" (Harvey, 2005, p. 64). We will start with the theoretical understandings of neoliberalism, however, before moving on to the practice of neoliberalization in urban environments.

Neoliberalism is generally understood as some iteration of a "free-market" ideological and regulatory regime, with a focus on free trade, flexible labour, and active, competitive individualism. Emerging from the thought of the Chicago School of economic theorists such as Hayek (1944) and Friedman (1962), and cementing its hegemonic role in the "Washington consensus" institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, in many parts of the world neoliberalism is a stand-in for crisis-oriented macroeconomic restructuring (Peck, 2010, pp. 1-2), of a kind propagated in Chile under Pinochet and continuing in places like Greece after the 2007-8 crisis. Coming into common usage around the turn of the millennium, early investigations into neoliberalism such as those of Larner (2000) acknowledged this historical emergence, whilst extending the analysis to argue that neoliberalism is not in fact a monolithic ideology, but a composite structure, emphasizing three distinct elements – policy, ideology, and governmentality. This approach would be further extended in a special 2002 issue of the journal *Antipode* devoted to the concept of neoliberalism and its applications within geography. Under conditions of globalization and financialization on one hand, and a "new localism" inspired by Harvey's observations of entrepreneurialism on the other, Brenner and Theodore argue that the city, or "locality" is the new locus of struggle over spatial justice, as the relative power of nation states continues to wane. The issue was to:

> confront the urban geographies of neoliberalism in… three ways – (1) by developing theoretical frameworks through which to explore the intersection between neoliberalism and urban development; (2) by analysing the logics, dynamics, and contradictions of state intervention in neoliberalizing urban spaces; and (3) by examining the divisive sociospatial effects of neoliberal urban policies"
>
> (Neil Brenner & Theodore, 2002b, p. 344)

Brenner and Theodore open the issue by discussing the "rather blatant disjuncture" between the theory and practice of neoliberalism. For whilst neoliberalism seeks to create a "utopia" of free markets liberated from the state, the imposition of this free market mode of

production and consumption has involved the deployment of coercive and disciplinary forms of state power (Neil Brenner & Theodore, 2002a). This is reiterated by Peck, who claims that neoliberalism has always had as its objective the capture and transformation of the state (Peck, 2010, p. 4). Brenner and Theodore thus seek to understand the geographies of "actually existing neoliberalism," via the contextual *embeddedness* of restructuring projects. Neoliberalism in this local context already operates in a network of existing institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices, and social struggles. For this reason, contemporary neoliberalism is *path-dependent*. It is also difficult to only speak of one, monolithic form of neoliberalism, with many theorists preferring to pluralize the term. According to Peck and Tickell (2002, p. 383), "ideologies of neoliberalism are both produced and reproduced through institutional forms and political action, since 'actually existing' neoliberalisms are always… hybrid or composite structures."

It would appear that the hybrid or composite nature of neoliberalism would make its usefulness as a tool of analysis somewhat limited. The contradictions within neoliberalism – "between ideology and practice; doctrine and reality; vision and consequence" – do not arise as unintended consequences of a clearly defined, tangible system of ideas (Peck et al., 2009). They are central to the *process of neoliberalization,* which is to be understood as a "process of market-driven socio-spatial transformation." (Neil Brenner & Theodore, 2002a, p. 353) This transformation occurs via path-dependent processes of creative destruction that are unpredictable and deeply contested. As capitalism occurs under specific historical and spatial conditions, it is necessary to mobilize particular spaces, scales, and territories as productive forces. This is Lefebvre and Harvey's "production of space," however this production renders previously produced areas as obsolete in order to open up new areas for the accumulation of capital (Neil Brenner & Theodore, 2002a, pp. 354-355), via "rent gap" (Smith, 1986, pp. 23-24) models of gentrification or other means.

It is clear that in discussing the "new localism" from a position of increasing globalization and financialization of everyday life under neoliberal urbanism (Waterhout, Othengrafen, & Sykes, 2013), Mitchell's third axiom – *no landscape is local* – begins to ring true. Discussing the interrelated nature of the construction of neoliberal urban landscapes reveals "new localism" not as a form of retreat from the global (Hall, 1997), but as the introduction of cities and locations into marketised global systems of competition (Clarke, 2009). This is most explicit in the popularity of Florida's "Creative Class/Creative City" concept in which cities were analyzed and ranked according to a system of metrics of "creativity" which eventually lead to economic growth (R. L. Florida, 2004). Whilst this system has been shown to "subtly canalize and constrain urban-political agency, even as their material payoffs remain extraordinarily elusive," creative city policies have gained extraordinary traction (Peck, 2005, p. 768), even gaining policy traction in small Australian cities like Darwin, that do not quite know how to implement them (Luckman, Gibson, & Lea, 2009), and in spite of increasing civil resistance (Lee & Hwang, 2012; Novy & Colomb, 2013). This "new localism," therefore, has been seen not as a return to the local, but a political-economic reconfiguring of the scale upon which capitalist development is predicated (Neil Brenner, 2000; Delaney & Leitner, 1997).

This reconfiguring of scale – that privileges the urban over the national as the key site of development – has led to a number of academic investigations of the "Global City" (Sassen, 2001). In Global Cities, we see an extraordinary concentration in the command and control

functions of the global economy, resulting in an increase in socio-spatial inequality. Global Cities come to increasingly rely upon communication technology (described by Castells (1999) as the "space of flows") to facilitate the operation of capitalism. As such, Global Cities become more connected with each other, and become disconnected with their own hinterlands (Sassen, 2005). Sassen describes the spatial dynamic of the global cities as thus:

> The Global City is not a bounded unit, but a complex location in a grid of cross-boundary processes. Further, this type of city is not simply one step in the ladder of the traditional hierarchy that puts cities above the neighborhood and below the regional, national, and global. Rather, it is one of the spaces of the global, and it engages the global directly, often bypassing the national.
> (Sassen, 2016)

Here we see how the Global city, as a particular iteration of neoliberal urbanism, operates as a relational concept, predicated upon particular forms of interrelations, privileging particular relations over others. According to Sassen, this reconfiguring of scale, and the commensurate rise in spatial and socioeconomic inequality, will lead to "a growing informalisation of a range of economic activities which find their effective demand in these cities, yet have profit rates that do not allow them to compete." (Sassen, 2005, p. 30) This is as true in the global city of New York as anywhere else in the world (Sassen, 2016). As a means of survival, informal practices are a near-ubiquitous feature of the contemporary city. What is revealed upon investigating the wealth of scholarly literature emerging in the field of urban informality is that paying attention to the variety of *responses* to neoliberalization can lead us towards emergent forms of socio-spatial organization that may seek to create a more socially just city.

Urban Informality and assemblage

If we take Mitchell's fifth axiom – *landscape is power* – it is clear that the previous section has described how one particular form of power acts upon the landscape. The purpose of much of critical urban geography, in response to the power of neoliberalisation, has been to articulate and advance a "right to the city" – a right that is often viewed through a centralist, statist lens (Lopes de Souza, 2010), and readily adopted in a depoliticized, reformist context (Mayer, 2009). However, many of the practices that allow us to view "another city" – and that allow us to conceive of possible urban futures outside of our contemporary experience – exist outside of formal institutions like trade unions, and rest within radically democratic social movements and urban initiatives (Lopes de Souza, 2007). If we are to understand how landscape has the power to shape social life, we must therefore investigate the ability of everyday practices to change and modify the landscape. These modifications allow different and competing interests to convey a sense of power or control over the city (D. Mitchell, 2008, p. 43). This thesis will focus on the interrelations between agents of neoliberal urbanism – predominantly emanating from state authority in support of certain forms of capital accumulation associated with the 'global city' agenda through urban (re)development – and the everyday interactions that constitute informal urbanism. By working at the intersection of these two competing claims to the city, we are better able to understand the politics of inequality in the contemporary city.

Urban informality has always been of central concern to human geographers, particularly in regards to housing and labour practices in the global South (Roy & AlSayyad, 2004). As early as 1947, Lefebvre would tie informality to everyday life, claiming that the "uncontrolled

sector" was the domain within which everyday life operates (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 248). Furthermore, recent scholars have highlighted the importance of informal dynamics in our current understanding of Lefebvre's production of space (Kudva, 2009), and in a broader framework of urban theory that sees cities as informal, contested, and anchored (Gaffikin & Perry, 2012). In recent years there have been numerous calls for the informality paradigm to be applied to urban practice in the global North, (R. Connell, 2007; Watson, 2009). This demonstrates how the epicentres of debates regarding urban theory have shifted, with much discussion led by scholars of the global South, where the majority of scholarship regarding informality occurs (Parnell & Robinson, 2012).

It is interesting to note that urban informality has been given a variety of pseudonyms in discussions of contemporary urbanism. Discourses of "messy" urbanism (Chalana & Hou, 2016), "guerrilla" urbanism (Hou, 2010), "insurgent" urbanism (Maziviero, 2016; Miraftab & Wills, 2005; Roy, 2009), "austerity" urbanism in the "makseshift city" (Tonkiss, 2013) and "DIY" urbanism (Finn, 2014; Iveson, 2013), provide just a small sample of the variety of ways in which different aspects of informality have been emphasized in the literature. Empirical studies of informality relevant to this thesis have covered topics including night-time economies in Singapore (Su-Jan, Limin, & Kiang, 2012; Yeo & Heng, 2014), liquor licensing in South Africa (Charman, Herrick, & Petersen, 2014), and street trading in both South Africa (Charman & Govender, 2016) and New York City (Devlin, 2011). Whilst many of these studies reveal similar dynamics to those that may operate in local music networks, crucially, Kerr (2015), in a study of underground rap music in Tanzania, has demonstrated that the informality paradigm can be readily applied to musical production and performance practice.

Developing alongside these empirical investigations have been a number of typologies that seek to understand urban informality through the creation of categories of analysis. With a distinctly architectural bent, Dovey and King (2011) have sought to describe the urban morphology and spatiality of informality via three distinct processes – *settling* in new areas, *inserting* into abandoned or disused areas, and *attaching* to the already existing structures of the city. Seeking to understand the broader social forces that shape urban informality, Tonkiss (2014, pp. 102-110) has posed the "contradictions of informality" as a set of binaries: organic settlement/slum, self-help/abandonment, social capital/racketeering, temporary use/insecurity, looseness/disorder, commonality/invasive publicness. These binaries seek to show how the most salient features of informality can be operationalised in favour of or against particular forms of intervention into the informal city. In a similar fashion, when describing the practices of DIY urbanists, Iveson (2013, p. 943) has described a range of *vectors* that DIY urbanists may operate across: temporary/permanent, centre/periphery, public/private, authored/anonymous, collective/individual, legal/illegal, old/new, unmediated/mediated. These typologies provide differing and useful perspectives on the informality paradigm. Of central concern to this thesis both theoretically and structurally, McFarlane and Waibel (2012, pp. 3-5) identify at least four ways in which the formal/informal divide can be conceived: as a *spatial categorization*, *organizational form*, *governmental tool,* and *negotiable value*. This analysis seeks to break down the divide between formality and informality, and highlight the ways in which the informal is always already present in urban practices that we would consider formal, for as Tonkiss (2012, p. 58) notes, "recourse to informality is also a routine tactic of the powerful."

Recent interrogations of the informality literature seek to reposition informality not as a way of being, but as a *form of practice*, a process of becoming (McFarlane, 2012). McFarlane suggests that "notions of 'formal' and 'informal' are rarely neutral, and reflect dominant forms of state, corporate, legal, residential, and activist power, and debates about the sorts of urbanism that should be valued, promoted, avoided, or removed." (McFarlane, 2012, p. 103) Whilst a more traditional approach would view the formal as associated with notions of state/market/regulation and the informal as the negation of the same, recent scholarship suggests that these epistemological distinctions are modes of practice that are particular ways of getting work done in cities (Roy, 2005).

This way of thinking about urban informality – as a "mode" (Roy, 2005, 2009) or "form of practice" (McFarlane, 2012), is often informed by the political philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and specifically their conception of the term *assemblage*. The assemblage term is a useful foundation for thinking about informality, as it not only accounts for formal and informal elements within space, but also allows for a more *relational* understanding of the way that spaces are constructed, similar to that of Massey. Furthermore, there have been a number of recent productive interactions between assemblage thinking and other schools of geographic thought, starting with McFarlane (2009) and resulting in a special issue of *Area* in 2011 (for example, see Allen, 2011; Anderson & McFarlane, 2011; Dewsbury, 2011; Featherstone, 2011), as well as discussions elsewhere between McFarlane (McFarlane, 2011a), and those of a more rigid political economic approach (Neil Brenner, Madden, & Wachsmuth, 2011). Tonkiss (2011, p. 588) has urged for caution when using the term, lest assemblage become a form of "template urbanism" that reflects academic trend, more than a tool for careful critical analysis. Whilst the term has been deployed in a variety of ways, generally it has been understood to emphasize emergence, multiplicity, and indeterminacy, and connects to a wider redefinition of the socio-spatial in terms of the composition of diverse elements into some form of provisional socio-spatial formation. To be more precise, assemblages are composed of heterogeneous elements that may be human and non-human, organic and inorganic, technical and natural (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011, p. 124).

In this regard, whilst there are a variety of possible applications of assemblage thinking, of use to this thesis are ideas of assemblage as "veritable invention," an analysis of "how key actors, ideas and technologies are actively brought into productive co-presence in cities, [and] in how certain absences are also presences in policymaking." (McCann, 2011, p. 143) Of course, there are numerous representations and uses of space that are not expressed within the confines of the regulationist school, urban policy transfer studies, or urban political economy, and the use of assemblage thinking allows us to begin working through these interstices. Assemblage thinking also examines how the construction of urban space is a result of interactions, many of which are from "elsewhere," leading to the creation of *translocal* assemblages that stress the importance of communication networks (McCann, 2011; McFarlane, 2009). In spite of this line of thinking that emphasises networks and flow, there is still stasis – networks congeal and condense, contract and expand over differing temporal and spatial scales and provide useful targets of analysis.

This influence of Deleuze and Guattari on critical urban geography and planning literature is even more wide ranging. When looking at the ("formal") planning system, it has been noted that due to the

> very tight relations of planning practice to the state, and the state's structural dependence on capitalism, Deleuze and Guattari's vision forces us to ask both existential question about what planning is and normative questions about whether we should be planning at all.
>
> (Purcell, 2013, p. 20)

Deleuze and Guattari believe in desire as the source of all human creation and production, and it is this desire that drives the process of transformation, of *becoming* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1984, 1987). The emphasis on *becoming,* as opposed to *being,* is of vital importance to their political philosophy – we cannot conceive of things as they are, as forms are always in fluctuation and assemblages converge, flow, emerge, and dissipate. They refer to this process as *desiring-production*, a form of production that, through its inorganization, resists being absorbed and subordinated to a larger social body. These processes are aided by forms of "immanent organisation," organisations that emerge out of the activity of the people themselves, and thus reject the transcendent authority of the state (Purcell & Born, 2016). In the process, immanent organisations allow us to question the very nature of urban planning, and indeed envisage a what planning might look like *without the state* (Purcell, 2016). Standing in the way of *desiring-production* are the *apparatuses of capture,* forces which seek to limit or imprison desire, "bending its anarchic nature towards the project of the social order." (Purcell, 2013, p. 24) Whilst desiring production is always planning its escape from the apparatuses of capture, this is extremely difficult as the apparatuses are "extraordinarily well-developed and effective" (Purcell, 2013, p. 25). Tracing out the ways in which desiring-production interacts with the apparatuses of capture, and the role that immanent organisations play in those interactions, thus becomes of central important to understanding the interactions that produce informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney.

Soft gentrification and urban autonomy

Adopting a similar Deleuzian framework, Raunig (2013, p. 130) has described the functioning of apparatuses of capture within contemporary urban environments as one of "soft gentrification," in which more radical uses and users of urban space are sidelined in a multifaceted governance and consultation apparatus that seeks to reassert the ability of capitalism to command space. On the contrary, the project of these radical uses of urban space is to strip away the apparatuses of capture, to return desiring-production to its original position of autonomy. Urban autonomy, according to Bulkely et al. (2016), can only be conceptualised in relational and empirical terms, in relation to already existing social and institutional networks of power, organised across space. Castillo and Martin (2015) have claimed, in a study of autonomy in Puebla, Mexico, that the spatial practices of urban autonomy consist of "the establishment of permanent yet semiprivate locations (cafeterias, workshops), coupled with the ephemeral political activities (meetings and protests) in public squares." In the gentrification process, the permanency of spatial access for marginalized actors is called into question, via processes of soft gentrification.

Raunig's (2013, p. 124) conception of soft gentrification takes as its key site those "old industrial complexes," which after deindustrialisation become "welcome sites for trying out alternative modes of living and production." In the fashioning of these alternative modes of living, we may see the clear links between these sites and informal processes. Through the soft gentrification process, "non-conformists are denounced as incapable of negotiating and

are excluded; those who are included follow an increasing logic of subservience." (Raunig, 2013, p. 130) It is in their engagement with the state and capital, however, that the violence of soft-gentrification takes four distinct, yet overlapping forms. The four forms are paraphrased as such (Raunig, 2013, pp. 130-133):

1. *Repressive escalation:* although this process tends to be avoided, state violence is routinely deployed to subjugate and repress alternative modes of living. Commonly accompanied with targeted media campaigns to denigrate informal practices, the purpose of the escalation is to re-assert private control over urban space.
2. *Pseudo-participation as exclusion:* often branded as community building, initiatives are launched which seek to build consensus within a community undergoing renewal. This process "dangles a carrot" of having a stake in the planning process, when it is those most invested in informal practices who have the most to lose from gentrification processes.
3. *Activating participation and machinic subservience:* civic society groups and associations, as well as dedicated individuals are invited to play an "active part" of the planning process, however the scope and terrain of negotiation is dictated by the powerful interests of capital. It is within this process that the subservient are integrated into the process, whilst the indocile are excluded and repressed.
4. *Co-deciding participation by elites:* the only real space where genuine participation takes place, where the same powerful interests invoking participation engage with trained professionals to transform an area in order to make it attractive to the urban middle classes.

Raunig presents us with a model of urban socio-spatial change that certainly affects landscapes of musical performance generally, and especially those that are informal in nature. The ability of this model to describe *processes* of urban regeneration that take informal practices as vital to the functioning of contemporary cities is incredibly useful to this thesis, and as such will become a central explanatory concept.

Conclusion: Landscapes, the city, and social justice

And so we return to Mitchell's axioms to answer a more fundamental question: how can the theoretical formations outlined so far in this chapter lead us to greater conception of how to achieve social justice in cities? Mitchell (2008, p. 45) claims that the concept of landscape is *the spatial form that social justice takes*. There are a number of reasons he takes this position. Firstly, if we take landscape to mean the concretisation of social relations, then landscape "literally marks out the spatial extent and limits of social justice" (D. Mitchell, 2008, p. 45). I will take the opportunity here to discuss what social justice may look like or be defined as. In line with feminist theorists such as Young (1990), social justice in cities may take as its starting point not issues of distribution, but of oppression and domination, and to understand how these concepts are framed not just in terms of economic distribution, but in the realms of decision making, and most importantly for this thesis, matters of culture. If we are to think about this in relation to Lefebvre or Massey, we would take as our starting point the statement *(social) space is a (social) product,* and be able to identify the many *representations, representational spaces, spatial practices* (Lefebvre), or *interrelations and*

multiplicity (Massey) that act upon the landscape in order to display the limits of social justice in the spaces produced through interaction in cities.

Secondly, Mitchell, using the words of Henderson (2003, p. 180), moves us to examine the "actually existing social and political formations" that help to produce the landscape in order to understand the terrain upon which we may be able to achieve social change. Concomitant with this are two interlinked strands of thought. Firstly, an approach that seeks to understand "actually existing neoliberalism," in its many and varied permutations, is able to see how those formations exist at an institutional, economic, and structural level. This is particularly important to Young (1990, p. 227), who observes that "cities and the people in them are relatively powerless before the domination of corporate capital and state bureaucracy. Privatised decision making processes... reproduce and exacerbate inequalities and oppressions." By understanding the ways in which decision making processes exclude, dominate or oppress particular groups in society, we are better able to conceive of new structures that are more inclusive and just. Furthermore, we may be able to conceive of forms of *immanent organisation* that reject the power of the state. An understanding of landscape as the plane upon which everyday life is lived and produced allows us to see the interrelations between the lived experience of landscape and the possible alternative futures – the *lines of flight* – that will make those potential future worlds possible (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). In this sense, landscape allows us to see "the shape and possibility of justice" (D. Mitchell, 2008, p. 46). It is indeed possible that future alternatives for conceiving of the city are already taking place within the shell of the everyday.

Mitchell also tells us that, as it is the case that landscape is *made*, it is the case that landscape must belong to *the people* who made it (D. Mitchell, 2008, p. 47). If it is indeed the case that the majority of landscape production is situated within the realm of *everyday life*, within *informal* arrangements of spatial practices, then this issues quite a challenge to orthodox views of landscape based upon propriety, fixity, and being. Literature in the field of urban informality has demonstrated how landscapes are often controlled and produced by actors in ways radically different from the intention of planners, architects, bureaucracies, and corporate capital – yet it is these very institutions who have the authority to command large swathes of the urban landscape, to expropriate land, and to remake the city in the ongoing project of capital accumulation. The concept of *assemblage* has been deployed here in order to provide a useful model for explaining how actors within the urban landscape in contemporary times may be able to challenge this authority.

If landscape is the form that social justice takes, and we can visibly see how attitudes towards justice have become manifest in landscape, then it follows that we must be able to also read the history of struggles for justice from the landscape. There have been numerous attempts to understand the contours of live music regulation in Sydney, Australia, and overseas, from a number of different approaches. There have also been attempts by cultural studies and popular music studies to account for the spatial practices of cultural producers, primarily through the *scene* concept. This concept has been applied in an empirical manner to many varied scenes the world over. It is thus not the point of this thesis to map out the "scene" being observed in Sydney – but rather to examine the ways in which members of a social group *informally produce landscapes of performance* in a context of neoliberal urbanisation in this self-described 'global city'. Ultimately, this thesis is about the way that the spaces that

constitute a performance landscape are constructed relationally, and the way that they are repressed, ignored, subsumed or commodified. It will examine their role in exacerbating or resisting the problems of contemporary cities, and whether the politics generated within informal live music spaces may serve as a useful vehicle through which we may arrive at a conception of a socially just society, or:

> a society in which everyone would rediscover the spontaneity of natural life and its initial creative drive, and perceive the world through the eyes of an artist, enjoy the sensuous through the eyes of a painter, the ears of a musician and the language of a poet. Once superseded art would be reabsorbed into an everyday which has been metamorphosed by its fusion with what had hitherto been kept external to it.
>
> (Lefebvre, 1992, p. 37)

McFarlane and Waibel's four conceptions of informality – *spatial categorisation, organizational form, governmental tool,* and *negotiable value* – provide an important framing concept for the case studies presented in subsequent chapters, and will be elaborated on considerably in both theoretical and empirical detail in subsequent chapters. Furthermore, my own typology of informality – where space may be conceived of as *informally informal, informally formal,* or *formally informal* – will build on an analysis informed by this framing concept, with each case study chapter introducing and analysing one of these typologies of the formal-informal relationship. For each case study, each sub-section will cover each of McFarlane and Waibel's conceptualisation, allowing for different configurations of informality to be distinguished and unpacked. These categories will be useful in tracing and outlining the process of "soft gentrification," and its role in assisting or hindering the goal of achieving urban autonomy (Raunig, 2013). The formal-informal relationship, then, does not simply reproduce regulationist geographies of neoliberal urbanism, but looks at the more diffuse ways that informal spaces exist in relationship to each other, to the state, and to a broader conception of urban politics as the domain of everyday lived experience. It is for this reason that when we think about informality and its relationship to the urban, we must consider the importance of landscape.

In the following chapter, I will discuss how these theoretical considerations have led me develop a methodology that can reflect this aim – a methodology that can move between structuralism and phenomenology, that can account for the informal, everyday nature of spatial practices, that understands the socially produced and relational character of space. I will also discuss the major ethical issues that arise when trying to design a research methodology, based on these theoretical concerns, from the position of an "insider" to the social group I am studying. Far from being a hindrance, I view this methodology as of central importance to achieving social justice in cities.

Chapter 3 – Methodology: ethnography and informality

Introduction

In this project, I utilized case studies, insider ethnography, and content analysis to chart the ways in which informal live music spaces are relationally produced, and institutionally regulated. My study of informal musical performance landscapes in Sydney has required an assemblage of methodological approaches. I have allowed for empirical exploration of my case studies and field notes, whilst also allowing for a discussion of more general concerns about the nature of informality in globalizing cities. My approach was particularly concerned with the (micro-)production of local informal spaces, and understanding their interactions with the state. I also sought to understand the larger-scale political, economic, and socio-spatial processes that foreground those interactions. The adoption of a case study approach has allowed me to present ethnographic material in its situated, local context, and be able to account for changes in the landscape. I was required to negotiate my position as both researcher and participant: to this end, I utilized *insider ethnography* (Bennett, 2002; Hodkinson, 2005; J. Taylor, 2011). Though this approach is more common in popular music studies, I rendered it 'spatial' by using it to explore the relational construction of spaces, and by exploring the ways in which a participant in a space becomes an active participant in its creation (Massey, 2005).

In this chapter, I will discuss the factors that influenced the selection of my methods, and how they build upon common approaches to studying both urban informality and music scenes. I will then discuss how I was able to negotiate my relationship as both insider ethnographer and participant within the spaces I have studied. I will conclude with a discussion of my case study approach, and justify its use for analysing and presenting my findings. This chapter will draw upon both theoretical and methodological literature as well as personal reflections and anecdotes drawn from the ethnography itself.

Landscape and ethnography

In order to understand the ways in which landscapes are informally produced, we need to draw on methods that honour the relational, the spatial, and the institutional, as well as the interrelations between the three. This is explicitly outlined by Mitchell (2008, p. 32):

> …a theory of capitalist landscape would need to be as supple and complex as the world it sought to describe. Rather than simply observing immediate surroundings (which may not provide direct evidence of transformation), a theory of landscape would need to describe the complex set of changing relations that actively produce the landscape.

As we have already seen, the landscape is not a dormant, static, passive, feature of our lives – it is actively produced by complex assemblages which render urban space as "processual, relational, mobile, and unequal" (McFarlane, 2011c, p. 649). In order to understand landscapes of informality, we need to be able to understand the ways in which this designation is put to work:

> The task before us is to track the different ways in which informality and formality are put to work as a resource, disposition, practice, or classification in the production of urban inequalities, and in processes that contest and exceed those forms of production.
>
> (McFarlane & Waibel, 2012, p. 7)

One crucial and often overlooked way that we are able to understand how this distinction operates in practice, is by understanding the *everyday* ways in which life is lived. Generating this understanding was of central importance to de Certeau:

> If it is true that the grid of 'discipline' is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it, what popular procedures (also 'miniscule' and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them.
>
> (de Certeau, 1984, p. 107)

The methodological approach most suited to discovering the procedures by which groups of people manipulate, conform to, and evade the grid of discipline is an ethnographical approach, where the researcher is in the same space as the practices that are taking place. An ethnographic approach generally (but not exclusively) involves face-to-face, direct research (Madden, 2010, p. 16). The primary method used in ethnography involves participant observation, but can also include interviewing, focus groups, and visual methods (Crang & Cook, 2007). As ethnography involves contact with participants, it raises issues of trust, reciprocity, obligation, and the formation of friendships (Madden, 2010, p. 16). In recent years, scholars have increasingly called for ethnographic practice to work *with* communities, focusing on being an "embedded" and collaborative researcher, whilst still valuing traditional practices of participant observation (Lewis & Russell, 2011). For the ethnography presented in this thesis, I conducted participant observation at a number of venues, both formal and informal, over a period of approximately eighteen months, spanning from December 2014 until mid-2016. I then conducted follow-up interviews with eight key informants throughout 2015 and into mid-2016, as I began to shape my ethnographic material into the case studies that will be presented in the following chapters.

Defining the field and my position within it

A key benefit of using ethnographic methods in geography is that in the process of defining a field of study we already begin to uncover and grapple with spatial concepts. The practice of ethnography is intimately tied to place, as through our definitions of the field we set boundaries, and these boundaries are grappled with and negotiated by researchers and subjects throughout the course of the project. Ethnographers, in choosing what, who, and where to study a concept, play a key role in defining fields of study – it has even been said that ethnographic fields "do not exist" independently of the ethnographer (Madden, 2010, p. 38). In the process of conducting my ethnography, my initial research area sought to investigate the entire field of live music regulation and reform in Sydney. Through my interactions with subjects in the field, and the shifting of my own experience of music in Sydney – from one actively involved in the field of policy, to one more engaged in DIY practice – my "field" narrowed into several case studies and typologies of informal spaces of musical production in Sydney. These case studies involved me looking predominantly the DIY/punk scene in Sydney, which, as with most scenes, escapes clear definition. It is clear that certain

sections of the scene valorize the ideals of DIY both politically and aesthetically, which undoubtedly would shape the contours of my research, as well as my findings. Whilst other scenes – for instance jazz, or contemporary music – also display elements of informality, they are not typified by prefigurative politics in the same way, and as such were not considered in this thesis for reasons of scope (Culton & Holtzman, 2010).

My research for this project began in 2014, by which point I had been playing music in Sydney for a decade, spanning from fairly DIY projects, to more commercially-oriented projects. I had also worked in a number of commercial rock venues that had closed, as well as booked regular shows at a local community club on a volunteer basis. My honours thesis used interview and survey methods to understand the impact of gentrification on live music venues in Surry Hills, an inner-city suburb of Sydney. Following from that, I had engaged in live music activism and advocacy through the SLAM (Save Live Australia's Music) network, assisting venues (some of whom have become case studies in this thesis) negotiate regulatory hurdles to their existence. Later, I was approached by the City of Sydney to conduct research on the history of live music in Sydney. It is fair to say that, on a number of levels, prior to commencing this project I was already fairly well acquainted with the communities, spaces, and personalities that constituted the "field" for me, as it had been the domain of my own lived experience for the majority of my adult life.

This position, as a participant and protagonist in the story of my project, would appear to lend itself towards autoethnographic approaches to qualitative research that emphasize and analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural phenomena (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010). I chose not to write specifically about my own experience for a number of reasons. Firstly, it would limit my capacity to engage with others in the community who are currently and actively producing informal space in Sydney. Secondly, rather than telling a story of my own journey within the Sydney music scene, I wanted to be able to describe in detail the everyday tactics being used by a range of people, and how they walk the line between informality and formality in their daily lives. Finally, and most importantly, I wanted to adopt a reflexive, relational understanding that was aware of my positionality within the field of research (England, 1994; Rose, 1997).

My position within the field as a researcher is certainly not a marginal one. Indeed, as a white cisgender[1] male with a relatively comfortable suburban Sydney upbringing and a university education, my position within the field is privileged. This affects not only my approach to research, but the nature of my relationships with the researched, particularly given that my 'research' included women, queer people, indigenous people, or people with disability. The position of the researcher within the field has substantial effects upon the types of information volunteered by the researched, and the effects of power imbalances between researcher and researched need to be acknowledged, explored, and where possible, mitigated against (England, 1994). There is real danger of the data collected by the researcher to be appropriated in order to further oppress the communities studied, despite the perceived altruism or good nature of the researcher (England, 1994).

[1] 'Cisgender' is a term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth. In my case, I was assigned male at birth and continue to identify, and present, as male.

It is clear that in my own work in the worlds of policy and research over the last 5 years, I have engaged in practices that would put me squarely in the middle of the "apparatus of capture" when talking about DIY spaces (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). For instance, research conducted in 2014 sought to place an exact dollar figure on the social and economic contribution of live music to the economy, basing the value of the scene in neoliberal economic terms (*The economic and cultural value of live music in australia*, 2014). Despite my intention to assist and help DIY spaces negotiate the world of regulation, I am certainly aware of instances where my activism and advocacy in fact made it more difficult for those spaces to continue their work, either directly through increased workload, or indirectly via an intangible contribution to the gentrification of the areas in which they operate. For example, I have previously conducted historical research on live music industries in Sydney for the City of Sydney, which has contributed to the valorization of the "pub rock" era, and its mythologization through initiatives like walking tours (City of Sydney, 2016). In my research practice, I was attempting to eradicate the "repression of diverse expression" that is a part of the gentrification process, and is tied to rendering the previously unseen (or informal) visible (or formalized) (Schulman, 2012). Ethnographies work to undermine oppression because they force the researcher to abide by the codes of a space operated by oppressed people. This is demonstrated at performance spaces that adopted Safer Spaces policies, where non-adherence to codes of behavior results in expulsion from the space. In my research practice, I sought not to impose any pre-existing views upon the field, but rather, to allow the spaces and the participants within the space to articulate their own experiences, in their own spaces, and on their own terms.

The spaces I investigated all existed within the Inner West of Sydney, an area stretching from the immediate west and south-west of Sydney, and encompassing a loosely defined ring of suburbs stretching for approximately 7-10km from the centre of the Central Business District. All the performance spaces used in my ethnography were known to me prior to my engagement with them on a research level, meaning I had either performed in or attended the space, or knew some people involved in the space before beginning my research. As all venues studied except for one exist in legally precarious grey areas due to their informal production (Tempe Jets is legally constituted and supported by local government but is temporally precarious), I made a specific decision not to conduct any research within local government. The justification for this was twofold – firstly, I was acutely aware that the potential disclosure of information regarding informal spaces to local government (even accidentally), would jeopardise the potential viability of spaces to operate into the future. If the aim of ethnography is to ensure that we do not leave researched groups worse off as a result of our fieldwork, then it is clear that discussions of informality with those that seek to erase it from the landscape would not contribute to that aim. Secondly, I was also mindful of the fact that many informal spaces have a terse relationship with local authorities, and my non-engagement with those authorities was a conscious decision in order to avoid any potential conflict of interest or appearance of collusion. As such, my work approaches informality "from below," and allows us to more closely observe the ways in which planning can be conducted without the State (Purcell, 2016).

Insider ethnography and studies of youth culture

The use of ethnography in Western popular music studies was initially introduced in the 1980s as a reaction against the prevalence of "linguistic, semiotic and musicological traditions" that were dominant within the cultural studies approach at the time (Cohen, 1993, p. 126). Ethnographies at the time focused on wide cross-sections of popular music production in a particular area (Cohen, 1991; Finnegan, 1989), gradually moving into ethnographies of particular scenes (Hodkinson, 2002; Pfadenhauer, 2005). Emerging around the same time was a discussion of the role of "insider research," where the researcher has a degree of initial proximity to the scene being studied (Hodkinson, 2005), which was seemingly adopted without any substantial methodological critique (Bennett, 2002).

Certainly, my position as an "insider" was something that needed to be considered and constantly negotiated throughout my research. As Hodkinson has noted, however, the "complexity of the selves of both researcher and researched makes the notion of being an absolute insider (or outsider) problematic" (Hodkinson, 2005, p. 132). As a result, it is often difficult to clearly delineate inside-ness or outside-ness even within a particular space at one time, as various groups and power dynamics operate at a number of different scales across the same space. For example, when negotiating access to become a researcher at the DIY Harder festival, my key informant was an organiser of the festival who worked in my local neighbourhood. Whilst they personally were fine with my participation in the festival and knew that I had attended similar events previously, due to the collective decision-making practices of the festival, my attendance specifically as a university researcher needed to be approved by the organising collective. Whilst I was eventually allowed to attend and take notes at the festival, it was specifically my designation as a researcher that required deliberation by the committee. During this process, it is not appropriate to say that I was an "insider" within the field – and it was specifically my intent to attend the festival as an ethnographer that rendered me an outsider. My previous attendance at similar events as a non-researching attendee did not require the same amount of deliberation. As a community consisting of several members who experience structural oppression – working class people, people of colour, queer people, women, indigenous people – communities based around informal music venues can often have very clear insider/outsider boundaries, due to a strong sense of collectivity (Hodkinson, 2005, p. 134).

Regardless, my position as a researcher with varying degrees of insider-ness did reduce the amount of time required to socialise and build trust within the community, which allowed me to spend more time attending and observing at events. Having a level of cultural competence in the Sydney underground music community allowed me to be 'vouched for' by others, and to be introduced to people who would become key informants, and, in some cases, show me around research sites (Hodkinson, 2005). Having gained access to the field through my existing social networks, though, the negotiation of informed consent to investigate the field was an important consideration. Going beyond the institutional ethics requirements that involve permission forms and information statements, I wanted my transition from participant to ethnographer to be known and accepted by my community. As I have attended many of the research sites prior to commencing this study, and hope to continue to do so, a breach of trust in the research process would not only affect my project, but had the potential to affect my personal life. Conducting research in which the participants are close friends

makes it impossible to "completely detach" from the field; though arguably "full detachment" is not ever possible when one lives alongside the field (J. Taylor, 2011, p. 16). When entering venues to do field work, I ensured that people that I had conversations with were aware that I was conducting research for my thesis. Any conversations that took place without the participant's knowledge that I was a researcher were not recorded. Participants were given the option to view and review my field notes and transcripts and had the option to withdraw any or all of their contributions to my research. Whilst this did not happen, some participants asked that during interviews some sections would not be recorded, and not be included in the thesis, and I have honoured those requests.

Whilst conducting my observations, I endeavoured to adopt a "step-in, step-out" approach to ethnography, where I would leave my home to attend events related to my research, then return home later to write up notes and debrief (Madden, 2010, p. 80). I argue, however, that I never truly *left* the field, as for the duration of the research I was always residing in my hometown of Sydney, and the informal production of space was taking place around me. Regardless, the ability to return home to my own space to construct field notes and make sense of what I had observed allowed me to mitigate some of the issues of blindness or complacency that results from conducting insider research (Hodkinson, 2005, p. 16; J. Taylor, 2011). Furthermore, negotiating travel to and from research sites via various methods (bicycle, on foot, and by public transport) allowed me to experience how the research sites fit into the rhythms and dynamics of Sydney more broadly. This embodiment of the socio-spatial context of my research sites was vital in understanding how informal spaces function on a city-wide scale. It was not my intention in this process to put emotional and/or physical distance between myself and the field, but rather to reflect upon my experiences and subsequently "choose to see myself, my social actions, interactions and performances as part of the phenomena under investigation and not as someone distinct from it" (J. Taylor, 2011, p. 16). This process of *grounding* allowed me to re-interpret my experiences through my theoretical framework and thus place greater emphasis on the everyday ways in which spaces are produced.

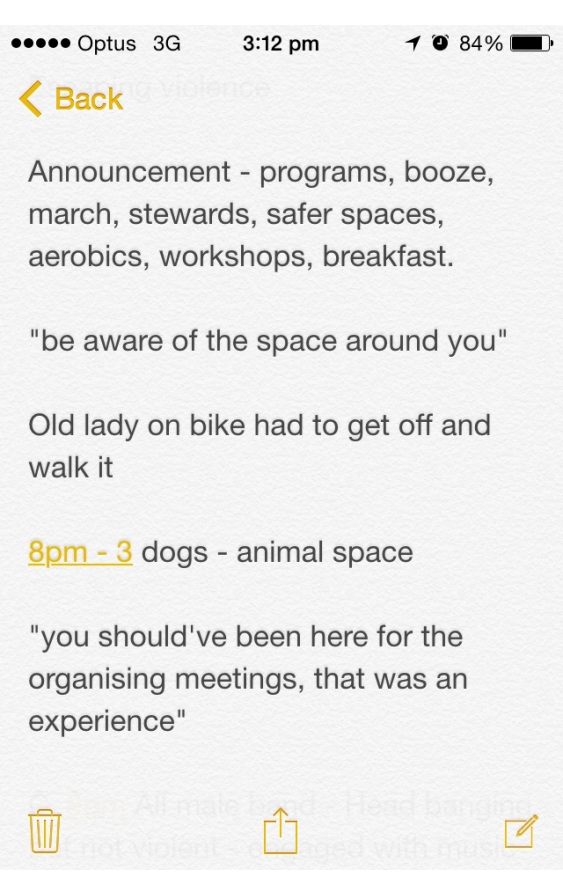
The case study approach

Initially, choices over which events and spaces to observe were made on the basis of my ability to access particular spaces and networks – related to travel, social proximity, and juggling the needs of research with the demands of generating an income to sustain my research. My interactions within the field, and the back-and-forth between engaging with the data I was generating, and grappling with the theoretical concepts I could use to explain what I was seeing, heavily influenced the development of my study into a case-study approach. The observation that distinct types of spatial relationships were occurring, and that they could be grouped into categories, made it clear to me that the development of detailed case studies to depict the three observed typologies of informal spatial relationships would allow me to describe their practices and their relationship to the concept of urban informality in more detail. The development of the case studies of the applications of urban informality in globalizing cities allows for us to assess the viability of the application of theory, and despite common misconceptions, allows for generalizations to be made about the nature of informality (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Case studies allow a researcher to identify and cope with "technically distinctive situations" in which multiple sources of data overlap (Yin, 2003, p. 13). Furthermore, the case study approach benefits from prior theoretical developments that guide the case selection process. The case studies for this project were chosen on the basis of a number of factors, but primarily, it was my ability to "see" the uniqueness of each particular assemblage of relations that produced the spaces that led me to choosing particular case studies. This was assisted by my position as an insider within the field, and also by my history as a researcher of live music and planning policy, as well as the development of my knowledge regarding the uses of urban informality as a theoretical tool to understand urban development. A case study approach allowed me to view each space in its situated, relational context, particularly in a situation where the boundaries between event and context are somewhat blurred (Yin, 2003, p. 13). The development of a case study approached involved the collation and triangulation of multiple sources of data, including ethnographic field notes, interview transcripts, and supplementary data including photos, news media, council policies, and digital sources from locations on social media websites.

Field notes

The writing of field notes is crucial to the practice of ethnography. Madden (2010, p. 119) has reiterated the popular conception that "ethnographic field notes are seen as almost magic scribbling: raw, primary, unadulterated; a window onto real human lives and events." Whilst Madden approaches this assertion with a critical eye, it is certainly the case that the field notes are a key tool of the ethnographer. Whilst Madden emphasizes the idea that notes should be handwritten, and in a number of instances I did take hand-written field notes, for the majority of my observations I relied upon both hand-written notes and notes that I would type into my smartphone. The reason for adopting a smartphone as an ethnographic tool was that I wanted to be able to blend in to my community – with the checking of smartphones and the use of social media like Instagram and Facebook commonplace at informal musical spaces, the use of a smartphone to take field notes would seem less socially intrusive than a pen and paper. There were however limits to the use of a phone as a tool for recording field notes, particularly for a geographical work where spatial representation is paramount. In instances where hand-drawn maps were required, I would be quick to resort to pen and paper. The use of notebooks however, was limited whilst at field sites – I would often jot down notes and draw maps and diagrams whilst on the bus home, for instance. Figure 3.1 depicts a screenshot of my phone, demonstrating key details I had noted down in my phone, whilst Figure 3.2 depicts a hand-drawn map of a field site. These participatory notes, written whilst in the field or immediately after, are the raw material from which more consolidated notes can take shape. On occasion, due to heightened participation in events (engaging in activities like 'doing the door,' or cleaning up, or performing), I was unable to take participatory notes. Instead, I would rely upon returning home to write more consolidated notes in an "experiential" approach to ethnographic practice (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 18). Furthermore, "already-existing" representations of spaces and descriptions of events in the form of event programs, posters, and flyers, were added to field notes in order to provide more detail.



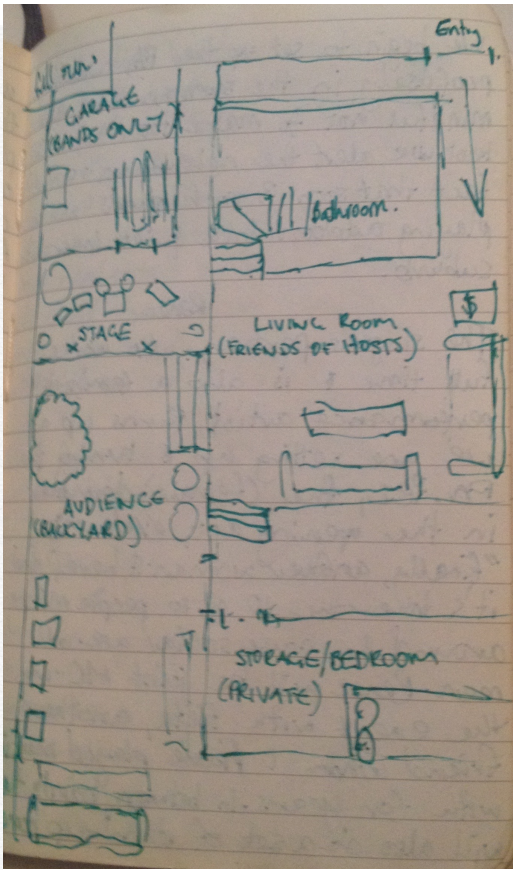


Figure 3.1 (left): Section of notes from smartphone

Figure 3.2 (right): Hand-drawn map from field notes

It is imperative that the ethnographer strives to be systematic and in the way that they collect and organize their field notes, in order to clearly and accurately represent what they observe in the field. Whilst it is generally understood that the ethnographer is unable to document everything taking place at an event, and that the selection of events chosen to describe is a reflection of the ethnographer's own desires, aims, and influences, the researcher should nevertheless and to create "faithful representations of real events" (Madden, 2010, p. 119). Building on my participatory notes, I would return to my computer at a later date to consolidate these notes into a longer, more readable form. In this process, I endeavoured to faithfully represent the breadth of what was occurring, as well as focus specifically on those moments and interactions that seemed most important to me (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 55). As such, I began to shape my cases through interactions in the field, whilst identifying key participants for interview.

Interviews

Subsequent to attending events and taking field notes, follow-up interviews were arranged with eight key informants involved in producing informal space in some way – as organizers, managers, performers, and attendees. Selection for interviews involved the use of snowball sampling, where participants would refer me to other potential participants and I would also recruit participants through my own social networks. Using snowball sampling for my interviews and case studies has allowed me to explore these spaces *relationally*; in this, my

methodology reflects the ways in which participants in these spaces experience the spaces, and each other. It was pivotal that this process take place *after* conducting initial observations in the field, as observation would allow me to understand the spatio-temporal rhythms of particular places, which could then be accounted for and expanded upon in interview. All participants were approached by me personally in-person at an event, and subsequently via phone or email (except for one participant, who I only contacted via email). They were then asked to participate, as well as given a general indication of the types of questions I would be asking. This was important so that participants would have time to think about their spatial practices in more detail, as well as potentially report back to their own communities to discuss more practical concerns, such as what details to leave out of interview, and whether their interview data should be identifiable or not. During the interview process, interviews consisted of pre-drafted open-ended questions, such as 'What is your relationship with your neighbours? Can you describe the process behind organising a show?' with follow-up, improvised, probing questions to draw out key themes or points that I found interesting. This process, moving between the general and the particular, whilst avoiding leading or loaded questions, follows best practice for conducting ethnographic interviews (Madden, 2010, p. 71). The tone and approach I adopted within interviews was non-threatening, accepting, and curious. As Crang and Cook describe, asking general questions initially builds trust as:

> Given that the main aim of interviewing in ethnographic research is to allow people to reveal their own versions of events in their own words, it is important to get people to recall what they know of events and activities.
>
> (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 69)

Interview participants ranged from people I have played music with before and would socialize with regularly, to people I had never met before, and with whom I had to make multiple attempts to contact and build trust through intermediaries in order to interview. Negotiating access to interview participants was sometimes a simple process, whilst other times it required more some negotiation. Having walked the line between informality and formality in my role as a participant in the scene, negotiating access to participants often involved me playing multiple roles. In the same way that my participants may work in an office by day and organize outdoor punk shows on the weekends, throughout the course of the ethnography and in interviews I would play the role of participant, co-consipirator, friend, researcher, advocate, fan, door person, cleaner, and whatever else was required whilst in spaces in order to continue my research. It is also arguable that they are roles I would have played regardless of my position as researcher.

Supplementary data

The construction of case studies, according to Yin, is not only a data collection tactic, or a research design feature – it is a comprehensive research strategy (2003, p. 13). In the construction of case studies, data must be collected from multiple sources in order to be triangulated with data collected in the ethnographic process. In what follows I will describe other sources of information used in this study.

Photographs

I used photographs to illustrate more clearly the ways in which spaces were constructed. In photographs taken as part of my practice, I endeavoured to ensure that individuals in the photo were not identifiable, but nor did I make any attempt to move people out of the way or curate the photo beyond pointing and focusing my camera. Whilst photo-taking practices when in the field were incidental to my primary objective of participant observation, I agree with Crang and Cook (2007, p. 106) when they state that photographs taken in the field "can usefully complement the writing of field notes." Furthermore, I also relied on publicly available photos from online archives as well as Facebook pages of local bands that were publicly available, which provides yet another perspective on how space can be represented.

Digital material

Some images, such as posters and images, were taken from publicly available social media pages, such as Facebook event pages for informal events in Sydney. As already existing, naturally occurring data, they can be used without permission, and are reflective of the "archiving power of the internet" (Gorton & Garde-Hansen, 2013, p. 289). The Facebook event page is the primary way of communicating information about local DIY events, and thus becomes a key site for representations of socio-spatial practice.

News articles and local government documents

In order to understand how spaces are viewed by news media and local government, the representations collected within the ethnography were compared with other representations of space from news media and local government documents, where applicable.

Conclusion

Throughout this project, I have used case studies based on interviews and insider ethnography, to chart the development of informal live music spaces in Sydney. In the development of a case study approach, driven by ethnographic practice, I have been able to successfully approach the field and investigate the informal production of musical landscapes in Sydney. The use of insider research was critical to negotiate my access to the field and my position within it. Interviews with key participants allowed me to verify information, as well as glean a deeper understanding of spatial practices. I combined ethnographic and interview data with supplementary material including photographs, digital methods, news articles and local government documents in order to triangulate the date in a case study approach. This approach allowed me to understand the everyday nature of the production of informal space, the ways in which they are constructed relationally, and to consider their relationship to the State. In the following chapters, I will use this relational methodology in order to understand the spaces between informality and formality. This ethnography will allow me to understand how informality is put to work in a variety of ways, and to understand how informality interacts with the state in three distinct typologies of spaces.

Chapter 4 – *Informally informal* occupations of space for musical performance

Ultimo's Parties: Introduction

Between 2012 and 2014, my friend and sometime collaborator, Jack Lee, along with some friends, rented a terrace house on Wattle Street, a busy traffic corridor in the inner city precinct of Ultimo. The run-down property was one of four terrace houses sharing a common backyard (opening onto Blackwattle Lane), and was slated for demolition once development approval was given to construct a six-storey building consisting of 22 apartments and underground car-parking. The property next door, formerly a panel beating workshop, was being converted to an Urbanest student housing development, where beds in shared rooms were being rented from $300 per week. By contrast, Jack and his friends, predominantly students and artists, were paying around $120 per room. The contrast did not just extend to rental prices, however. In Jack's house, you had to be careful to not step on the wrong floorboard in the kitchen, as the oven would topple over; the walls were covered in stencils, drawings, and punk posters; the bathroom wall was made out of plaster, the bricks having been removed some time ago. Next door, at Urbanest, student facilities included twenty-four-hour gym access and front-desk concierge; swipe-card access to the building, and private security companies monitoring the space with both physical presence and CCTV cameras. Over time, the block of houses would eventually become surrounded by apartment blocks, as Ultimo overtook King's Cross to become the most densely populated locality in Australia, at 15,100 people per square kilometre (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

Jack's house and the adjoining terraces were the last remaining remnants of the nineteenth-century subdivision that became known as the Blackwattle Creek slum, an area with a high rate of death and disease at the turn of the twentieth century due to constant flooding and poor living conditions (Sneddon, 2006). Over the course of their tenancy, the backyard would play host for another rapidly disappearing sight: becoming known as Ultimo's Parties[2], the yard would host informally organized, irregular, daytime performances of bands drawn from the social worlds of the tenants in the house. The music was performed loud and outdoors, drawing upon both Australian pub rock's long association with high volume (Homan, 2003) and the DIY occupations of space typical of the punk and rave eras (Gibson, 1999; Walker, 1996). The site allowed for connections with and performance opportunities for interstate bands drawn from what would become known as the "dolewave" scene (Prescott, 2014; Rogers, 2014a, 2014b; True, 2014), emphasizing the *translocal* nature of the scene (Bennett, Stratton, & Peterson, 2008). The performances drew a variety of responses from the local community. Whilst some neighbours interacted with the music from the apartment balconies across the street, some even filming performances and uploading them to YouTube[3], others would heckle and eventually call the police. Most shows were subject to police intervention over a two-year period. Over time, with it becoming increasingly difficult to host shows, and

[2] *Ultimo's Parties* is a play on words, appropriating the Velvet Underground song *All Tomorrow's Parties*, which is also the namesake of a global alternative music festival, first held in Australia in 2009.

[3] For example, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Tl5VFYGGf0

the house falling into disrepair, the tenants moved out – holding a final party inside the house to say goodbye to the space. At the time of writing, there are no tenants living in any of the four houses on the block, with the site recently being privately sold as a development site. The backyard, empty, fenced off, and overgrown, remains undeveloped. Tom D, a regular attendee, recently reflected on the event:

> Nothing would happen if people didn't just do it, regardless of whether it was legal or not, and I think that's like the main thing… laws don't change because someone up the top of the food chain thinks "oh you know what would be a great idea if we let some kids have some fun and play some music in a backyard on a Saturday afternoon," that changes because people decided that's what they wanna do and then they go ahead and do it. And then eventually the law catches up to that.
>
> (Tom D, personal communication, 14 April 2015)

Figure 4.3: Part of the backyard at Ultimo's Parties, c. 2013. The missing bathroom wall is shown to the left, the performance area is in the center, and the panel beater's workshop is behind the green wall (photo taken by Author).

Ultimo's parties is an example of what I would like to call an *informally informal* space. I use the term *informally informal* to describe a space that, having been constituted informally through its use of urban space, either refuses or fails to establish any kind of recognition from the State. Thus the informality is twofold – both in the establishment of the space, and also in its relationship with the state. In other cases, to be discussed in subsequent chapters, spaces may negotiate a kind of tacit agreement to operate from the state, (becoming an *informally formal space*), or become incorporated into highly formalized and structured spaces that mimic informality (becoming a *formally informal* space). *Informally informal* spaces for live music performance in Sydney tend to operate as temporary (or at best, semi-

permanent) occupations of domestic or "nominally public spaces" (Matejskova, 2007, p. 138). These spaces rely on "tacit, spontaneous, and affective" forms of social organization (McFarlane & Waibel, 2012, p. 3) that constitute a type of "immanent organization" (Purcell & Born, 2016). For a variety of reasons, these spaces are not appropriated by urban authorities into "creative city" style urban governance programs, however they are put to work in the service of urban renewal in more indirect ways through the gentrification process (Mayer, 2013).

In some of the case studies that will be discussed in this chapter, engagement with the state is restricted by a lack of access to the resources, information, and political capital required in order to guarantee ongoing access to space in the event of a confrontation. In this sense, *informally informal* spaces may be seen as a form of "enterprise of exclusion," where the recourse to informality is a form of 'making do,' of providing cultural space for communities in the absence of other options (Tonkiss, 2014, p. 104). In other cases, participants demonstrate a willingness and desire to operate outside the purview of the state, and participation is based on a withdrawal into "counterpublics" (Iveson, 2007). *Informally informal* spaces are also important sites for the accumulation of social capital (Tonkiss, 2014, p. 106), a key contributor to the constitution of (trans)local and subcultural music scenes (Bennett & Peterson, 2004; Thornton, 1996), and an essential element of their social reproduction. Furthermore, *informally informal* spaces may be considered both the *product* and *productive of* counterpublic space (Iveson, 1998, 2007), which allows for new forms of discursive interaction with the public sphere. It is in the construction and management of the borders of that space where its politics is articulated to a broader conception of the city. More recently, this line of thinking has been linked to the development of a theory of "occupancy urbanism," which seeks to understand acts of urban insurgency as based on a politics of occupation (Davidson & Iveson, 2014; Vasudevan, 2015).

It is the goal of this chapter to articulate the everyday, situated, and lived experience of interacting with and participating in *informally informal* spaces in Sydney. To do this, I will be adopting McFarlane's (2012; McFarlane & Waibel, 2012) four conceptualizations of urban informality that were elaborated upon in Chapter 2: as *spatial categorization* which primarily relates to the types of spaces used, their location, and designation in planning documents; as *organizational form*, or the way in which groups of people work together; as *governmental tool*, demonstrating how different groups of people have the ability to command space; and as *negotiable value*, where different systems of value and 'ways of seeing' the city struggle to find a foothold in the urban landscape. Viewing informality across these four dimensions generates an analysis that can identify and interrogate the full range of social, political, economic, and spatial factors that shape the production of informal landscapes of musical performance.

Using this framework, I will consider four examples of *informally informal* spaces of musical performance across this chapter:

- DIY Harder, a weekend-long punk festival that took place in public laneways and informal warehouse performance spaces in and around Marrickville in January 2015. The festival was held as a fundraiser for the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy, and consisted of a variety of musical performances, art exhibitions, and workshops;

- Birdrib, a now-defunct 'warehome' performance venue in Tempe that functioned primarily as a residence that hosted semi-regular performances, mostly of punk music;
- Alfred Street, a residential house located adjacent to a golf course in suburban Dulwich Hill that holds infrequent performances; and
- Ultimo's Parties, described in the introduction to this chapter.

Using data including archival material, interviews with key participants, and insider ethnographic work, I will demonstrate the ways in which the production of *informally informal* spaces allows for an alternative way of understanding the city. These forms of tacit knowledge, both productive of and produced by informal spaces, allow us to imagine what "planning and publics without the State" might look like (Purcell, 2016) as an alternative form of interaction in the contemporary city.

Hidden away in the margins: the *informally informal* spatial categorization.

McFarlane and Waibel (2012) situate informality as a spatial categorization within squatter and slum settlements in the 'Global South.' As such, the concept needs some reworking to be applied to the cities of the 'Global North.' The absence of readily available vacant or disused land that encourages squatting or slum building, a historically small squatting movement, a rigorous system of building standards, as well as vigilant monitoring of empty buildings has restricted the growth of squatting and self-building as a form of urban occupation in Sydney[4]. The case studies presented in this chapter predominantly gain access to space via private rental relationships – whilst the Ultimo and Dulwich Hill homes adopted formal lease agreements on private homes, Birdrib's agreement with its landlord consisted of:

> …a piece of paper, with the address [of the warehouse] written on it, and two signatures. That was it. The verbal agreement was just an amount, and we gave him a lot of labour, so to get it done we knew that we'd have to do a lot of free work on the space, so we helped him move a lot of his stuff out, we helped him sort it.
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

The DIY Harder festival is a notable exception, being the only case study to take place on publicly-owned land in Sydney. For those spaces formed on privately owned land, it is through divergence of *land use* from that stipulated in formal zoning designations that makes these spaces informal. There is no provision within a residential zoning for a house or to be used as a performance venue and community space (for Ultimo and Albert Street). In a similar fashion, Birdrib's use as a residence and performance space was not stipulated within its zoning, and regardless, they did not apply for development consent for its use. Questions of use aside, as is the case with almost all of the case studies analyzed throughout this thesis, the *informally informal* spaces discussed in this chapter occupy marginal positions within the urban hierarchy. This does not mean that their marginality is uniform – marginality is variable across contexts, and even a single site may experience differential marginalities across varying time scales. A site may be able to establish legitimacy only at night, or vice versa, or a site may become more or less marginalized over time as urban activity takes place around it.

[4] There are some notable examples to the contrary. After 13 years, long-running Sydney squat the Hat Factory was evicted on July 31, 2014 (Powell, 2014). In September 2014, squatters were evicted from vacant state-owned properties in Millers Point (Hasham, 2014).

Comparing Tom D's response regarding Ultimo's Parties, with a response describing the site for DIY Harder, we see this variability:

> The whole police, you know, coming and shutting it down, I mean it was obviously gonna happen, which is why you wouldn't do it at night time or anything, like try and keep it a more afternoon thing.
>
> (Tom D, personal communication, 14 April 2015)

> You've got the factory, like the Supré [clothing] factory and all that at the other end, creating this kind of like, why would you walk down here anyway? Especially at night time? If you're not inclined to feel safe in these areas, you probably just wouldn't [go there], which I think probably helps [the ability to put on perfomances].
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

Furthermore, sites may be marginal for different reasons – they may be derelict, they may be in undesirable locations for residential or commercial purposes, or they may be *sonically* marginalized. By sonic marginalization I mean one of two things. Firstly, that the spaces are in a location that experiences noise such that residents are formally or informally deterred from living there. In the case of Birdrib's location in Sydenham in the Marrickville LGA, this is enforced through formal zoning, as well as development control plan (DCP) requirements that residents under the flight path have double-glazed windows. Tenants at Birdrib quickly realized that its location made it amenable to music. In the case of outside performances at the location of DIY Harder, it sometimes inhibited performance:

> Who would put on a gig there? It's like not really ideal to have live music in there, the planes going overhead make a sound tunnel, I remember the first Punk Outsides were acoustic, and there were literally points where you could not hear anything [because] planes would go over.
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

Secondly, sonic marginalization may mean that a space exists in a marginal location because they specifically wish to make noise. In this, sonic marginalization is seen as a dispersive force, and a pull factor towards new locations. Gus describes the Alfred Street house, which is situated next to Marrickville Golf Course in Dulwich Hill, as thus:

> I've lived in [my house] for the last two years, it's a very nice house, it's very well kept, it's tidy, it has no neighbours, and it's in the middle of suburbia and we are able to have four people… have bands practice and record in the loungeroom without it being intrusive [to the neighbourhood].
>
> (Gus, personal communication, 19 May 2015)

Here we see two conflicting ways in which sound is tactically deployed in the urban landscape, according to Goodman (2010): firstly, the intensification of noise in an area may lead to the dispersal of bodies and the dissipation of collective energies (p. 11). Secondly, the reverse is also true: for local punk shows, the intensification of noise through music is intended to create "a heightening of collective sensation," and may also create "transposable and prophetic diagrams of sociality" (p. 11). The relationship between these two movements goes part of the way towards explaining how *informally informal* performance sites open up in the landscape. It is in the "dead space" created as a result of the noise of contemporary capitalism (construction, industry, aircraft, etc.) that subcultural activity can work to draw people in to the space (Prasetyo & Martin-Iverson, 2015).

In most cases, the most effective way for live music activity to take place without attracting noise complaints that may lead to its closure is to shield itself from residential use by locating in an industrial area. All spaces examined for this chapter are located either in, or adjacent to an industrial area, with the exception of the Dulwich Hill house (which was located adjacent to a golf course). Shaw (2013a) has noted that prohibitions on residential use in industrial areas often shield performance spaces from noise complaints, whilst elsewhere (2005) noting that these spaces are highly succeptible to urban regeneration, and in fact may be strategically deployed in order to bring about renewal (O'Connor & Shaw, 2014). Birdrib and DIY Harder's location were described as thus:

> What made Birdrib attractive was the location, which was super, it was pretty industrial, so onto Princes Highway in that sense, under the direct flight path, so no real neighbours that close, and I remember the first time going there, and thinking, like, yeah, this will work.
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

> We were walking down a side street between a large factory and a train line, past a stormwater reservoir… there's also a huge amount of graffiti on the factory walls – some large pieces and throwups, and large tags… as I turn the corner to walk past the reservoir, I can hear the music already – from a distance of probably 300 metres. As I approach the venue, a middle-aged man walks out of a nearby food processing factory in his work gear. He doesn't approach us as we walk past, but ignores us and walks back into his factory. The event site is chosen mainly for the reason that it is isolated from any residential properties – it would have to be at least 2 or 3 blocks to the nearest residential property (I later confirm that it is 350-400m walking distance).
>
> (Field Notes entry, 23 Jan 2015)

The close proximity of other forms of informal practices were, in some cases, seen to be a positive or encouraging factor. The ability of other informal practices to persist in the same space, or very nearby, were seen to be a positive factor in the case of DIY Harder, creating a form of 'zone of exception' where practices of this nature are ignored or tolerated:

> I don't even know what you'd legally call a place like that, it's a lane I'd suppose, but it's huge, and you can fit, and the graffiti helps as well, like it's suits…I suppose… if you were going to walk down that space as a member of the public, maybe you'd think they have permission or something, because they look like legal graff walls, like maybe just people don't ever complain because they think that you can get permission to put something on here or something?
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

Figure 4.4: DIY Harder Festival, 23 Jan 2015 (Photo by the author)

The proximity of other forms of informality to create a 'zone of exception' is not always a means by which informal practices can shield themselves from enforcement. If a nearby practice transgresses socially acceptable acts, they will be subject to state intervention, which may trigger similar interventions nearby. This was certainly the case with Birdrib, where the opening of an informal boarding house in an adjacent building raised the ire of the local council, and indirectly led to intervention at Birdrib. It may also be the case that the same physical space is subject to intervention when used by a different group of people for informal purposes, for example:

> There was a gig on New Year's Eve and they set up, they had a stage, and they didn't play against the wall, they blocked the walkway, they were shut down by 9:30, you know, it didn't last. The cops have come to Punk Outside, but they also know that some things are factored in to it being in that physical space, which is not ideal but really cool, and maybe once or twice they've said the last band can't play, but I don't ever remember it being like, sort of raided in that sense where they walk through and kick everybody out, pour out everyone's beer.
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

The creation of "zones of exception" does not only operate from a bottom-up fashion. Roy (2009) has discussed the creation of top-down zones of exception, where normal planning processes are suspended in order to create exceptional opportunities for capital investment through urban redevelopment. This is certainly the case with the Marrickville area in which DIY Harder takes place, and will be discussed later in this chapter. For now, we turn to McFarlane's second conceptualization of informality: as organizational form. By understanding the ways in which *informally informal* spaces are organized, we are better able to understand how they challenge contemporary understandings of how cities can or should be planned.

Volunteerism, self-sufficiency, multitude: The *informally informal* organizational form

> DIY is the idea that you can do for yourself the activities normally reserved for the realm of capitalist production (wherein products are created for consumption in a system that encourages alienation and nonparticipation). Thus, anything from music and magazines to education and protest can be created in a nonalienating, self-organized, and purposely anticapitalist manner. While production mostly takes place through small and localized means, extensive and oftentimes global social networks are utilized for distribution. Though DIY is most prominent in the realm of cultural production, it is continually being expanded to reclaim more complex forms of labor, production, and resistance.
>
> (Holtzman, Hughes, & Van Meter, 2007, p. 44)

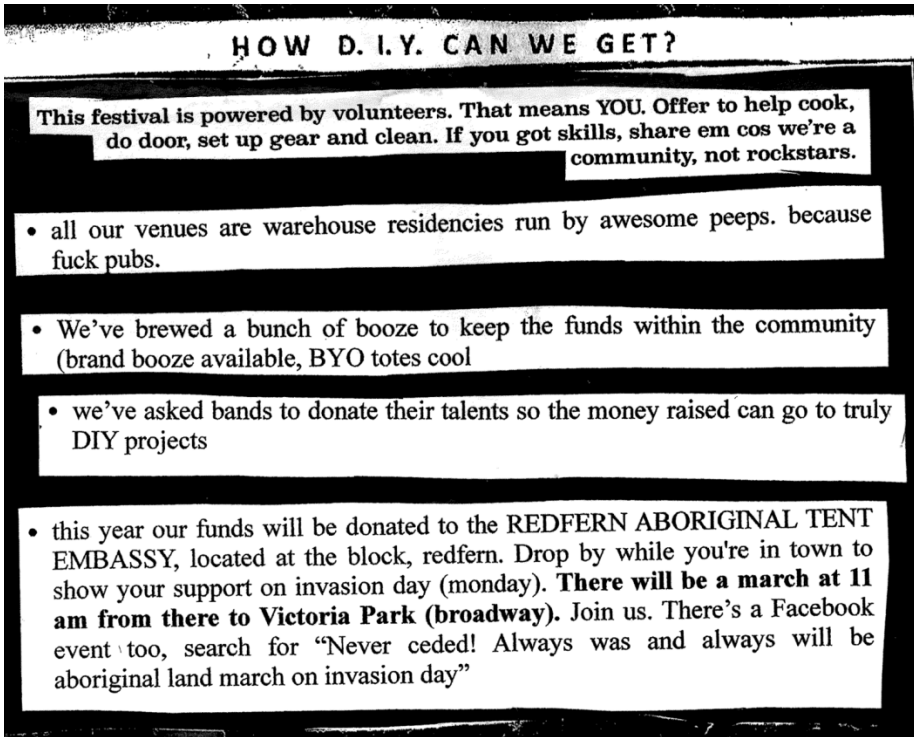


Figure 4.5: How DIY can we get? (source: Festival program collected during fieldwork)

This definition of the do-it-yourself (DIY) ethic, along with its articulation at DIY Harder in Figure 4.5, is a useful starting point to unpack the second way in which urban informality is conceptualized and expressed: as a mode of socio-spatial organization. Following McFarlane and Waibel (2012, p. 3), "formal is generally assumed to be rule-based, structured, explicit, predictable, and regular, while informal is generally assumed to be defined by the absence of these forms. Informality is often thought as spontaneous, tacit, and affective." Using this as our departure point into investigating *informally informal* organizational forms, we can see that this dynamic was certainly a driving force behind some of the spaces:

> I think my favourite kind of venues are the ones where you don't really have to play by an owner's rules… you can byo [bring your own alcohol], you can smoke cigarettes inside, or you know, out in the backyard… they don't have lockouts, they don't have people controlling when the set times need to be, you don't have people charging at the door, although charging at the door's not a bad thing if you're organising it yourself.
>
> (Tom D, personal communication, 14 April 2015)

> DIY, or just having control or taking back control and doing something exactly the way you want to do it, doing something with mates and having spontaneity is a good thing in performance, rather than rigid, rule-bound, [inaudible] at venues with a big separation between performer and audience.
> (Lani, personal communication, 13 May 2015)

In these examples, we begin to see a recourse to informality as a *rejection* of the control of some outside, appointed authority – in this case, the formal world of live music venues which are dictated by formal distinctions between performer (as producer) and audience (as consumer), mediated by a property owner. Whilst the working lives of musicians can be considered as largely typified by informal labour, here participants are describing the distinction between musical production as a type of labour, conducted in formalized spaces, and music as a form of community practice, conducted within informal spaces. It is within this rupture that we can begin to trace a *line of flight* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9), a potential way to escape the rigidity of the formal, and experiment with new, immanent forms of socio-spatial organization.

Organizational form in this instance is a limited means by which to interpret urban informality. Whilst McFarlane and Waibel (2012, p. 3) state that informal modes of labour organization are highly organized and disciplined in practice, we are presented an incomplete picture. According to this understanding, these modes are centred around building a reserve army of contingent labour – a form of organization designed to be readily available at the disposal of capital. In other instances, informality may be used as a departure point to develop "innovative forms of autonomous social organization" to negotiate with a distant or weak state, or in resistance to other forms of hegemony, such a local gangs (de Cácia Oenning da Silva & Shaw, 2012). These forms of organization assist in being able to find "new forms of aesthetic sociality," allowing participants to envisage a path towards local autonomy. It is for these reasons that we must not only distinguish between formal and informal organizational form, but also look at the *terms* on which those forms come into existence, and interrogate their relationship to dominant modes of socio-spatial organization. In order to do this, we will now turn to the idea of *immanent organization,* for it is clear that when discussing *informally informal* types of organization, we are not discussing the absence of a social order, but the creation of alternative forms.

Purcell and Born (2016, p. 5), drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari, state that immanent organization "must always emerge out of the activity of people themselves," and "cannot be directed or managed by a separate, transcendent, or centralized power." This interpretation places at its core the *active* creation of new ways of being together, and the expansion and maintenance of those ways of being together, with an emphasis on self-management and autonomy. In this radically democratic way of organizing, "there are no artificial persons that transcend the community; there are only natural persons that are immanent to it" (Purcell & Born, 2016, p. 6). There is evidence of this process of organization at DIY Harder:

> I run into a former work colleague, who is now doing his PhD and lives in one of the warehouse spaces being used for the festival. "You think this is chaotic, you should've come to the organizing meetings," he says to me. When I ask him what he means, and on what principles the event was organized, he calls it "kind of consensus," which he sarcastically described as "argue until one person relents, only to bring it up at the next meeting."
>
> (Field Notes entry, 23 Jan 2015)

Being part of the organizing committee for a large, multi-day, multi-venue festival like DIY Harder was a unique experience for Birdrib:

> There was a committee, so to speak, that didn't involve every member of the house… and then they would come back and talk to our house about how they wanted it to run, and then there was a discussion about you know like, how much we were gonna charge and then all that kinda stuff was then decided by collective, not really decided by us, so it was one of the few gigs where we um, invited a lot of other people to have formal roles at Birdrib, so things like instead of security there were conflict managers, we invited them to be, you know, to go and do their thing, and I think there was the awareness that we weren't necessarily Birdrib that night, we were part of a collective, and I think that DIY Hard and DIY Harder, those two were the only ones that we did like that.
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

Through this loose consensus, committee-based, *informally informal* mode of socio-spatial organization, DIY Harder was organized over the course of a weekend, taking place in both public spaces and warehouse venues across Marrickville, St Peters and Tempe. In this immanent and generative mode of organization, a schedule of performances, workshops, and discussion was arranged, and communicated via the festival program (see Figures 4.6 and 4.7). At DIY Harder, organizational work was not being carried out by a transcendental, professional planning authority, such as those that reside in local government. The authority to command space and determine the use of that space over the weekend was determined by collective members themselves, with attendees offered opportunities to participate via volunteer callouts. These relationships are embedded and reinforced through the vehicle of performing and listening to music:

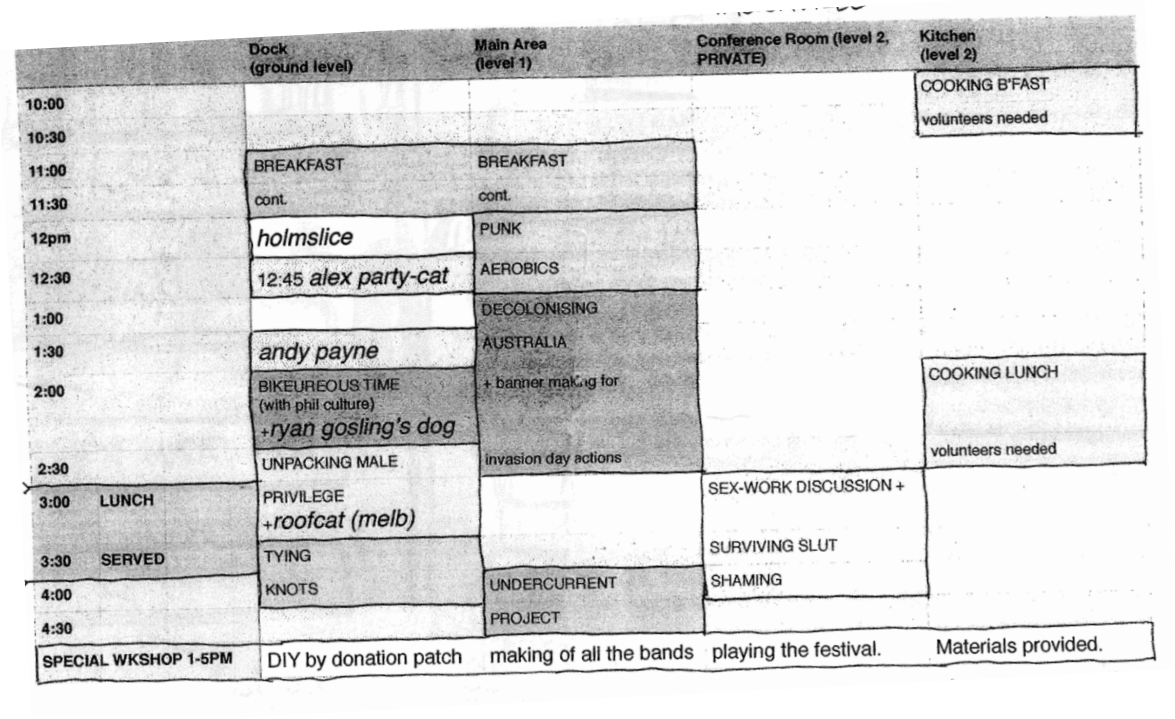
> By bringing into existence relationships that are thought of as desirable, a musical performance not only reflects those relationships but also shapes them. It teaches and inculcates the concept of those ideal relationships, or values, and allows those taking part to try them on, to see how they fit, to experience them without having to commit themselves to them, at least for more than the duration of the performance.
>
> (Small, 1998, p. 183, quoted in Bell 2014)

Through the hosting of punk music performance, links are formed between DIY Harder and other organizations. The festival itself was a fundraiser for the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy, an ongoing occupation of public space resisting the displacement of indigenous housing in inner Sydney, and culminated in attending a rally in its support on invasion day, January 26.[5] Recently, Darling (2016) has discussed the potential utility of approaching urban displacement, such as that at Redfern, through a lens of informality, and indeed, there are many links (as well as many important differences) between the Embassy and DIY Harder. With the festival's emphasis on reclaimed food – "bins" are one of 3 landmarks located on the festival map (see Figure 4.8), and practices of collective cooking and eating were encouraged as a part of the festival – links can be drawn with the dumpster diving and Food Not Bombs movements, part of a global movement against food wastage (Edwards & Mercer, 2007). Birdrib has also previously hosted activists from rural and interstate social movements, including anti-mining blockades, and people from similar scenes in other cities. In its emphasis on direct action, participation, volunteerism, and collectivity, the organizational structure of DIY Harder shares many similarities with DIY Punk scenes, for example in the US (Barrett,

[5] Invasion day is a term coined by indigenous activists to highlight the brutal processes of dispossession that are celebrated as part of "Australia Day," January 26.

2013; Culton & Holtzman, 2010), Indonesia (Martin-Iverson, 2014) and Europe (Císař & Koubek, 2012; McKay, 1998). These *informally informal* modes of socio-spatial organization, in their creation of *immanent* forms of authority, demonstrate potential ways of organizing and governing urban space. We will now turn our attention towards those modes of governance, as well as state attempts to intervene in this immanent form of city-making.

Figure 4.6: Band timetable for DIY Harder (source: Festival program collected during fieldwork)



	Dock (ground level)	Main Area (level 1)	Conference Room (level 2, PRIVATE)	Kitchen (level 2)
10:00				COOKING B'FAST volunteers needed
10:30				
11:00	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST		
11:30	cont.	cont.		
12pm	*holmslice*	PUNK		
12:30	12:45 *alex party-cat*	AEROBICS		
1:00		DECOLONISING		
1:30	*andy payne*	AUSTRALIA		
2:00	BIKEUREOUS TIME (with phil culture) +*ryan gosling's dog*	+ banner making for		COOKING LUNCH volunteers needed
2:30	UNPACKING MALE	invasion day actions		
3:00 LUNCH	PRIVILEGE +*roofcat (melb)*		SEX-WORK DISCUSSION +	
3:30 SERVED	TYING		SURVIVING SLUT	
4:00	KNOTS	UNDERCURRENT	SHAMING	
4:30		PROJECT		
SPECIAL WKSHOP 1-5PM	DIY by donation patch	making of all the bands	playing the festival.	Materials provided.

Figure 4.7: Timetable for second day of the festival, at a warehouse in Marrickville (source: Festival program collected during fieldwork)

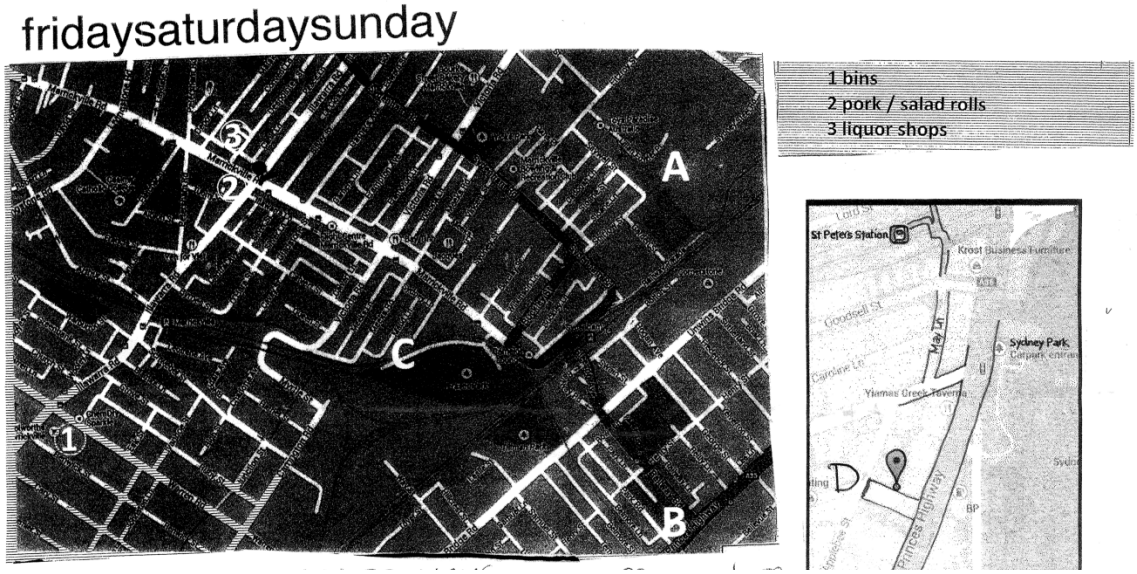


Figure 4.8: Festival map (Source: Festival program collected during fieldwork)

Imagining planning without the state: *informally informal* governance

The creation of *informally informal* modes of socio-spatial organization as exemplified by Birdrib and DIY Harder is a useful starting point to investigate the third of McFarlane and Waibel's (2012, p. 4) conceptualizations, where informality is viewed as *governmental tool*. Initially, they describe the dominant forms of understanding informality in this way, in which "categories of formal and informal are often deployed by states as an organizational device

that allows particular… forms of intervention" (McFarlane & Waibel, 2012, p. 4). The forms of intervention observed in our case studies can be understood using Raunig's model of *soft gentrification*. Raunig claims that in this process, despite "a prepossessing rhetoric of participation" and "the constant invocation of innovation and creativity," the reality is that:

> Top-down processes are carried out here, steered by trained personnel and culminating in a divisive logic of inclusion and exclusion. Non-conformists are denounced as incapable of negotiating and are excluded; those who are included follow an increasing logic of subservience.
>
> (Raunig, 2013, p. 130)

Whilst McFarlane and Waibel claim that this allows states to view informality as a "developmental problem," to be solved through formalization, Raunig goes into detail into describing the *processes* that underpin this transition through his model of soft gentrification. The first stage, which he calls *repressive escalation,* is most clearly demonstrated in *informally informal* spaces. As these spaces either do not wish to or do not have the resources to engage with the state, often when the state chooses to engage with them, it is with the intention of putting an end to the activities taking place within that space. Whilst Raunig claims that this process often tends to be avoided, as it can create undesirable images of repression, in the case of Ultimo's Parties it was certainly present (see also Figure 4.9):

> Straight Arrows were playing, there was that time when like the police came in and I was having a dance and then I bumped into one of the policemen while I was having a dance, he was like going up to the stage to make them be quiet or whatever, and this cop just like turned around and grabbed me by the throat and just threw me to the ground… that's just what policemen do, they just wanna get people into order and stuff, they do it however they want.
>
> (Tom D, personal communication, 14 April 2015)

In order for these images of repression to gain support, they are often associated with a targeted media campaign, "especially with the help of the classic hooks of drug dealing and criminality" (Raunig, 2013, p. 130). Moral panics surrounding "illegal" parties and drug use have a long history in Australia, particularly since the rave era of the 1990's and the now-famous death of 15-year old Anna Wood (Gibson & Pagan, 2000; Homan, 1998, 2003; Luckman, 2000). Indeed, since the introduction of the lockouts in 2014, numerous media outlets have lamented the proliferation of "illegal" warehouse parties, which "are not licensed and are known for unregulated drinking, drug use and potential fire hazards in unsafe buildings" (Koziol, 2014). In these cases, unsafe buildings and drug use are routinely invoked as triggers for police intervention, often including the use of public order and riot squad tactical units (L. Harris, 2015).

These repressive incursions into urban space, along with the targeting of marginal populations in enforcement (including youth, students, women, working class people, queer people, indigenous people), has long been noted as a component of Smith's "revanchist city" (Smith, 1996; 1998, p. 1). The fact that many of these sites are "rent gap" sites that are awaiting redevelopment shows that there is an economic as well as political imperative to restrict the use of these spaces for informal activities (Smith, 1979). Whilst this may be the case, it is clear that repressive escalation is not used in every instance. For now, we turn to other, less direct ways in which the informal/formal divide is put to work as a governmental tool.

Figure 4.9: Police intervention at Ultimo's Parties (source: Straight Arrows Facebook page)

The first thing to note is that informality may establish its own tools of governance, beyond the reach of official governance mechanisms. This non-normative conception of informality does not, therefore, assign informal status only to marginalized or unstructured operations, but is concerned with events upon which the government may have little impact (McFarlane & Waibel, 2012, p. 4). These modes of governance may rely upon informal modes of socio-spatial organization, but are constituted in the ways that informal organizations are able to restrict or enable particular forms of activity in particular spaces. Broadly, considering the amount of cash-in-hand and in-kind payments that take place in the music industry (Hoegh-Guldberg, 2012), we may consider it an industry largely typified by informality. Within this large sector, however, it is in DIY spaces that immanent forms of governing space are created.

Informally informal modes of governance, based on social connection and proximity to events, encourage participation by those who become acquainted with them, as a participant commented in the case of Birdrib:

> [our friends] were there at every show helping out… there was an open agreement that other people could police the place and say that they, like, people would smoke upstairs, and people would say "hey man, I live here, we don't allow people to smoke upstairs, can you please smoke downstairs," and they didn't live there, but we would let them say that because… they'd been there from the first gig, they knew how the place ran, and they knew who we were, and they knew what would be ok and what wouldn't be ok.
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

This informal system of governance was able to limit violence – an interviewee who lived at Birdrib could only recall "one or two scuffles" taking place at the venue, "one was just totally to do with this drunken misunderstanding, and the second was nothing, it was when we rented it out for a party, so nothing to do with like our community" (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016). The socially constituted aspect of these governmental tools is made clear with the following:

> We functioned off people either coming enough that they knew the deal, or being friends with somebody that would know the deal, and what's cool about these spaces is that generally, most people on most nights did [know the deal].
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

Whilst informal modes of governance often rely on social proximity, and a system of codes and mutually understood practices (as demonstrated above), on occasion these codes are formalised into policies or statements, such as a Safer Spaces policy. The concept of "safe space," emerging out of feminist, queer, and civil rights movements, seeks to keep "marginalised groups free from violence and harassment" (The Roestone Collective, 2014, p. 1346). To that end, they have been highly effective in enabling those who have experienced violence and oppression "to participate in political organising," rendering them "incredibly valuable contributions to anti-oppressive praxis." (Fitzpatrick & Thompson, 2015, p. 245) The purpose of a Safer Spaces policy is thus to reduce oppression and violence within DIY space, and also to potentially avoid the involvement of the state and/or police in instances of violence (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015, p. 47). This is evident within the Safer Spaces policy for DIY Harder shown in Figure 4.10, which highlights the availability of "grievance crew/mediators" to provide support for festival attendees. It also asks attendees to be "conscious of themselves and the 'space' they take up," demonstrating the inherently spatial character of the policy. As I reflected at the time:

> I assume that this statement (Safer Spaces) is mainly directed toward members of the community to police their relationship with each other, however a few minutes later a woman who is not attending the show tries to ride her bike along the pathway, and has to dismount from her bike to negotiate the throng of people milling around the pathway in front of the performance area.
>
> (Field notes, 23 Jan 2015)

For shows taking place in public, it is clear that the effect of such a policy is to create a safer space not only for attendees, but members of the general public who may interact with performances, either incidentally or intentionally. As such, statements of immanent governance like a safer spaces policy seek to not only engender a sense of respect, trust, and mutuality amongst members within a group, but for those values to be the basis of a space's relationship with the wider community. Through the creation of these forms of governing space, we can see how local claims to controlling space can exist "beyond the reach of official governance mechanisms" (McFarlane & Waibel, 2012, p. 4). They key point here, is that Safer Spaces policies, whilst sharing similarities with policies used in similar scenes elsewhere, are a form of governance that have their genesis within an immanent organization. In the case of Birdrib, this was very much highlighted by the following:

> So because DIY had a Safe Spaces policy [see Figure 4.10], of course we definitely were completely on board with that, for that night… if we were ever involved in something, or if the people who wanted to put on a gig wanted to have certain terms like, we were on board with that as well. But as a house, it

wasn't, we didn't point to a wall and say this is our safer spaces policy and this is why you can't be here, we just said like, there's certain things you don't do, and you just did one.

(Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016

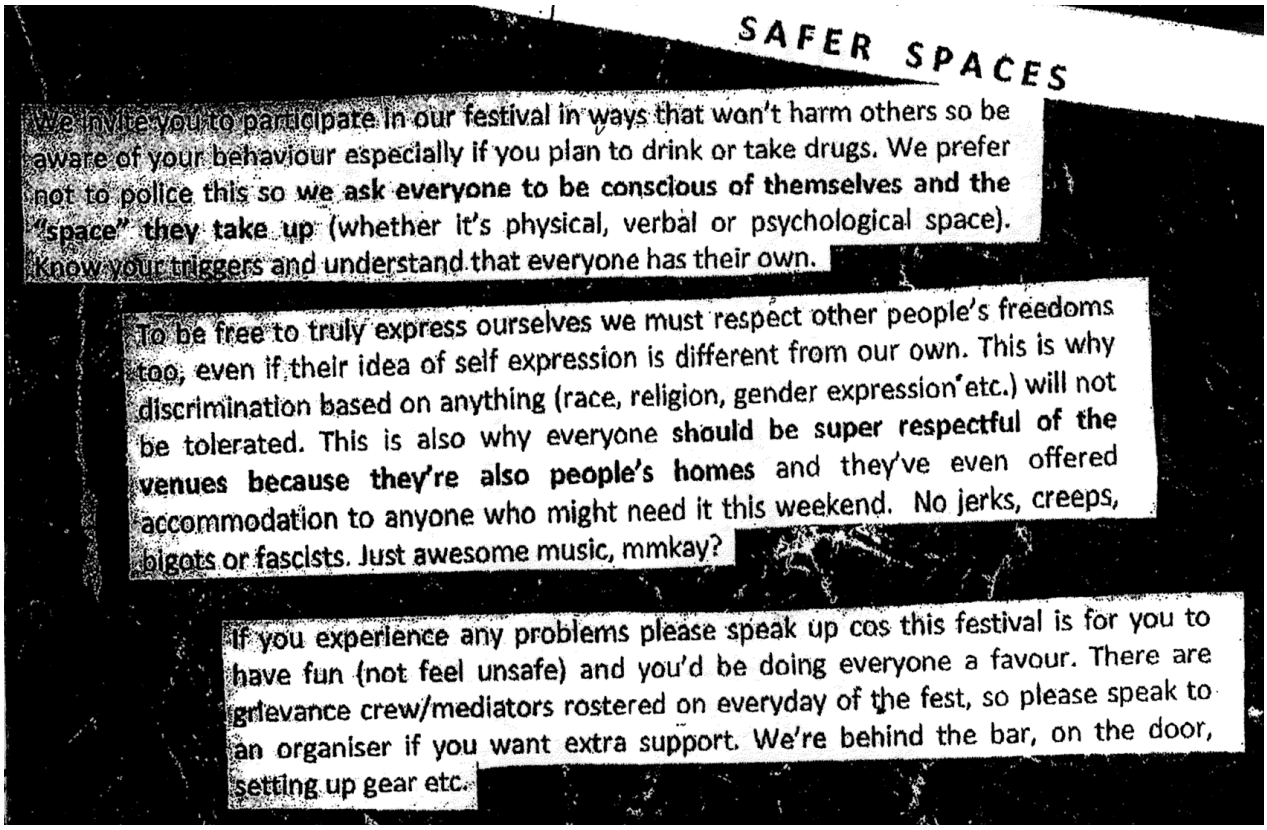


Figure 4.10: Safer Spaces policy for DIY Harder (source: Festival program collected during fieldwork)

Spatial governance, however, does not only arise from immanent organizations. In fact, as Raunig has described, in the practice of soft gentrification, "top down processes are carried out… steered by trained personnel and culminating in a divisive logic of inclusion and exclusion" (Raunig, 2013, p. 130). These processes can be tracked on a local scale through the interactions that informal spaces have with the everyday world of local statutory planning and its associated authorities. In a more general sense, we can see broader ideas about the future of local areas articulated through strategic planning documents.

Birdrib's informal constitution, as a space rented on a handshake agreement and with no formal approval through the planning system to be used either as a residence or a performance space, was to quickly become its undoing in its interactions with Marrickville Council. Interestingly, it was only when the building next door began being used as an informal boarding house that local authorities were made aware of the existence of Birdrib:

> their landlord was probably fucking them over, so like tons of rubbish left out the front, they turned their shop window into their lounge room… and I think the council probably found out, or got suss on the place, because it was just so obvious after a certain point that people were living there, and that was our direct neighbours, but I can sympathize with their position, I'd probably do the same if I was in their shoes.
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

Additionally, as the informal boarding house next door was part of the same building, and their utilities costs were shared due to a splitter not being installed in the building, Birdrib experienced a spike in utilities costs, causing them to rely on more shows to generate revenue. These shows further exposed the venue to the public eye, and caused particular problems when the space was listed on social media:

> People would tag that they were at a gig at our house [on social media]… [and] it creates a page and there's obviously like "well what is this place called" so somebody had created a page called Birdrib, and if you clicked on it, it had a map, with a drop pin of our fucking address, and then you can't delete that unless you can legally and formally claim that you own [the space], and the way they want that is Facebook will say "we'll call you" and they'll only accept a landline or a business number, so how do you claim that if you're clearly illegal.
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

When Birdrib was eventually inspected by council officers and threatened with maximum fines of a million dollars for running an illegal boarding house, the officers inspecting stated to the owner and the tenants of the building that they knew the space was hosting events because they had found them on Facebook. Here we can see the potential utility of social media and ubiquitous computing as a form of surveillance, that actually contributes to a form of "digital enclosure" (Andrejevic, 2007) that has material spatial consequences. It is also constituted in relatively mundane, everyday experiences, and "run by multiple agencies, exempting no-one" (Lyon, 2002, p. 242). Faced with large fines, and with no way to continue paying rent on the space without the ability to live or put on shows there, the collective decided to vacate the space.

It is clear that whilst informal modes of governance over urban space can arise from forms of immanent organization, at the present moment in Sydney they lack the authority to provide a viable alternative to the transcendent and violent power of the state. Furthermore, the State is able to put the formal/informal distinction to work, in designating some venues (like Birdrib) as illegal boarding houses, whilst working with other spaces to generate more tacit forms of compliance, creating *informally formal* spaces, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. In the final, concluding section, I will unpack the urban politics at work throughout this process, by discussing *informally informal* spaces as sites of negotiable value.

Conclusion: commoning, enclosure, and informal spaces as *negotiable value*

We have seen thus far the establishment of informal spaces, organizations, and modes of governance based on the principles of autonomy, immanence, and what has become known in the literature as "commoning" (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015). If commoning can be viewed as a form of self-help, where "those who piece together collective forms of creating and exchanging do so in order to meet concrete needs," then it is evident that multiple examples of commoning can be found in the case studies outlined in this chapter (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015, p. 36). These new, informal spaces, organizations, and modes of governance, allow participants to experience new modes of production and new ways of being together, in the formation of a "separate camp" that Negt and Kluge argue is one manifestation of a counterpublic seeking to establish forms of authority and value that are counter to the mainstream (Negt & Kluge, 2016 [1972], p. 61). As they note, however, if the boundaries of such counterpublics are policed too forcefully, then they cease to function effectively as

publics in which anyone might be able to take part. And yet, if the alternative forms of being together established by counterpublics are not closed or completely invisible, these emergent forms will occasionally come into conflict with the formal world which seeks to alienate space in the production of exchange value in the city. As such, state Roy and AlSayyad (2004, p. 5), "if informality operates through the fixing of value, including the mapping of spatial value, then informality operates through the constant negotiability of value." Following this, the informal/formal distinction is a binary that is not only crossed by individuals frequently in their everyday lived experience of the city, but can be viewed as "modes of everyday sociality through which different urban constituencies (residents, planners, business people, activists, etc.) sift and sort through their hopes and desires." (McFarlane & Waibel, 2012, p. 6) In this understanding, informality and formality allow us to understand urban politics in globalizing cities in new and productive ways.

The representations of space articulated by *informally informal* spaces thus provide only one perspective on space, and may conflict with other competing visions for the area. The large walkway off Sydney Steel Road Marrickville, which plays host to the Punk Outside series of shows as well as the DIY Harder Festival, currently lies adjacent to two recently announced redevelopment schemes. The Sydenham Station Creative and Artisanal Industries Hub was announced by Marrickville Council in September 2014. Produced in collaboration with the National Live Music Office, the Future Cities Collaborative (part of the United States Studies Centre of the University of Sydney), and the NSW State Government, and subsequently renamed to the Sydenham Creative Hub, the plan proposes that a ten-hectare area adjacent to Sydenham Station be "activated" to "limit the squeeze on artists and industry" (see Figure 4.11). The plan also proposes "concept hotels" on major sites and seeks to "reclaim streets for public and programmable space," in what appears to be a fairly generic Creative City-style regeneration effort. In the plan, the walkway in which performances were hosted is slated to be an "improved connection to Marrickville Metro." This 'improvement', and the likely securitization of that space in that improvement process, would reduce the possibility of hosting future performances there. Participants seem aware of that fact:

> it's kind of nestled out the back of this kind of pretty industrial area, and at the end of that lane are these like disgusting reservoirs that like smell really bad, what desire is there for people to go to an area like that unless you're like, you know, like open to these kinds of things [punk shows and graffiti], maybe, but of course with like this rezoning of that whole area, that could change completely at any moment, like, yeah, fuck, Shirlow Street, instantly, develop that, and that lane is gone.
>
> (Anon, personal communication, 16 April 2016)

Furthermore, immediately adjacent to the Marrickville Council plan is a private developer proposal to redevelop 18 hectares of industrial lands along Victoria Road. The Victoria Road Precinct seeks to redevelop the area into high- and medium-density housing, as well as a business precinct and mixed use development (see Figure 4.12). Due to the area's location under the flight path, height controls and bans on residential development in the area will need to be lifted to accommodate the proposal. Once again, the location of Punk Outside lies right next to the redevelopment proposal. Another group, the Marrickville Community Planning Collective, objects to both of these plans, believing that the developer proposal will

Figure 4.11: Proposal for Sydenham Creative Hub (source: Marrickville Council)

Figure 4.12: Victoria Road Precinct proposal (source: victoriaroadprecinct.com)

increase noise complaints, stifling the creative industries in the area. Via their Facebook page, they have stated that:

> There are literally 100s of artists whose studios and performance spaces thrive in the Victoria Road precinct…The Victoria Road precinct warehouse parties are known throughout Sydney, from Bondi to Bankstown, and amongst young people and those who follow the music culture.
> You can't "force" creative industries. They grow organically and they have been and are still growing and thriving in the Victoria Road precinct. If you don't recognise this and capitulate to developers' rezoning demands, the creatives, artists, musicians, boutique breweries and food industries will be lost to Marrickville forever, as will our industrial heritage.
>
> (MAGIC – Marrickville Community Planning Collective, Facebook page, 3 May 2016)

This local activist position recognizes the importance of informal practices to the local area, as well as the social capital generated and fostered within these spaces, albeit through a "creative industries" lens. These representations of the area, especially when compared to the map included with the DIY Harder program depicted in Figure 4.8, demonstrate that there are "multiple forms of urban sovereignty" operating within this relatively small precinct (McFarlane & Waibel, 2012, p. 6). It is clear that the developer and council proposals for the locality seek to rapidly change the area. As such, precarity lies at the heart of *informally informal* spaces of musical performance in Sydney. Precarity, as we will see in subsequent chapters, becomes a dominant theme throughout this thesis. Subsequent chapters will reveal how differing typologies of informal spaces – *informally formal* and *formally informal* – are specific iterations of spaces that are both produced by and productive of precarity.

For the *informally informal* spaces discussed in this chapter, we have seen that there are a variety of factors that have led to their displacement – foremost of which is an inability or unwillingness to engage with the formal world of state-directed urban planning processes. As we will see in Chapter 6, with the example of the Pitz, the space between informality and formality, and the regulatory world of planning is *already* being deployed in order to produce socio-spatial inequalities in the area. For all of the spaces discussed in this chapter, their only recourse to this displacement is to start over in a new area, presumably further from the centre of the city. For now, we will turn our attention to informal spaces that have managed to become semi-permanent fixtures in the landscape of musical performance – the *informally formal* spaces of musical production in Sydney.

Chapter 5 Black Wire Records and the *informally formal*

Introduction

The following case study, of Black Wire Records in Sydney's inner west, makes up the second typology of informal space in Sydney that will be discussed in this thesis: the *informally formal*. Here, on a retail strip with high vacancy rates and road traffic, lies Black Wire Records, a multi-functional space that operates primarily as volunteer-run record store and performance venue. The space was established under a commercial lease after a number of participants in a local punk scene found it impossible to operate a similar store in a nearby area undergoing rapid gentrification, where they were subject to regular police intervention. Black Wire has managed to operate in its current location due to a unique assemblage of factors, including possessing a strong and vocal subcultural community, local concern about live music venue closures, and attempts at urban reform to rehabilitate the live music sector. In practice, these factors highlight the tensions and contradictions inherent in the project of neoliberal urbanism, revealing how despite the appearance of a highly structured urban environment, informality persists on the part of both the state and local musical communities.

The organizational structures of those involved with the space are typified by affective and informal relationships, based on volunteerism, self-sufficiency, and mutual aid. Since opening in 2010, Black Wire has become a focal point for a wide array of musical scenes and subcultures. These scenes, which are locally constituted but have a *translocal* and *virtual* character, create conditions by which participants are able to experiment with new forms of social organization that encourage active participation (Bennett & Peterson, 2004). These forms, typified by immanence, provide a mode of organization through which urban space may be subjected to "commoning" (Kirwan, Dawney, & Brigstocke, 2015; Purcell, 2016). This process is necessarily messy and incomplete, but it is evident that the form of self-organization found in spaces like Black Wire provide useful lessons as to how this may be achieved. The crucial difference between Black Wire and the *informally informal* spaces of Chapter 4 is Black Wire's minimal forays into the formal world that allow it to attempt to achieve a sense of spatio-temporal security.

This chapter will outline the ways in which Black Wire records can teach us about informality and neoliberal urbanism as a mode of *spatial governance in praxis*. This refers to the ways in which Black Wire has developed an *informally formal* governance structure, through informal negotiation between participants of the space, and those that live and work around it. It also refers to the ways in which certain socio-spatial rules and codes are enacted in the space, and the ways in which none of these codes can be mapped successfully onto formal or official codes of practice, rules or laws. This has not occurred without conflict. The space had managed to exist informally and outside the purview of the state for a number of years, despite hosting loud, unauthorized musical performances several nights a week. This was made possible because of the negotiation of a number of informal agreements with its most immediate neighbours, and the perceived benefit the space brought to the local area. After complaints from newly arrived neighbours, the venue was the subject of council enforcement

for operating without development consent. Despite still operating without consent, the venue has been praised by local politicians for its contributions to live music in Sydney, and volunteers from the space have been invited to sit on a number of advisory panels for local council.

What distinguishes Black Wire from the informally informal spaces discussed in the previous chapter is that it is an example of a space that has chosen to engage with the formal world at strategic points that would ensure its ability to continue to operate. Its existence, reliant upon both formal arrangements as well as tacit agreements with both residents and the local council, seeks to comply with relevant regulation – primarily building codes and planning law – but only as much as is necessary for the survival of the space. It is an example of a space that is *informally formal*, a space that can simultaneously experiment with possible extra-regulatory urban futures *and* secure its future through regulatory compliance. As a social space, rooted in ideas of immanent organization and reliant upon informal agreements, it provides numerous lessons in not only how planning may be conducted without the state, but furthermore, how under certain conditions the urban planning system may be viewed as an impediment to the process of equitable city-making.

In this chapter, I will provide analysis of observations conducted at events held at Black Wire between late 2014 and early 2016, as well as in-depth, semi-structured interviews with attendees, performers and volunteers at the space. To demonstrate the interactions between local government and Black Wire, I have sourced numerous council documents, including documents relating to Black Wire's development application in 2012 and 2013, as well as a number of council reports relating to live music industries in Sydney. These documents show that even though Black Wire Records regularly relied upon informality as a mode of socio-spatial organization, the enforcement operations of local government are *also* typified by a high degree of informality, demonstrating Tonkiss' (2012, p. 58) claim that "the recourse to informality is a routine tactic of the powerful." It is through the maintenance of the boundaries of *informally formal* spaces that we see how they may be useful in imagining a more socially just city. As with the previous chapter, the analysis of this informally formal space of musical performance will be analysed using the McFarlane and Waibel's four categories of informality discussed in Chapter 2: spatial categorization, organizational form, governmental tool, and negotiable value.

Crossing over: the *informally formal* spatial categorization

Black Wire Records operates under a commercial lease, and at first glance, the primary purpose of the space seems to be a record store – racks of records for sale line the walls, and the glass-top counter contains cassette releases and merchandise, including t-shirts, zines, and posters (see Figure 5.13). Yet, posters on the wall detail the history of performances in the space, instruments line the walls of the rear kitchen, milk crates store empty bottles in a hallway, and a booth stands near the entrance of the venue to take door money (see Figure 5.14). The posters, in particular, tell us a story about DIY performance in Sydney, and operate as a museum or archive of long-closed DIY spaces in Sydney, such as Maggotville, the Pitz, and Lanfranchi's Memorial Dischotheque. These are clear visual cues that indicate that performance is not only a regular occurrence, but central to the venue's operation. The historical emergence of Black Wire, in its current location, as both performance venue and

record store, is a result of changing urban dynamics that can be understood through a lens of informality.

The opening of Black Wire in its current location is the result of a process of "settling" that has consisted of both push and pull factors. Devlin (2010) has described the settling process of street traders in Manhattan, who in the face of increasing enforcement, move to poorer minority neighbourhoods where oversight and enforcement is lighter, and the process may be observed in a number of other informal practices. A near-constant fixture at Black Wire is one of its residents (there are three bedrooms in a residence upstairs) and volunteers, Tom. Tom has been involved in the Sydney DIY music community for a number of years, and the opening of Black Wire can be traced to the closure of the record store Paint It Black, which existed in nearby Newtown during the early 2000's, and at which Tom was also a volunteer. The collective that ran Paint It Black nearly a decade ago decided to close the store for a number of reasons, including compliance issues, neighbour complaints, and the creeping gentrification of the area:

> It had gotten to the point where our main problem was with newly moved in neighbours, like there seemed to be a lot of people in that area who had just moved in who were a very different kind of socioeconomic class and treated us as such, like they… yeah it was a very adversarial kind of relationship, which is obviously far from ideal but it was very hard for me particularly, like I'd have to go to the police every single time [the store held a performance] and like lay out the whole timesheets of everything [relating to the performance].
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

Figure 5.13: Front counter of Black Wire Records (source: Instagram @blackwirerecords)

Figure 5.14: Tom, volunteer at Black Wire Records, on the store's sixth birthday (source: Instagram @blackwirerecords)

Paint It Black was also subjected to informal enforcement operations from the local police:

> There was no kind of specific agreement, it was more just a… I mean to their credit they didn't just say "don't do anything, fuckin, like [laughs]" they didn't say you've gotta cease, I mean they implied that, but they didn't say it outright, and they didn't say work within these kind of… it was mainly to do with noise levels and time. Which, in a lot of ways is quite reasonable… as much as I had a frequent relationship with them, it wasn't necessarily horrible. Most of that was just because of our proximity, like where we were; you could almost see it [from Newtown police station]. I think if we were further away we would have had more problems, it was because we were almost right under their nose it was deemed more acceptable somehow.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

Kurfürst (2012, p. 98) has described how the creation of 'mediation spaces' that permit or restrict particular types of activity are spatially characterized by two types of proximity – spatial proximity, and social proximity (or mundane intimacy). The confluence of these two types of proximity allow for negotiations to take place and informal agreements to be reached over the use of particular spaces. However, ultimately it is social proximity – the ability of enforcer and enforced to relate to each other – that allows informal agreements to persist

over time. Whilst Paint It Black may have been spatially proximate to the main intersection of Newtown and its police station, the informal arrangement was lacking in social proximity, as Tom says:

> They [police] were kind of "what are you doing, what is this place," but they were fairly easy going considering… there was a *lot* of interaction, and particularly because at Newtown police, quite often it's where people go straight out of the academy… so you get all of the new fresh-faced police, all very eager and overly enthusiastic.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

The collective operating Paint It Black eventually decided to move the store out of the Newtown area, due to consistent neighbour complaints and ongoing police issues. Tom says of the decisions influencing locational choice for what would become Black Wire:

> we knew we needed to do something as well [as retail] … plus we also knew that we weren't going to be able to afford to do it in one of the… more central areas, so we knew we were gonna be further away.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

Tom's narrative here articulates the process of "settling" quite well, with a unique assemblage of push and pull factors contributing to where informal practices take place. The store subsequently opened on Parramatta Road, in an area typified by high vacancy rates and low rents. Tom says of the new location:

> It's definitely more beneficial. We can do more worthwhile things, and but at the same time there's, in terms of retail it's incredibly poor. We don't get walk-in traffic really, whereas previously [in Newtown] you'd get people just wandering past and coming in and buying things, the only customers we get are people that, not universally, but almost always, people specifically coming to buy something, like either something in particular or just something that they like, so there are a lot less customers, which means that it's a lot harder to pay the rent, but at the same time we can get away with doing a lot more in terms of performance and shows and stuff, and it's a lot more functional than any other space we've had.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

Despite its more marginal location, the space is substantially larger than its previous incarnation, allowing for multiple uses. According to Tom, its presence has been welcomed by neighbours who appreciate the fact that it brings people to the street at night time, when otherwise the area would experience very low levels of pedestrian activity. Tom's knowledge of his neighbours' opinions, and his narrative of negotiation with those whom he shares space, demonstrate clearly the *relational* nature of the negotiation of informally formal space.

The store is, however, located in an area of Parramatta Rd often viewed as a mostly derelict "eyesore" (Needham, 2014). This popular denigration in the media is accompanied by calls to transform the area through urban regeneration and consolidation – some plans estimate that 40,000 housing units will be constructed in the area by 2050 (UrbanGrowth NSW, 2015). As such, Black Wire is most certainly occupying a rent gap location that will soon be witness to a quite rapid transformation that may threaten its ongoing viability.

The tension between formal and informal, visibility and invisibility, enforcement and evasion, is written into the design of the space. From the street, the shop windows are blacked out

with a thick, heavy, black cloth, which visually obscures the activities to passersby, as well as providing important sound insulation—obfuscating Black Wire from the landscape, both visually and aurally (see Figure 5.15). Black Wire's invisibility from the street—its protective measures against both visibility and hearability—create a kind of visual and aural demarcation between inside/outside. These measures also compound the space's ability to challenge or dissolve established use categories. This is highlighted by Gus, a local musician who regularly performs and attends shows at Black Wire:

> From the outside, the first time we went there it wasn't welcoming at all… it just had like not much of an outside, just a black curtain, and like you just open the door, but once you walked in, I was totally blown away by like "oh yeah just put your beers in the kitchen" and you go to the kitchen and you get your beers in and out of that fridge, but that's also their fridge for the house that they lived in which was just like "what?" like, is this a record store? Is this a house? Is this a venue? What is this? Oh, it's everything; it's all of those things at once.
>
> (Gus, personal communication, 19 May 2015)

Figure 5.15: Black Wire records, front façade (source: Google Maps)

This kind of locational *settling* and the disintegration of established use categories is the product of a complex juggling of competing issues. Push factors including enforcement, intimidation, harassment, avoidance, and evasion, contribute as much as the pull factors of cheaper rent, larger spaces, and lower risk of enforcement. Thus the space is produced through interaction between police, neighbours, passersby, the potential patrons of the venue, and the venue itself. "Settling" is outlined by Devlin (2011), who shows how street traders in midtown Manhattan tend to cluster around areas seen as a 'refuge' from police and private security harassment – the difference in this case being that venues like Paint It Black and Black Wire serve a relatively small subcultural music community – and the accessibility of venue to this community is a further consideration of locational choice. The fact that informal musical practices often find some wiggle room in the face of increasing regulation has been documented in the case of musicians on the New York subway (Tanenbaum, 1995), with Black Wire's location serving as a tradeoff between accessibility to patrons, and (relative) invisibility to enforcement. Black Wire's juggling of visibility to those

that use the space, and *in*visibility to those who could present a threat, is part of the space's negotiation between *formal* and *informal worlds*. In order to survive, the space has needed to move between the two, formalizing for survival where possible, and utilizing informal methods where not. Underwriting the classification of Black Wire as an *informally formal* spatial categorization is a unique organizational form that relies on immanence whilst also partially formalizing structures in order to facilitate ongoing, regular use of the space.

Volunteerism and the *informally formal* organizational form

Black Wire's reliance upon unpaid volunteers to operate the venue demonstrates how informality as *organizational form* is vital to the operation of the space (McFarlane, 2012, p. 91). The creation of a space that is multiplicitous and open, where individuals and groups are able to shape their own space, yet with a belief in the community to determine its own codes of behavior (Massey, 2005), is one of the central tenets of the urban informality paradigm. This can be traced back to the work of John Turner in the 1960s. Turner believed that urban informality allowed for 'a sense of autonomy and self-determination for both individuals and communities in making their own environment directly.' (Van Ballegooijen & Rocco, 2013, p. 1797) More recently, McFarlane and Weiber (2012, p. 3) have described that one way of understanding informality is as an *organizational form* – one that is "spontaneous, tacit, and affective," and rooted in everyday interaction. As we will see, the organizational structure of a space like Black Wire is spontaneous, tacit, and affective, which allows for the effective governance of the space as an informal venue.

Black Wire's organizational model exists of a core group of volunteers who perform the daily functions of the space – booking shows, running the store, and facilitating performances. There then exists a larger group of "regulars" who are able perform more mundane tasks within the venue such as helping clean up, and doing the door; these tasks are also routinely conducted by bands performing at the venue. This happens through informal understandings of helping the space to function as a collaborative effort; these 'regulars' were likely never *asked* to help out, but followed the lead of others, or spotted a gap in labour, and filled it. During my field work, I often took empty bottles to recycling, or directed new participants to the toilets. During one event, an art exhibition titled "Hold On" in 2014 (see Figure 5.16), I headed to the local supermarket to purchase extra paper towels for the informal restaurant that had been set up in the kitchen of the space. There is also a large section of the community that attend shows regularly and are familiar with the way the space operates, and finally newcomers or non-regular attendees who may be less familiar. As Gus described previously, his first visit to the space was typified by apprehension which abated once he became familiar with the specific organizational forms and their attendant modes of spatial governance.

Volunteers at Black Wire also improve the amenity of the physical space through various forms of handiwork, as well as facilitating the daily routines and rhythms of retail and performance that sustain the shop on a daily level. The improvements and contributions to the space come into existence through, and reflect, the affective connections that the community has to the space. On the level of everyday operation, the venue usually has three nominated volunteers per performance, that rotate throughout the space performing its most vital roles - doing the door, operating the sound equipment, cleaning up, and ensuring the show runs on time and without incident. However, observation indicated that a number

of people, including members of performing bands and regular attendees, consistently step in to help out with these roles, particularly when there is a break in the established patterns of behavior within the venue, and especially with regards to enforcing the spatio-temporal rhythms of the venue. When these rhythms are enforced, patrons are made aware of the informal agreements with neighbours, and advised that the future viability of Black Wire as a performance space is reliant upon adherence to these agreements. In this sense, the labour volunteered at Black Wire allows for tacit knowledge about the space and its political-economic situation to be transferred to newcomers to the space, offering the space as a potential "machine for learning," where the information that is passed on not only contains instructions to be followed, but offers a model and institution of socio-spatial organization that has proven effective and can be potentially used elsewhere (McFarlane, 2011b).

The *informally formal* approach to organizing the space is typified by the way in which shows are booked:

> We generally don't deal with managers or booking agents or anything, even if a band has a manager or a booking agent, they'll tend to contact us directly, and then, and it's usually a touring band, like we'll usually have a touring band, an interstate or international band, that will then pick either themselves they'll already have an understanding of who they want to play with, or they'll ask us for advice, and they'll put a lineup together.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

> There's no hassles in organizing a gig, it's like oh you didn't bring an amp, we've got one, the bottle shop's across the road, [Black Wire] is all ages, they've got food, like just everything. And it's the least pretentious, for something that should be the most unorganized group of people… punks or whatever… nothing ever happens there that isn't fine, and if anyone fucks up there, anyone does something stupid, well like it never happens there compared to like a big venue… where you know you can have a major technical issue and the night's over, or you can have some guy that's a dickhead and ruins everyone's night.
>
> (Gus, personal communication, 19 May 2015)

This personalized, direct method of communication, that avoids the use of intermediaries like managers and public relations agents, facilitates more direct interaction. It also means that the makeup of the space and its organizational form is a reflection of the various communities and scenes that regularly book shows at the venue, emphasizing how an informal space as a relational assemblage may have a very different constitution on particular days and at different times (Su-Jan et al., 2012; Yeo & Heng, 2014). This also demonstrates the informal 'codes' of behavior that exist within the space, constituted and enacted by the community. Just as cleaning up and helping out around the space are part of the 'code', so too is directly approaching Tom to request a booking, directly approaching other bands to play, and collaboratively deciding who will bring what, and how. This highly specific code of interaction is not formally decided upon but instead informally constructed and enforced through repetition (Mendoza-Denton, 2008).

The *informally formal* organizational structure also facilitates the ongoing tailoring and modification of the space by the volunteers, which actively facilitates the flow of people throughout the space. The obscurity of the venue from the street serves to deter passers-by; whilst inside the space, attendees are encouraged to congregate in the rear courtyard area, and are discouraged from loitering and drinking on the footpath at the front of the space. This

was something that was acknowledged and acted upon by residents and volunteers at the space:

> We moved the counter and what's essentially the sound desk over from, we had it in the back right hand corner of the room, which was how I had always had stuff set up, with the counter and the door right behind us and it just felt like it was, to me it felt like it was kind of I dunno protecting that area [the residence, kitchen, and outdoor area] somehow, but then for ages B [another volunteer] was saying that it was a flawed layout and that she didn't like it, and I finally said "oh well maybe we'll give it a go," we moved it over and it was, also because it coincided with when there were people pissing on the doorsteps out the front, we felt that we had a responsibility to make it as easy as possible for people to piss inside, it's all well and good having a toilet, but if someone who hasn't been here before and is not comfortable talking to someone else can't find it then they can't really be faulted too much for pissing in the street, and so it was about enabling easier access out the back.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

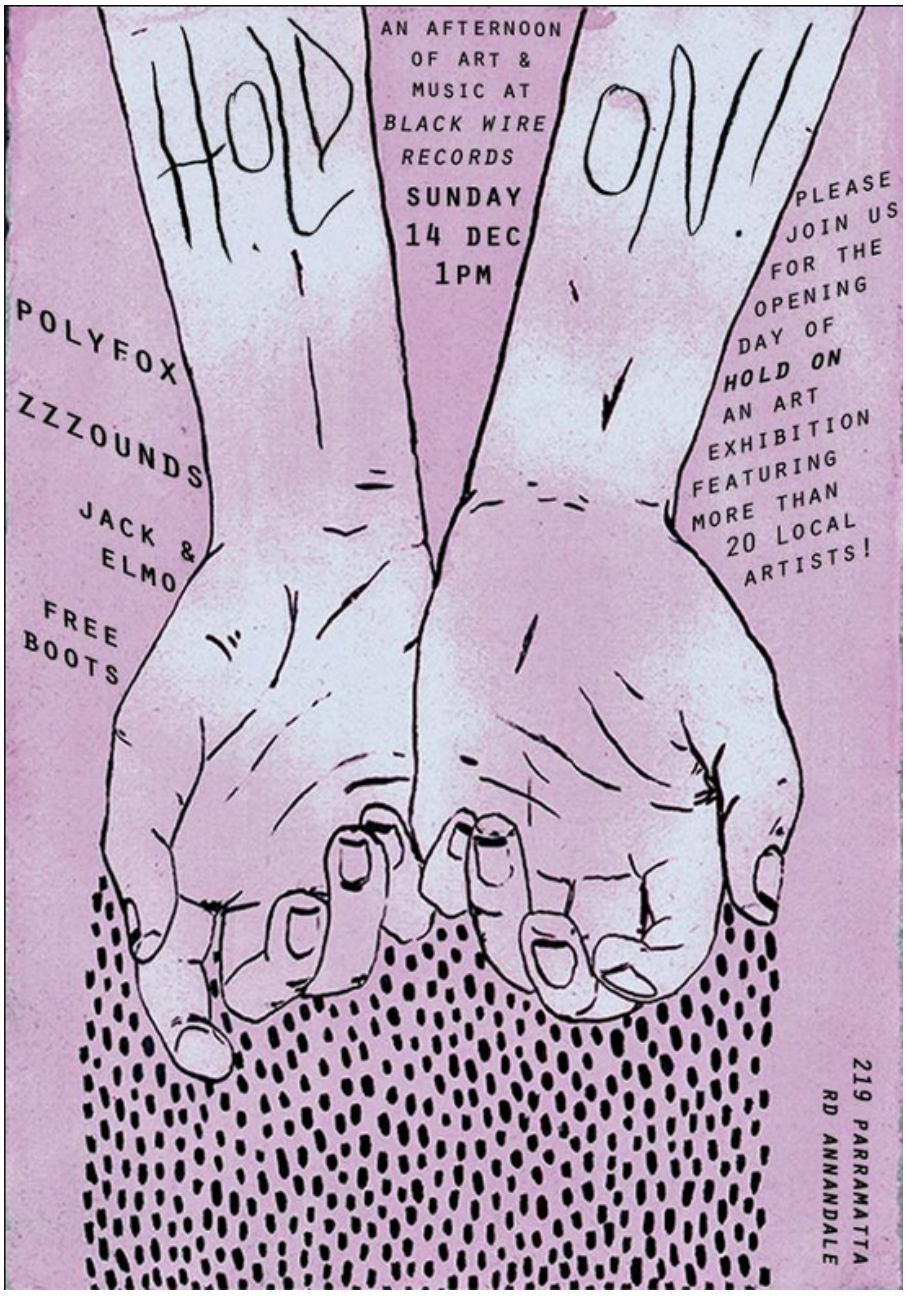


Figure 5.16: Flyer for Hold On art exhibition at Black Wire (source: Facebook)

This is a case of the collective tailoring the space to reduce disturbances caused to neighbours and create a more welcoming space for attendees. In a similar vein, attendees to events and volunteers also have the capacity to mould the space to cater to different types of events. This was observed at an event I attended in 2014, an art exhibition named "Hold On." Whilst Black Wire typically hosts musical performances on a weekend evening, this event took place on a Sunday afternoon, and featured an art exhibition and musicians, with another volunteer serving food, and donating the money directly to the space (see Figure 5.16). The funds raised from this event were donated by way of materially configuring the space to be readily configurable for further art shows, increasing its multifunctionality, and demonstrating the participatory and DIY nature of the space. For the event, posters had been temporarily removed from the walls, and wire installed to enable the display of the artwork; chairs and couches had been moved from around the outside of the room, as befitting live music performance, to the centre of the room, allowing participants to walk around the room and view art on the walls. Furthermore, the propensity of local musicians and artists to hold large fundraiser events for the space demonstrates the strength of the tacit, affective connections and ownership that the community feels towards the space (see Figure 5.17).

The organizational form of Black Wire extends to a large community of people who display an affective identification with the space. For example, an online fundraising campaign in 2015 to assist with covering costs associated with maintenance of the space as well as a rent increase, managed to raise over ten thousand dollars in 24 hours, with at least 263 people donating to the space (see Figure 5.18).

Figure 5.17: Posters for two Black Wire benefit shows, hosted in April 2014 and November 2012 respectively (source: blackwiretocommonground.wordpress.com)

Figure 5.18: Crowdfunding campaign for Black Wire (source: gofundme.com)

It is evident that organizationally, Black Wire is typified by a high degree of informality. The social structure that underpins Black Wire is spontaneous, tacit, affective, and immanent, and is predicated upon very little (if any) intervention from the State. It prioritizes the relational over the structural, the improvised over the official, and functions through a series of unwritten codes. But it also does so while an individual's name is on the lease as the tenant of the space and the owner of the business, providing a legal, formalized basis upon which informal socio-spatial organization may take place. As such, the limited engagement with the formal allows for some sense of spatio-temporal security that allows for *informally formal* modes of organization to develop through repeated interactions over time. In the analysis that follows, we will see how this structure effectively manages informal modes of spatial governance, whilst encountering problems when subjected to enforcement by local authorities.

Over the back fence: *informally formal* urban governance from below

We have already seen how Black Wire Records may be viewed as an *informally formal* space through both its spatial categorization and organizational form. These conceptions have allowed us to see how the community associated with the space has been able to assert autonomy over the space. This kind of spatial autonomy can be observed outside of the operation of the space, on a neighbourhood level. Black Wire exists largely without complaints from neighbouring residents and businesses, and this is largely due to a number of informal agreements that have been struck with those parties. Tom revealed the process behind this in interview:

> T: There's no written agreements, no. It's all verbal, literally over the back fence kind of stuff. But I think that works. Sometimes they'll just come in if there's been something that's concerning them and then, yeah.
>
> C: What are their concerns?
>
> T: It's noise, but more than the actual noise generated by bands playing, it's the noise generated by people outside, because the way that the back lane works, it kind of reverberates all around the whole

> thing there… so I asked them "well what time do you go to bed?" They said "oh, 10, 10:30," oh well what's the latest that... we just kind of went back and forth and so we've come to an arrangement that at 10 o'clock, then everyone's cleared out of the back, we are theoretically supposed to finish completely at 10, but as I've said to them, it's sometimes for whatever reason it can run over, but they're less concerned with running overtime inside than people outside, and they made that very clear, and so that's what, I just have to stick to that.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

Tom's account here constructs Black Wire's operation as constituted in the conversations and negotiations taking place between neighbours over temporal access to particular spaces. Tom's position here – as the representative of the record shop and the one who is there most days, doing the visible everyday work that keeps the space operating – is the one that makes him recognizable to those that live nearby. As such, his central and visible role in contributing to the collective organization of Black Wire and in his engagements with the formal world more readily equip him to strike these informal agreements with his neighbours. Such negotiation highlights the 'relational and transactive' nature of urban informality (Porter et al., 2011, p. 116). In this process, neighbours become active participants in the production of the socio-spatial and temporal rhythms of the space as they are granted an active stake in its management, outside of formal structures of mediation that exist through local authorities. Furthermore, when these agreements are struck, they require constant maintenance:

> I am really acutely aware when we're not doing what we're supposed to be doing, and so I will, if I do see them, I'll go out of my way to apologize, and explain what it was, not just say "oh we just ran over," even if they don't give a fuck what the excuse is, that there is one… we're not just haphazardly doing whatever we want, there was a reason why it went over and because we're doing so much stuff within the parameters of what we've agreed on, they are willing to forgive the little slights now and then.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

Informal modes of governance do not only exist between the space and its neighbours – respondents also have detailed how this extends to the maintenance of behavioural standards within the space in a way that was described as "self-policing":

> Because there's a community, and there's almost in a way, I don't wanna say policing, but it's self-policing, kind of like, it's just a small… group of people that are there, you can't fuck up, you can't be a dickhead there because if you are a dickhead there, you can never come back, because everyone knows you, and everyone knows who you are or something, it's like, it's a community.
>
> (Gus, personal communicaton, 19 May 2015)

This quote from Gus seems to articulate a version of what Iveson (2014, p. 86), following Rancière, describes as "the police," where the police refers to a "community in which everyone has been assigned a part to play, and a proper place in which to play it". Conversely, Ranciere's notion of politics is conceived of as "wherever [the police] is disturbed by the inscription of a part of those who have no part" (Rancière, 1999, p. 123). From the established self-policing order at Black Wire, we may see politics as occurring in two movements – below, I will discuss how marginalized communities assert their right to the space, whilst in the next section, I will discuss what happens when the state attempts to assert control over the use of the space.

In Chapter 4, our discussion of Birdrib and DIY Harder explored the ways in which the creation of nominally autonomous, self-policing communities allows for the creation of counter-

publics, where new ways of living can be experimented with. It has been demonstrated, however, that often, a community that is left to self-police can often create forms of control through interaction that reinforce dominant hierarchies – of gender, race and class (Purchla, 2011). At Black Wire, numerous groups organize shows in order to destabilize these hierarchies, including One Brick Today – an organization committed to "supporting and helping provide visibility for women and queer folk who are marginalized in a largely straight/male scene" (One Brick Today, 2016, see Figure 5.19). As the space can vary in its makeup from night to night, shows hosted by One Brick Today have a different spatial dynamic to many others shows booked at the space. Firstly, the most notable differences are generally higher numbers of women- and queer-identifying performers, and a higher concentration of women and queer folk towards the front of the audience area. Whilst this is not formalized through a Safer Spaces policy[6] at Black Wire, safer spaces practices are encouraged during One Brick Today shows, through announcements from bands to the audience that encourage women and queer people to come to the front, and for men to stay away from the front of stage area. These practices are modeled upon policies instituted at other shows attended during my fieldwork (and at which One Brick Today artists have performed), such as a fundraiser show for a women's shelter, hosted in Wollongong, which included a detailed safer spaces policy. As described in Chapter 4, Safer Spaces policies are a form of immanent spatial governance that aim to keep spaces free from violence and oppression.

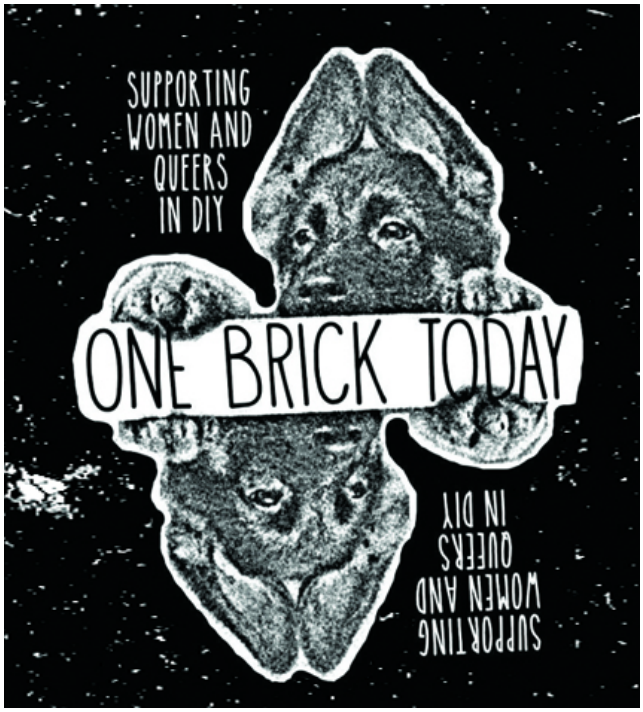


Figure 5.19: One Brick Today logo (source: onebricktoday.wordpress.com)

[6] 'Safer Spaces Policies' are common practice at many punk shows with feminist, anti-racist, anti-colonialist or other social justice orientations. They include guidelines on how to best respect the space and other audience members, including asking for pronouns, or giving an acknowledgement of country. Safer Spaces policies might also reserve the right to eject any patron who behaves in a racist, sexist, transphobic, homophobic, ableist or oppressive way. For further discussion of Safer Spaces Policies, refer Chapter 4.

Black Wire records certainly demonstrates how we might conceive of an *informally formal* mode of spatial governance, that relies upon informally negotiated agreements to ward off the disciplinary force of formal regulation. These agreements demonstrate how the *practice* of informality produces spaces that are both *relational* – as produced through interaction, and *transactive* – predicated upon negotiated exchanges. In the section that follows we will see how the state is also able to deploy informality in the pursuit of spatial governance, whilst simultaneously appealing to the logic of the formal world of statutory and strategic urban planning instruments. It is through the exploitation of this juncture that we see the construction of new, *informally formal* modes of neoliberal urban governance.

Enforcement and *informally formal* governance from above

Black Wire was able to operate as previously described for a number of years before Leichhardt Municipal Council began to investigate the space. By examining the operation of the *formal* land use planning system and contrasting it with the informal arrangements the governed the use of Black Wire prior, we are able to demonstrate the limits to the planning system itself. The enforcement of planning law in New South Wales is highly variable, and, in line with similar planning systems in other parts of the world, enforcement of regulation is complaint driven. These systems rely on non-statutory, investigative practices as well as formal planning instruments, and increasingly rely upon the participation of the public in reporting breaches (N. Harris, 2013). In the case of Black Wire, it was in relation to the perceived behavior of its patrons:

> Well, it all stemmed from one of our other neighbours, who was a little bit further down, who got her doorstep pissed on a couple of times... but the thing was that that then because it had happened on a couple of occasions that were with people that were attending this space, when it happened subsequent to that, when we weren't even open or anything... we just became scapegoats, which I think is a fairly common scenario for anyone doing this kind of thing, you become, you get demonized, like we ended up being blamed for all the graffiti in the area, and all kinds of like, nonsensical things.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

As we have previously demonstrated, Black Wire is able to manage its relationships with neighbours via informal agreements. Furthermore, it is able to physically modify the space to encourage or discourage certain behaviours from participants. However, in this instance the complainant had no previous agreement with the space due to their spatial proximity being further than other neighbours and in turn:

> [the neighbor] complained directly to the council who then sent compliance officers, who were taking photos of like posters and things... I was upstairs when they came around and I got a call from someone who was warning me that some dodgy looking blokes were hanging around out the front and that they were scoping the joint or something, and it was the council compliance officers.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

From this point onward, Black Wire was forced to engage directly with the planning system, as the development consent on file at the council, dating back to 1995, was for a restaurant, not a retail space:

> It was basically a kind of cease and desist scenario, at that point they were basically saying "you can't do anything," which I was a little bit perplexed by... [but] that was the point at which we fully kind of had to engage with council, because we hadn't really prior to that.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

Upon application for the change of use[7], concerns were raised at a council referral panel meeting regarding non-specific complaints at the venue and Council's knowledge of performances being hosted in the space (see Figure 5.20).

Issues identified by planner in preliminary assessment: ▪ Proposal seeks retrospective consent for use as record store. Previous approved use (D/406/1995) was a restaurant. ▪ Permissible within the Business Zone. ▪ Car parking within the rear. ▪ Clarification to be provided in terms hours of operation.	
FSR:	***Unchanged***
Landscape Area:	
Soft Landscape	
Issues raised during Referral Panel Meeting and recommendations: Planning: ▪ Clarification is required as to the full operational details of the use in light of complaints received for noise, live performances. Staff, hours, functions etc. Building: ▪ Officer not available – written comments to be provided. Engineering: ▪ Conditions to be provided in relation to parking and access arrangements including construction of a new vehicle crossing and pedestrian gate. Health: ▪ Acoustic report is required given residential dwellings in the vicinity and noise complaints.	

Figure 5.20: Detail of Document titled Referral Panel Meeting for Leichhardt Municipal Council Development Application D/2012/490 (source: Leichhardt Municipal Council)

An Internal Referral from Council engineers did not raise objections in the change of use, but recommended that a separate pedestrian entrance be installed to the rear vehicular access point, and that the "vehicle crossing be reconstructed according to Council specifications." The reconstruction of the crossing requires a "certified design by a suitably qualified Civil Engineer with NPER registration with the Institution of Engineers Australia," as well the obtaining of a Roadworks Certificate, and a payment of a $2,500 security deposit to Leichhardt Council to cover costs associated with the works required. A further council referral recommended that Black Wire be required to "Engage the services of an appropriately qualified Accredited Certifier, to provide a Building Code of Australia 2012 (BCA) audit of the building." This audit would provide recommendation for works to be carried out in order to satisfy the applicable performance requirements contained within the BCA relating to fire safety. Leichhardt Municipal Council wrote to Black Wire, seeking further information regarding their Development Application. Specifically, council required an acoustic consultant's report that would "consider all noise likely to be generated from the premises including noise from live music & recorded music," an amended Statement of Environmental Effects that would "include all operational details of the proposed use, including music played within the premises and the time at which it is proposed to be played," and the previously mentioned BCA audit.

[7] Black Wire Records' development application is numbered D/2012/490, with all documents relating to the application available from the Leichhardt Municipal Council website www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au

Whilst the initiation of this formalization process sought to stop Black Wire from operating in contravention to its stated consent, performances continued without being advertised publicly, and the store (which has a large online presence and a loyal following) continued to trade as a matter of survival. This practice of "going underground" demonstrates that even though it may try, the planned city can "neither eliminate nor subsume the informal qualities and practices of its inhabitants." (Brillembourg & Klumpner, 2005, p. 19) Meanwhile, the additional costs associated with preparing the necessary reports to gain development consent were running into the thousands of dollars – a crippling expense for a not-for-profit venue. This is an often-stated side effect of the formalization process, whereby costs associated with gaining necessary approvals leads to further displacement (McFarlane, 2012; Porter et al., 2011; Roy, 2005, p. 153). However, despite not having large reserves of financial capital to draw upon, many of the necessary reports were prepared by Black Wire through informal networks, as well as funded through solidarity fundraisers:

> It was made a little bit easier for us in that we have a kind of community of people that are quite talented in various areas, like we were able to find someone that could draw up plans for us... any kind of area, we knew someone who was talented in that particular area and was able to if not do it, then absolutely aid us in doing what we needed to do, so we were really fortunate in that regard. But after all of it, we still got denied.
>
> I think in the end it only ended up costing us a couple of thousand, but that being said, we didn't have a couple of thousand, like we had no money, we still have no money, we kind of operate on no money, so we did have to have a series of benefit shows and stuff to actually cover those costs.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

Despite the effort and cost required to assemble the application, Black Wire's development application was officially refused on 15 January 2013, citing insufficient information provided. From that point until time of writing, Black Wire has continued to operate as a not-for-profit, DIY venue:

> It's just a kind of agreement that yeah, as long as we don't do anything shit, they'll leave us alone. Which is not the most you know comfortable kind of state but it allows us to operate.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

At the time of writing, Black Wire still manages to operate based on this loosely negotiated truce. Despite operating without consent, and potentially liable to fines and/or closure at any time, the venue has been able to operate for three and a half years without any further enforcement actions. The reasons for this are to do with changes in urban governance emanating from an interest the role of live music in the city, and the growing concern about the loss of live music venues across Sydney, which will be discussed below. This reveals the double edged nature of State informality in practice: in designating some activities as legal and some as not, and by shifting the definitions over time, the State is able to operate as an informal agent with its own internal logic, whilst at the same time *producing* further informality (Haid, 2016). Despite making unsuccessful attempts at formalizing Black Wire, the State has now chosen to rely on the same tacit agreements that Black Wire established within its own community, producing *informally formal* modes of governance.

In early February 2013 the iconic live music venue, the Annandale Hotel, was placed into receivership, with the future of the venue uncertain. This announcement placed renewed

attention on the plight of live music in Sydney generally, and specifically upon the Parramatta Road area of Annandale where both the Annandale Hotel and Black Wire had run afoul of the authorities within weeks of each other. In an interview on local radio on the 16th of February, Mayor of Leichhardt, Councillor Darcy Byrne, said of Black Wire:

> My view about this whole precinct, including Black Wire Records and The Annandale and the whole of Parramatta Road, is that there's potential to turn Parramatta Road from what is currently an urban wasteland, an eyesore for Sydney, into a live music precinct, that can bring the place back to life. I want to work with the proprietors at Black Wire Records to try and make that happen.
>
> (Cayley, 2013)

As a result, the Leichhardt-Marrickville Live Music Reference Group, which was established in October 2013, included Tom Scott from Black Wire, along with a local musician, a café owner, several formal live music venue staff, and bureaucrats from Leichhardt, Marrickville, and City of Sydney councils. The final report, tabled in late 2014, lays out a development agenda to transform the Parramatta Road precinct into an "Off Broadway" precinct with flexible, intimate performance spaces for a variety of performance types, as well as a variety of "ancillary" businesses including cafes, clothing retail, small bars and marketing agencies[8]. The precinct was formally launched on 11 September 2016. Despite being invited to participate in the Task Force process and the drafting of the report, Black Wire Records is not mentioned once in the report. Tom says of the process:

> Whilst there was incredibly qualified people there, it was still, I think we were kind of sabotaged from the start, just by the kind of parameters we were given, like initially, it was supposed to be from Ashfield down to where the Annandale was [a distance of several kilometres]... and that [area] just got smaller and smaller and smaller until it became basically just one block between the Empire and the Annandale... there'd been no investigation into what properties were available... it was basically just pick out a spot on a map and then work on that.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

More than thirty-five years of theory regarding gentrification and inner urban redevelopment would indicate to us that participation in this process would result in displacement for venues like Black Wire, which require low ground rent and achieve minimal (if any) surplus value (Ley, 2003; Smith, 1979, 1986, 1996). So why would Tom, as the proprietor of Black Wire and one of its key contributors, participate in these kinds of processes? This is because designations of "formal" and "informal," as we have seen, are not static categories of spatial forms, but a function of power. Tom and Black Wire participate in the Task Force because it was politically advantageous to. In a context of being denied development consent, and with a renewed interest in the live music sector prevalent amongst civil society more generally and a vocal subcultural community mobilizing behind the space, Black Wire's participation would enable the further development of political capital that would assist in the survival of the space. Roy (2011, p. 233) states that:

[8] Information and documents relating to the Off Broadway precinct and the Leichhardt-Marrickville Live Music Reference Group, including its final report, can be found at http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/community/business/business-programs/off-broadway-precinct#.

> Informalized spaces are reclaimed through urban renewal, while formalized spaces accrue value through state-authorized legitimacy... it is a heuristic device that uncovers the ever-shifting urban relationship between the legal and illegal, legitimate and illegitimate, authorized and unauthorized. This relationship is both arbitrary and fickle and yet is the site of considerable state power and violence.

But what is occurring here is something different – here we have state-authorized legitimacy being attributable to an *informal* space. This dynamic was visible to Tom in his interactions on the Task Force. In his view, other *formal* venues in the area, that had emerged out of the *informal* world of squats and artist warehouses through reaching compliance with BCA and planning regulations, often at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars, were subject to similar, hierarchical processes of legitimation. A venue such as the Red Rattler in Marrickville, which is operated by a feminist collective and committed to social justice-oriented projects, was not held in as high regard as venues such as Camelot, located just down the road, which emerged from the arguably more middle class jazz scene, and charges substantially more for tickets because of its "dinner and a show" style setup. In this way, not only the formal/informal divide, but the distinctions between venues within each categorization due to their perceived potential audiences, reinforce dominant hierarchies and existing power relations. Tom says of the Task Force's enthusiasm for Camelot:

> I think it's just, they [council staff] can relate to the audiences of places like Camelot, that's the kind of place that they would go, or their friends would go, or that's, whereas they feel a bit threatened by Red Rattler, not because there's threatening people there but because it's a different culture to what they're used to.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

In their interactions with the state, Black Wire is expending political energy in the hope that state power is not wielded against them in the foreseeable future, and that they are simply left alone. In the meantime, as the reputation of the venue spreads nationally and internationally, the collective is accruing limited political and financial capital through the holding of fundraiser shows, and gaining valuable contacts within council building and planning departments. Speaking about the development of Black Wire's relationship with Council, Tom states that:

> [We] have become a lot better acquainted with the process itself, with council itself, and then also with a few people within the council, and so actually talking to, you know, talking to the head of the planning department, as opposed to just someone working there that's just like following the letter… it makes a massive difference because... it just doesn't seem so rigid, and black and white, because it's *not actually* as rigid as the bureaucrats in the middle of it make it out to be.
>
> (Tom, personal communication, 29 April 2015)

Despite feeling more confident about being able to reach compliance, Black Wire has not attempted to achieve such a designation at the time of writing. This position demonstrates the *evasive* nature of urban informality, where the threat of closure and/or insurmountable financial barriers deter actors from engagement with any form of state regulation other than those that immediately guarantee its ability to continue existing.

Conclusion: *informally formal* spaces and the negotiability of value

In this chapter I have sought to highlight how informal spaces are constituted through interaction and how informality as a mode of spatial organization produces *ways of being* in urban space. I have also sought to demonstrate how informal modes of operation interact with the "formal" world of regulation in order to produce new modes of urban governance. If we are to view space as relational, and as constituted through interaction, we are able to demonstrate how Black Wire provides an example of informality from below, of active city-making by people with minimal resources to engage with the formal worlds of local government and urban land use planning.

In the example of Black Wire, we can see how urban governance quite regularly involves the creation of "complex hybrid arrangements" that straddle or even bridge the formal/informal divide (Altrock, 2012, p. 180). Here were have a local authority who, despite knowing that a venue has been operating without development consent for a number of years, is happy for that venue to participate in a consultation process that is oriented toward the redevelopment and subsequent gentrification of the area in which it resides. This position, however, does not necessarily reveal the "dangerous counter-side" of urban informality proposed by its critics – as a back door path to neoliberalism, understood as a retreat of the state from the world of urban planning (Van Ballegooijen & Rocco, 2013, p. 1804). On the contrary, the interface between Black Wire and local councils demonstrates how the everyday operation of neoliberal urbanism requires the deployment of coercive and disciplinary forms of state power (Neil Brenner & Theodore, 2002a).

In a period of prolonged crisis surrounding live performance venues in Sydney, new governance structures and institutional frameworks arose – namely the Task Force model, along with public recognition of the social value of informal spaces – that clashed with inherited institutional forms, such as the world of environmental planning and building compliance. Thus Black Wire's status within the world of local environmental planning is an *emergent* strategy of state spatial regulation, one that allows the process of uneven development to continue whilst ameliorating its more negative effects (Neil Brenner & Theodore, 2002a). Black Wire is emblematic of a "conceded informality," one that recognizes the political economic intractability of informal urbanization (McFarlane & Waibel, 2012, p. 4). This form of state-authored legitimation that exists without being codified in law is an example of an arrangement that I would understand as constituting an *informally formal* type of state spatial regulation. Under this type, examples of informal development are known to authorities, and are given state legitimation through "soft" forms of engagement, such as consultative programs, but are nonetheless officially denied formalization through development consent. Whilst these forms of urban governance are commonplace in cities of the "Global South," they are only recently receiving attention from scholars in the regulated cities of the "Global North."

It also reinforces the notion that urban informality is typified by the "constant negotiability of value," that records of agreements are not kept, and that informal spatial and organizational practices are not always coherent, particularly to those spatially and socially distant from the space itself (Roy & AlSayyad, 2004, p. 4). Furthermore, immanence and relationality can have their downsides – for instance, without codification, informal agreements require

renegotiation when circumstances change – for example, when new neighbours move in. These informal practices are meshed with the formal, and these categories are not fixed. Informality and formality thus do not exist "above or in advance of urban life, but within its unfolding." (McFarlane, 2012, p. 101)

In its engagement with its immediate community, Black Wire has created a sense of shared social responsibility in the space by allowing the space to be shaped by its participants. In this way, it has contributed to the project of urban social justice by providing space for communities that are increasingly marginalized and excluded from public spaces – particularly people of colour, women, queer people, and youth. This is, of course, always a product of the labour of those people of colour, women, queer people and youth who continually work to recreate and reimagine space. Throughout this process it has been able to defend itself from attempts at formalization that would more readily facilitate its displacement. Conversely, it has also mobilized a degree of formality in order to mitigate the extreme precarity of the spaces described in the previous chapter. This formal basis upon which Black Wire rests has allowed for the development of counterpublic spatial norms to form and flourish within the space in an *informally formal* fashion. These attempts to make space for people constitute a form of political claim making, of creating a "city within a city" and an alternative way of being together (Iveson, 2013).

As we will learn, informality as a mode of spatial organization is being pursued by state actors in a variety of ways, in order to further the project of neoliberal urbanism. In Chapter 6, we will see how informal modes of socio-spatial organization are being subsumed into formalized spaces through 'meanwhile' and temporary uses of space. To do this, we will continue our study of informality with our next case study.

Chapter 6 – New modes of neoliberal urban governance: Tempe Jets and the *Formally Informal*

The Pitz and the problem of DIY

In December 2014, a series of fundraiser shows were organized to help assist with the cleanup, demolition, and removal costs associated with the closure of The Pitz, a DIY, not-for-profit rehearsal space, operated by the Downey family out of a red-brick, mid-century warehouse on Mitchell St, in an industrial area of Marrickville, in Sydney's inner west. The venue provided rehearsal space for local and international bands at approximately half of market rate, accommodation for touring bands at $6 per night (in a city where hostel beds routinely top $30), a privately owned and insured vehicle available for hire for touring bands (thus circumventing expensive car-hire companies), and a DIY, all-ages, BYO performance space. In a statement issued by the Downey family, in its nearly eight years of operation, The Pitz was "built and maintained without a cent of council assistance or grant funding. It functioned... on a basis of shared responsibility, artist self-sufficiency, and loose Marxist principals [*sic*]." The venue was originally established as a collective effort by a number of bands, and although the Downeys had taken over the day-to-day running of the space in a volunteer capacity after other bands had withdrawn from running The Pitz, upon its closure they were to state that:

> It goes without saying that everyone who ever used The Pitz over the past 7 years will have our endless gratitude and we hope that this... experiment of ours... illustrates the obvious benefits of the bargaining power of collectives. In [our] opinion, paying someone's salary or mortgage for your right to rehearse your craft is tantamount to theft. Find a space. Include your fellow artists. Save Money.

Despite a verbal agreement of ten years and a "legally binding 3x3 year lease (mutually allowed to lapse last January)," the owner required that the Pitz vacate the building by the end of 2014. After investing large amounts of their personal time, labour, and resources towards setting up and maintaining The Pitz, the Downeys were now faced with a large cleanup bill.

On 2 December 2014, days before two fundraiser shows were scheduled to begin, the Facebook event page associated with the shows was notified that the shows were cancelled, after the events were reported to Marrickville Council by an anonymous complainant. As The Pitz did not have development consent as a licensed entertainment venue, they were threatened with fines of $3000 per night if the shows were to go ahead. Almost immediately, several alternatives were arranged – the two original fundraiser shows were moved to the nearby (and compliant) venue, The Factory Theatre, whilst a third show was to take place in a house in Ashfield, which at the time hosted semi-regular DIY shows (see Figure 6.22). This immediate and organized reaction, similar to the fundraising efforts of Black Wire, demonstrated the enduring power of the informal as a mode of socio-spatial organization.

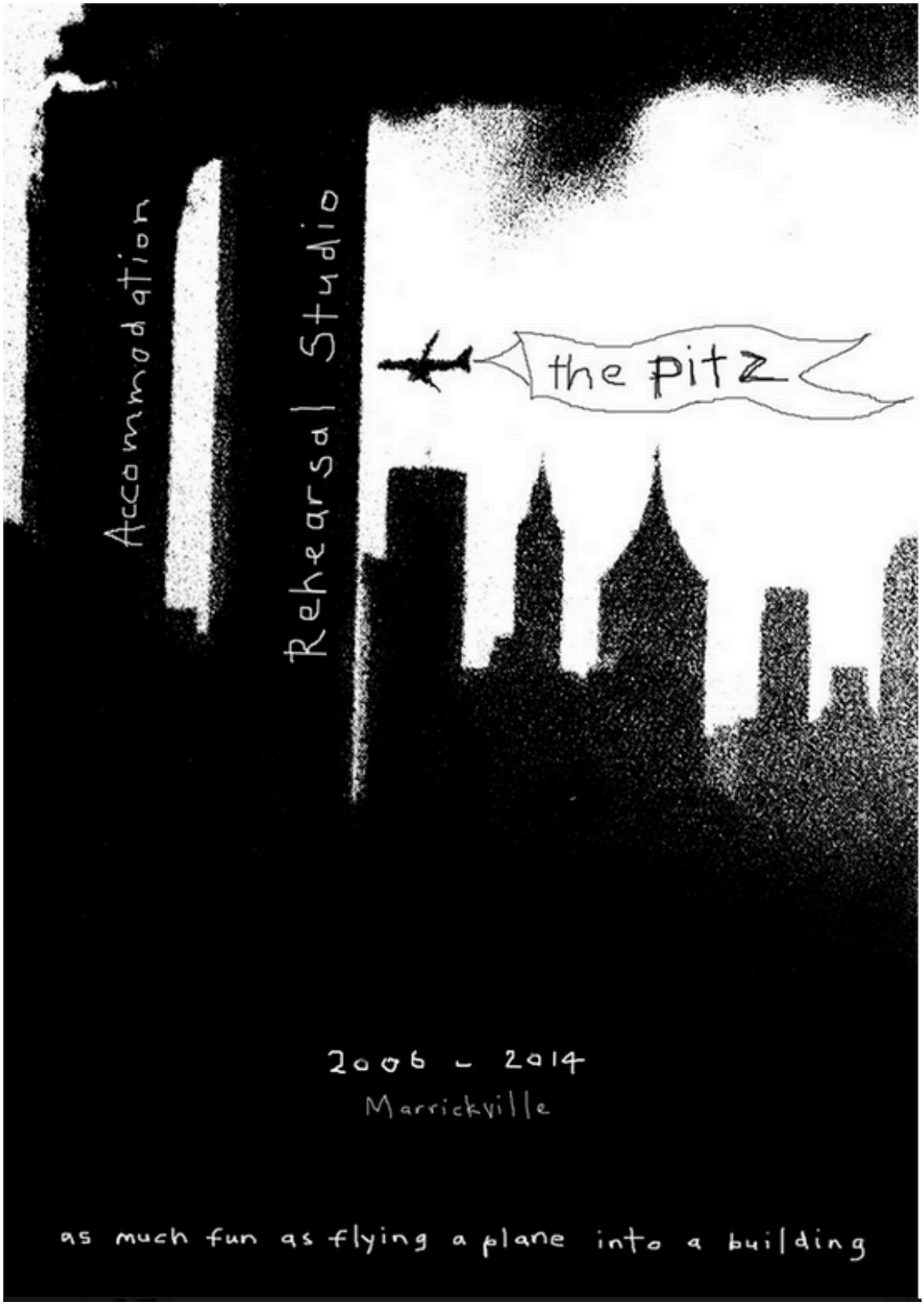


Figure 6.21: A "memorial" poster for The Pitz (source: Facebook)

Figure 6.22: Flyers for Pitz benefit shows (source: Facebook)

Over the coming weeks, The Pitz would be dismantled and vacated, and parts of the building's infrastructure – building materials, PA equipment, and instruments – would wind up, through networks cultivated in the Sydney music community, in a building located only a few kilometres away that is emblematic of a new, *formally informal* mode of socio-spatial organization in the contemporary city: Tempe Jets, a former sports club located on the banks of the Cooks River, in the inner west suburb of Tempe. Currently, it is home to a "live music business hub," operated by the Sydney-based not for profit organization, Brand X. The building is owned by the local Marrickville Council, and is temporarily leased to Brand X whilst council seeks expressions of interest for the site's redevelopment. Tempe Jets provides office, rehearsal, studio and performance spaces for local musical organizations at reduced rates, on rolling monthly leases or temporary agreements, until the building is redeveloped or the agreement revoked. Resident organizations range from punk and hip-hop record labels, to jazz organizations, and experimental orchestras. There are strict restrictions around the use of the space, and it is through this micromanagement of spatial access that the owner is able to ensure that the occupants have little chance to develop a legitimate, ongoing claim to occupy the space. This process demonstrates Vasudevan's (2015, p. 349) claim that "we need, therefore, to be wary of the co-optation and redistribution of makeshift materials and resources as agents of dispossession and displacement." At Tempe Jets, social, spatial, and material flows demonstrate the ongoing subsumption of informal and DIY spatial practices by new, neoliberal modes of urban governance that seek to reinforce private property rights and further spatial inequality in contemporary Sydney.

Introduction

The ability of informal modes of urban spatial practice to persist, particularly within rapidly gentrifying cities like Sydney, has been discussed in the previous two chapters. In Chapter 4, we have seen how *informally informal* spaces can operate as temporary or semi-regular occupations of public (or nominally public) space, ducking and weaving to evade enforcement. In Chapter 5, we have seen how attempts to retrospectively legitimate non-compliant spaces have led to the creation of *informally formal* spaces, where complex, hybrid governance structures reveal the negotiable ways in which urban planning systems operate. These spaces have, through practices of contestation, negotiated some amount of spatial fixity through informal agreements both with their immediate neighbours and local authorities. The brief example of The Pitz, offered at the beginning of this chapter, shows that these arrangements are precarious and can be revoked with little notice.

Our attention now turns towards state attempts to replicate the style and structure of informal spaces in newly established formal spaces. This is achieved through the creation of new modes of urban governance that codify and reinforce the precarious nature of informal space for local musicians whilst ensuring ongoing control over the space for its owners. It is through the creation of these *formally informal* spaces that we can observe the effect that informal uses of space for musical performance are having upon the way that local authorities treat underutilized land. It is by capitalizing upon the problems of reduced spatial access for subcultural activity in a city experiencing intensifying development pressures that local government forecloses on the possibility of local artists establishing an ongoing claim to urban space. The term *formally informal* arises from the fact that whilst the space is rigidly constituted through regulatory and legal instruments, it appeals to an aesthetic of informality, as well as inviting in residents who traditionally operate in other informal spaces. In practice, *formally informal* spaces are involved in the codification and regulation of spaces that previously may have been available for informal use. As such, they *subsume* informal practices. This is, in effect, the opposite of *informally formal* spaces which, being based on informal modes of socio-spatial organization, resist subsumption of the kind proffered by *formally informal* spaces.

This chapter will outline the benefits and problems associated with this type of "informality from above" (Tonkiss, 2012), particularly within the category of temporary or 'meanwhile' uses of space. Based on interviews with the director of Brand X, the manager of Tempe Jets, and a resident in the space, as well as observations from a public event hosted by the space, I will try and articulate the everyday ways in which control over the space is asserted, and the subtle ways in which the informal persists despite this control. This will be embellished with information gleaned from the Tempe Jets website, printed material collected during my visits to the space, council documents relating to the site, and internal documents provided by Brand X. This analysis will demonstrate that in contrast to Black Wire records, where local authorities attempted to enforce compliance retrospectively in response to local resident complaints, Tempe Jets has been carefully managed from its inception, and has enforced very strict controls upon its tenants in order to avoid any possible disturbance to the local community. It will also demonstrate how this process produces new territorial formations that embed conflictual social relations within relatively stabilized, routinized, and sustainable socio-temporal frameworks (Neil Brenner & Theodore, 2002a). The site also demonstrates

the contradictions of informality as an organizational form, providing an interface between the formalized world of local government bureaucracy as owners, the not-for-profit sector as managers, and the precariously employed artists who are residents in the space. This new mode of neoliberal urban governance is able to reinforce formal property rights while introducing to its tenants the precarity of spatial access typical to the world of informality. This evolving geography of 'meanwhile' uses of space is a clear example of neoliberal urbanism "failing forward," demonstrating the previous inadequacy of bureaucratic interventions to halt displacement in the face of rapid gentrification (Peck, 2010). Regardless, this emergent form of neoliberal urbanism has an important role in subjecting subcultural producers to market discipline, with a view towards producing aspirational and entrepreneurial citizens in new forms of neoliberal subjectivity. By foregrounding the relations between the formal and the informal we are able to understand the role of landscape as a site of struggle. It is in the lived experience of informality that we can understand the role of the spatial in social reproduction, and in shaping the contemporary city.

Tempe Jets as a *formally informal* spatial categorization

In order to understand the constitution of Tempe Jets as a *formally informal* space, we need to understand the intersecting ways in which this space is produced. As discussed in Chapter 2, McFarlane & Waibel (2012, p. 3) view the formal-informal divide as "an epistemological distinction put to work in different contexts", with one important way in which this divide is enacted being *spatial categorization.* Historically, informal spaces are seen to be marginalized economically, politically, legally, socially, and spatially. Under this analysis, informal spaces may *settle* in districts that provide the greatest amount of spatio-temporal security (Devlin, 2011), they may *insert* themselves into disused urban spaces, or they may *attach* themselves to the structures of the formal city (Dovey & King, 2011, p. 13) What these narratives of marginalization fail to account for, however, is the centrality of the informal to functioning of the city – how in the process of the production of urban space, binary positions (such as formal and informal) clash and combine to produce new forms of urbanism (Diken, 2005). By discussing the intersection of the varied trajectories of the actors involved in Tempe Jets, as well as the inherited history of the building, the space may be viewed as the result of a temporary stabilization in the conflict inherent in the formal-informal divide. By providing a state-financed temporary locational solution to several groups accustomed to relying on informalized spaces, Tempe Jets is able to absorb some (but not all) of the political energy that expresses itself through *informally informal* means, such as the public and semi-public performance spaces established in Chapter 4. In becoming a temporary activation of space for live music development led by a local authority, it relieves pressure on local government concerning the decline of the local live music economy. However, due to its temporary nature and its limited size and scope, it is only a partial stabilization, with subcultural activity coming to the surface in other locations, in different forms, and for different ends.

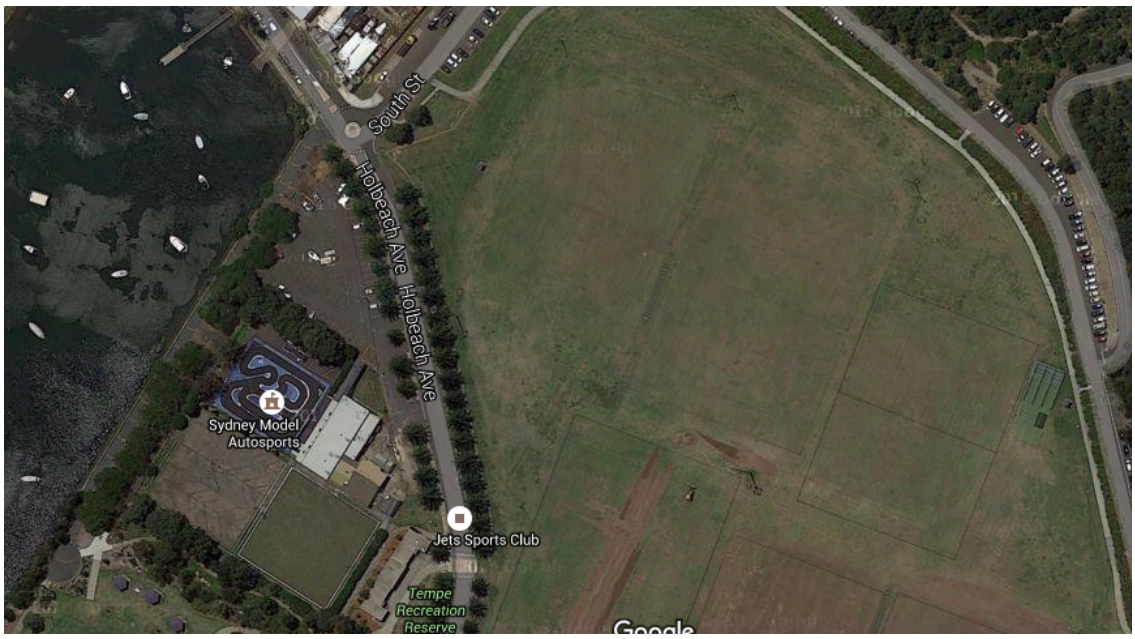


Figure 6.23: Location of Tempe Jets in proximity to the Cooks River and Tempe Reserve (source: Google Maps)

Tempe Jets, in its current incarnation as a "live music business hub," has been in operation at 1 Holbeach Avenue, Tempe, since 2014. Located on the banks of the Cooks River, in a major floodplain for the area, and across the road from Tempe Recreation Reserve, the site has historically been used as a licensed club, originally operated by the Cooks River Bowling Club, and then subsequently by a partnership between the Bowling Club and the Newtown Jets Rugby League Football Club, trading as the Jets Sports Club. In October 2013, The Jets Sports Club advised Marrickville Council, as manager of the Tempe Recreation Reserve Trust, that they would be vacating the site.[9] The location of the building, in the middle of a recreation reserve, adjacent to the Cooks River and a major road (the Princes Highway), its relative lack of nearby residential development, as well as its proximity to the airport and Tempe's historical association with aircraft noise, all made the building an attractive prospect for development relating to live music (see Figure 6.23). However, the space is poorly serviced by public transport: attending a performance there on a Sunday and travelling from the CBD, the only public transport options were one train and one bus every half hour, with the buses ceasing service around 6:30pm. The condition of the building is similarly poor – local council documentation estimates that to rehabilitate the building to Building Code of Australia (BCA) standard for use as a community centre would cost several hundred thousand dollars.

[9] In the past decade, the decline of lawn bowls as a popular recreational activity has led to several nearby clubs closing or radically altering their organizational structure – Camperdown Bowling Club has closed and was operated by Brand X as rehearsal studios (it is currently host to a pop-up restaurant and "pocket farm"), whilst Petersham Bowling Club relies heavily upon income from live music in order to stay open, and is managed by a volunteer board. The Concordia Club now operates the Tempe Bowling Club, primarily as a restaurant and cultural center. None of these clubs still offer competitive bowls – the only local clubs that do are Marrickville (which relies heavily upon live music revenue) and Alexandria-Erskineville (which has retained its focus as a competitive bowls club).

Marrickville Council subsequently opened the redevelopment of the site to Expressions of Interest (EOI). Whilst a number of community groups submitted tenders to operate the site, none were selected by Council, with Brand X subsequently chosen specifically to operate the site on a temporary basis. Even in this early point in the case study, we see how despite the presence of rigid, formalized, bureaucratic structures like the EOI process, informal selection processes are already governing the choice of operator for the site:

> They had two properties which are slated for redevelopment, we took on Camperdown Bowling Club and Tempe Jets at the same time, and so when I did the first walk throughs of both of those I wasn't interested, because I knew they were really broken properties, I also felt that it would've been something that may not have, would've been too much work and too hard to get people in, of course for me it's actually, you take on a property and then there's a massive expectation from the person who gave it to you... it's a PR exercise, ultimately, and that [you should achieve] immediate activiation... but that's, you've gotta build the culture from the beginning and that takes time and a lot of work.
>
> (James, personal communication, 3 June 2015)

Figure 6.24: Tempe Jets, front entrance, with Brand X logol (source: Craig Lyons)

According to James, the director of Brand X, their selection was due to a demonstrated track record providing cultural space on a "meanwhile" basis prior to major redevelopments, most notably Frasers Studios (named after Frasers Property, major developer of the Central Park site in Chippendale). The Frasers Studio project provided temporary studio space, with priority given to "local visual artists (defined as inner-city, Sydney) whose practice has been disrupted by development in the local community." (Queen Street Studio, 2015) This formally-operated studio was established during the ongoing gentrification of the Chippendale area, a period in which many informal performance spaces – of which

Lanfranchi's Memorial Discotheque and Space 3 are notable nearby examples – were forced to close either due to rising rents or increasing enforcement (Creagh, 2005, 2007). This pattern of temporary formal spaces absorbing practitioners displaced by the closure and redevelopment of informal spaces has a clear history in the visual and performative arts in Sydney. With the establishment of Tempe Jets, this practice would be extended to a space primarily geared towards musical practice, in a marginal location, much further from the city centre than previous spaces (see Figure 6.24).

The three interview subjects featured in this chapter have all moved between the formal and the informal in their professional practice over a number of years. In understanding their locational trajectories over this time period, we are able to observe dynamics similar to that of informal space – particularly *settling, inserting* and *attaching* (Dovey & King, 2011). In the temporary alignment of the trajectories of the three respondents at Tempe Jets, we can see how the space is produced relationally. Romy, the manager of Tempe Jets, states of the location "it's a bit further out, and I think people can't quite get their heads around going that far at the moment." (Romy, personal communication, 27 April 2015) Romy's previous arts-related volunteer work had predominantly taken place in local businesses and DIY initiatives in Enmore, Rozelle, Leichhardt and Marrickville – all areas slightly closer to the city, following traditional patterns of gentrification in which arts sector activities are increasingly displaced from the city centre in the face of rapid residential development (Shaw, 2013a). Brand X director James' trajectory has led him from his hometown of Adelaide, to the inner east suburb of Darlinghurst, to the Central Park redevelopment in Chippendale, and outwards to Camperdown and Tempe as properties are offered to Brand X for renewal – a similar trajectory. Nic, a tenant at the space, moved from Cairns in Far North Queensland to Penrith, in Western Sydney, for university; after commuting to the city to see bands for a long time, he settled in the Inner West. In our interview, Nic referenced rehearsing in suburbs as disparate as his former home and a rehearsal studio in Ultimo (to the immediate west of the CBD), Putney (10 kilometers north-west of the city), Bondi (7km east of the city), and Marrickville (7km south-west of the city). Nic states of this variegated geography:

> I think Sydney is more interesting as all these strange little fragmented communities and kind of eerily bizarre kind of worlds, as opposed to... wanting to have some New York or Melbourne style kind of metro lifestyle, I like that gigs exist in strange places in Sydney and kind of makeshift spaces and you know, it would be nice if there was a little bit more stability to it all, but it's kind of strange and interesting and.... at least things aren't complacent.
>
> (Nic, personal communication, 19 May 2015)

This view of the constitution of the Sydney music scene – as "makeshift," "fragmented," and as lacking "stability," seems to mirror Tironi's (2012, p. 205) assertion that musical scenes are typified by fluidity, punctuated by moments of fixity (such as the temporary arrangement supporting Tempe Jets) which enact "complex, situated... cultural economies." This temporary alignment of the trajectories of the three people interviewed (along with other residents and staff) in a situated and actively produced space, is methodologically useful, as it not only allows us to look at the distinctions between the formal and informal as a spatial categorization, it allows us to look at the transactive and relational nature of the spaces being produced. Far from the notion of the "collapsoscape," where urban decay is permitted to proceed uninhibited, in order for cultural industries to move in and thus "compost" the city (Keeffe, 2009), we can see local authorities playing an active role in facilitating this process.

It is in the interrelations between those involved in the space that we can see how informality is not only a spatial categorization, but also an *organizational form*, *governmental tool*, and a *mode of knowing* the contemporary city. Whilst all respondents have experience in informal spaces, their confluence in this case is facilitated by the local government, creating a *formally informal* spatial categorization. We will now turn to how the politics of labour in informal spaces leads to the production of new, hybrid subjectivities in the coming together of seemingly disparate groupings of people.

Tempe Jets and the *formally informal* organizational form

Building on the establishment of Tempe Jets as a *formally informal* type of spatial categorization, we can now see how this categorization facilitates the interaction of numerous differing and sometimes conflictual forms of social organization. At Tempe Jets, we see the confluence of a number of organizations and individuals with extensive experience with informal subcultural modes of socio-spatial organization into a clearly delineated, structured form. Tempe Jets actively facilitates the subsumption of informal and DIY modes of socio-spatial organization into rigid, structured, hierarchical forms, providing an interface between worlds of informal and formal labour. As local authorities increasingly privatize or subcontract their assets, state legitimacy is given to increasingly precarious livelihoods for some sections of the population (in this case, local musicians), while increasing value capture is afforded to other sections of the population (in this case, local authorities and/or potential future developers). In the following section, we will unpack the varying types of socio-spatial organization that work in, and work to produce Tempe Jets as a *formally informal* space

Brand X, the organization managing Tempe Jets, is a registered not-for-profit institution with DGR (deductible gift recipient) status under Australian taxation law. On its website, it lists the NSW Government (via Arts NSW), Marrickville Council (via Arts & Culture), and the property developer TWT as major partners. In its role as a service provider, Brand X "activates spaces, resources, and programs for the Independent Arts sector." (Brand X 2016) This is achieved by "working with Property Developers, Landlords, and Local Governments to transform empty spaces into cultural places." (Brand X 2016) This is reflected in the constitution of their board, which consists of urban planners, local government officials, academics, arts administrators, and professional service providers (such as lawyers and accountants). With its expertise in the rule-bound, clearly delineated worlds of urban planning, finance and business, and the legal profession (to name a few), the staff and board structure of Brand X quite obviously constitute it as a formal organization under McFarlane's definition.

Figure 6.25: Flyer for TJ#1 event, held at Tempe Jets in January 2015, showing Marrickville Council co-branding (source: flyer collected during fieldwork)

Rather than catering to individual musicians, Tempe Jets, in its incarnation as a live music business hub, has invited musical organizations – primarily record labels, but also an orchestra and a magazine – to become residents at the space. James' rationale for this decision is explained thus:

> the organizations, investing in them… has so much more power than [investing in] individuals, because those people… represent so many other people, so it's like a way in which you're making a great impact really quickly, you're doing it by people who've got programs or products or something like that, that assists so much more people, like we could get you in as an individual artist, and you'd create, and you'd have a thing, but you're one and you're taking over one space, you get an organization in, that effects 17,18, 20, 30 people.
>
> (James, personal communication, 3 June 2015)

Accordingly, several musical organizations were approached about becoming residents at the space. These include:

- The Splinter Orchestra (a large scale electro-acoustic improvising ensemble);
- World's Only (a small-run music magazine);
- R.I.P. Society (an independent record label catering to punk, rock, electronic and experimental music);
- Big Village (an independent record label catering to hip hop and rap music);
- The Jazzgroove Association (an artist-led association committed to raising the profile of jazz and improvised music);

- Splitrec (a record label catering to contemporary experimental and avant-garde music).

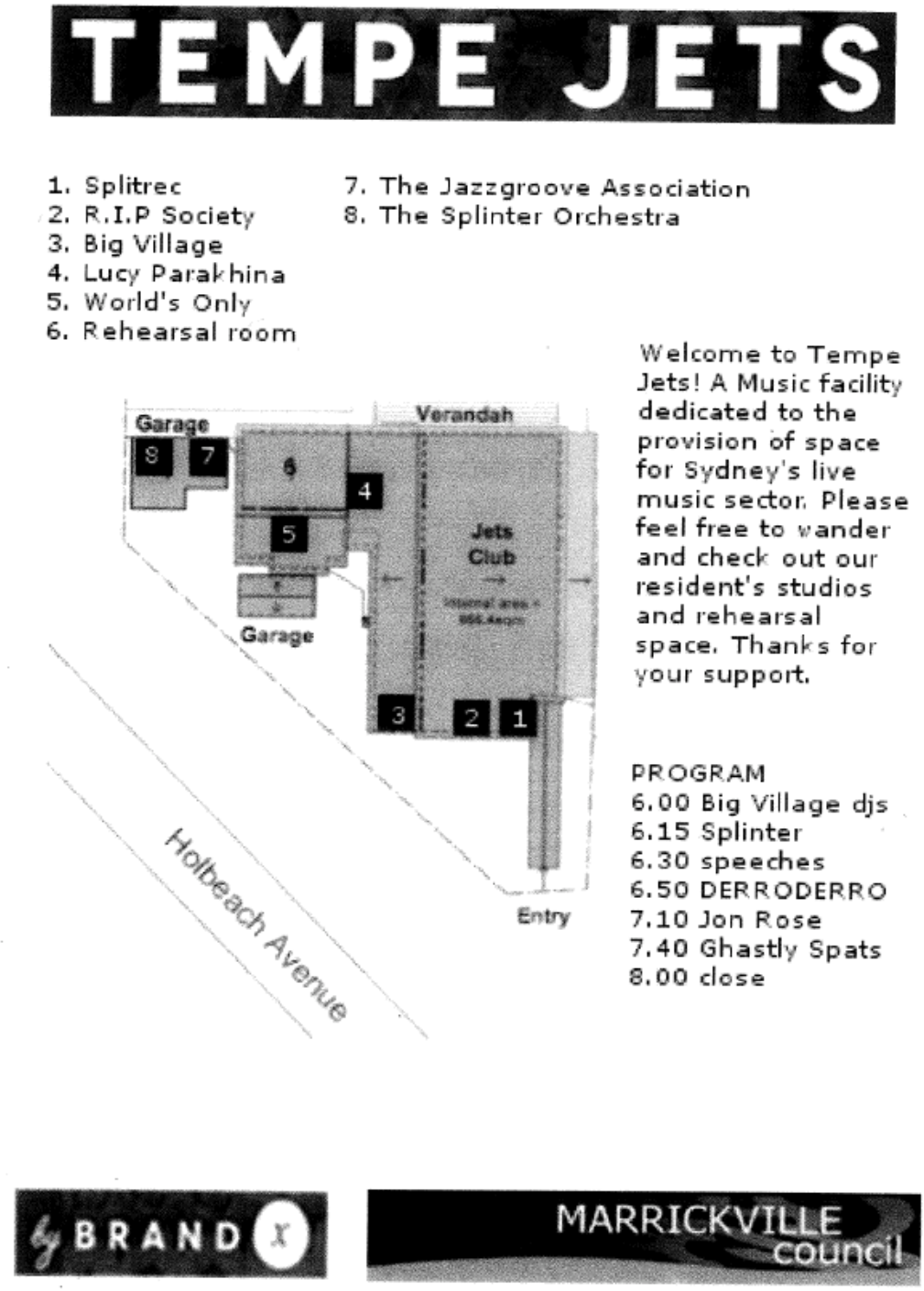


Figure 6.26: Layout of Tempe Jets, mid-2015 (source: handout collected during fieldwork)

As has been well documented, musicians generally experience lower and less stable incomes than most of the population, which often leads not only to musicians seeking other forms of income in other industries, but also a difficulty in measuring musicians' incomes through means such as a census (R. Florida & Jackson, 2010; Hracs, Grant, Haggett, & Morton, 2011; Hracs & Leslie, 2014). Additionally, it has been well documented in discussions of the "creative

class" over the last decade that cultural labourers, particularly musicians, are subjected to increasingly precarious livelihoods, concomitant with the flexibilization of labour under contemporary capitalism (Gill & Pratt, 2008; Neilson & Rossiter, 2008; A. Ross, 2008). The precarity experienced in everyday life is increasingly being felt across the traditional global North-South divide (Vasudevan, 2015), with Martin-Iverson (2012) demonstrating that precarity is an enduring feature of alternative youth music scenes in neoliberal Indonesia. Even though recent understandings of informality as *organizational form* tend to emphasize the precarity of manual and day labourers (McFarlane, 2012; McFarlane & Waibel, 2012; Mukhija, 2014), work on precarity has emphasized the productive capacity of *immaterial labour*, a category within which musical production as a communicative act may be situated (Hardt & Negri, 2004, pp. 108-109). Immaterial labour, which largely occurs in situations of precarity, is then appropriated by an administrative class (for example, advertisers, or the local state) for the purposes of value realization in the capitalist economy (Arvidsson, 2007). Whilst informality and precarity cannot necessarily be conflated, it is evident that the precarity of musical production is exacerbated by its socio-spatial marginality within the city and the recourse to informality as a 'survival strategy' perpetuates this marginality. This sense of precarity and informality was articulated by Nic in our interview:

> Okay so I was approached by Romy who was working for Brand X about going into the space, and I was a little bit concerned about you know having this weekly expense of rent [$40 per week] and stuff I was like, I've never stepped into that kind of world for a label, like having that expense, went out and had a look, like looked at a room that we could use, and was thinking alright, this is pretty much, even if I can't turn this into a place where we can have band rehearsals all of the time, this is still gonna be worthwhile if I can split it with my friend Steve.
>
> (Nic, personal communication, 19 May 2015)

Figure 6.27: Looking across the main hall towards the offices of Splitrec and R.I.P. Society (photo: Craig Lyons)

In the above quote from Nic, we can see his apprehension about the weekly expense of $40 a week, which by Sydney standards is quite reasonable – the current average rate for a desk-hire at a co-working space is $30-40 per day. This apprehension may not necessarily stem from the modest expense itself. Whilst moving into the space is a voluntary and potentially beneficial process for Nic, we are still able to observe his unease about the disciplinary effect of rent as an apparatus of capture. The function of rent, in this instance, is to transform Nic's operations from home operation to rent-paying business. This is only a piecemeal solution to a long-term problem, for as we will see, in the production of the spatiality of Tempe Jets and the precarious immaterial labourer-subject it contains, local musicians are being *enrolled* in the service of neoliberal urbanism.

Under this system, "creative city" policies, transported from the US and Europe, are enthusiastically and uncritically adopted by local governments trying to stimulate local economic growth, primarily through property-led urban regeneration. Whilst this may not be neoliberal urbanism by the letter, and actually relies upon state support in this instance, it is notably far more marketized than the *informally formal* space of Black Wire Records. Furthermore, the creation and support of *formally informal* spaces legitimizes the ongoing harassment and displacement of informal spaces such as those described in previous chapters. It is through the closure of collectively organized spaces, and the support of individualized, and marketized studio projects like Tempe Jets that we can see neoliberal urbanism in action on a local scale. Through the establishment of new, *formally informal* governance mechanisms, precarity and informality for musical producers is reinforced, whilst ensuring capital's ongoing control over space.

Neoliberal urbanism and *formally informal* governance

In the previous chapter, Black Wire Records give us an example of an *informally formal* space: a space that is technically illegal under planning law, but facilitates normatively or socially acceptable acts in a given territory, deterring enforcement of that space by local authorities. These acts, particularly when viewed in light of the decline of the formal live music sector in recent years, demonstrate that "breaking the laws in those small ways constitutes acceptable deviance." (Pagano, 2013, p. 369) Conversely, when establishing (or engaging a third party to establish) a similar space, Marrickville Council has been faced with the opposite dilemma, namely a space that is legally constituted, but may facilitate potentially socially unacceptable acts, particularly regarding moral panic around noise and youth violence. The norms constituting acceptable behaviours may occur on very small scale – for instance, between individual neighbours – and may be historically constituted, such as those relating to prior building occupants. James explains the relationship between the previous occupants and their neighbours as follows:

> It had previous history of course, party place, da da da, but really hated from the local community, really hated. I think lots of events went really rogue... and it just affected people's standard of living and quiet enjoyment, as they call it. And it's very easy for a space to go fallow like that.
>
> (James, personal communication, 3 June 2015)

This was a foremost concern of Brand X, and part of the reason that makes their "activations" an attractive prospect for property owners, with James saying that a prime concern of the management of the space is to stop it from "going rogue,":

> A complaint from a neighbor. That's it. That's all it is. We [Brand X] understand that concern, we understand that it's a political system, that in order for the mayor to get voted in again everyone's gotta be happy and everyone's working for the mayor's best interests. Hopefully the mayor is visionary and they have ideas of community engagement but regardless the last thing you want is a complaint – so we are a good candidate, because we kind of understand that.
>
> (James, personal communication, 3 June 2015)

As Pagano has noted, actions that are illegal but socially acceptable do not attract enforcement. Furthermore, actions that are illegal but are normatively accepted by the community tend to become legal, and then work their way into the urban development canon "such that legal means to replicate them become available." (Pagano, 2013, p. 370) In the example of Tempe Jets, we can observe how the style, aesthetic, and practices of the informal world are subsumed into legally constituted, formal spaces. These forms of DIY urbanism reveal the tipping point between the informal and the formal – where the line is drawn between what is socially, normatively, and legally acceptable, and what is not. Tempe Jets, as an example of a legal space that caters to communities previously serviced by informal spaces (or a *formally informal* space), is constituted in a particular form of historically specific socio-spatial relations, which are codified in specific regulatory and interactional accomplishments between owners, managers, and users of the space, as well as the public more broadly. In understanding the way that Tempe Jets is *produced,* we are able to understand how it is *productive* of new forms of neoliberal urban governance.

Tempe Jets has invoked informal modes of socio-spatial organization from its inception, beginning with the original tender process to establish the site. The contract to operate and upgrade the site was opened to Expression of Interest in late 2013, with Marrickville Council receiving 10 submissions from both commercial and non-profit operators – four from football teams, two from social clubs, and one each from a permaculture organization, a community nursery, a hobby group for model autosports, and an early learning centre. Council also

engaged a consultant to assess the cost of upgrading the building for use as a council community hall, which had an estimated cost of $266,038, due to the poor condition of the building.

Figure 6.28: Tempe Jets, rear view (source: Brand X Facebook page)

The results of the Expression of Interest process are confidential, but no parties who submitted an EOI were approached to operate the facility. In February 2014, Marrickville Council approached Brand X "with two properties requiring temporary activation while the council sought respective tenders for their redevelopment" (Brand X 2016). Romy describes how tenants were selected to be offered space at Tempe Jets:

> I guess it was kind of curated, I think because [of] time, we didn't have much time, and we wanted to activate it really quickly, I just approached people that I knew and tried to get the word out, we did a little call out on Facebook, but we didn't do the more standard Brand X callout which is done for the other spaces... with assessment panels and stuff.
>
> (Romy, personal communication, 27 April 2015)

Here we have an example of what Tonkiss (2014, p. 96) describes as "informality from above." In the selection of Brand X as the operator of the site, and of the musical organizations to become resident in the site, regular deliberative processes were circumvented in the name of expediency and the "immediate activation" required by council. In this process, the wider community was not consulted: Tonkiss claims that this is a kind of "'inequity planning' in which a skewed form of planning for elites passes as formal neutrality in the governance of space." (Tonkiss, 2014, p. 99) Here, we observe a process similar the "stratification" of Yiftachel's (2009a, 2009b) grey cities – in which those occupying informal "gray spaces" are either streamlined or incorporated (as is the case here), criminalized (as with the *informally informal* spaces), or left in uncertainty (as is the case with *informally formal* spaces). But the state is able to choose when, and how, it invokes informality in order to produce space, and in what circumstance it can return to structured, rule-based modes of socio-spatial organization. In the negotiations and conditions concerning the use of Tempe Jets, we can see how despite the aesthetic of informality being invoked, the space is in fact rigidly controlled in almost every way, formalizing and codifying use through lease conditions more stringent than most urban planning systems or commercial leases.

Tempe Jets opened in July 2014, as a "live music business hub," after a lease was negotiated between Tempe Recreation Reserve Trust (managed by Marrickville Council) and Brand X. This lease has subsequently been extended and renegotiated several times, and at time of writing, the lease extends from January 1, 2016, until June 30, 2016.[10] The cost for Brand X to lease this facility under its current lease includes $231.00 lease fee, as well as $1118.16 in utilities. The lease restricts the use of the building to between 8am and 11pm, with no rehearsals to take place after 10pm. Brand X are authorized to hold "Show Case Events" as a permitted use "provided the Lessee has obtained all necessary approvals if applicable." Of this process, Romy stated in 2015 that:

> the events that are happening now we've had to negotiate with council about, and they're on specific days that we've been assigned in advance, within specific hours with a maximum number of people, and all that kind of thing.

[10] The lease was subsequently extended in mid-2016 until the end of December 2016.

(Romy, personal communication, 27 April 2015)

Furthermore, other restrictions on the lease include that the Lessee must not "operate a musical instrument... or other equipment that can be heard outside the Premises," or conduct any building works whatsoever without the Lessor's approval. These lease conditions are strictly enforced, and utilize remote sensing equipment:

> one of the residents didn't know that they weren't allowed to do any kind of work in the rooms, so someone was patching a hole, which is so reasonable, it's a hole in the wall, but the dust set off the fire alarm and that's how Marrickville knew what we were doing and they were like, that's completely, you're not allowed to do that.
>
> (Romy, personal communication, 27 April 2015)

> you're not allowed to fix anything or change and you have to request anything you want to remove or you know anything structural, you're not supposed to drill anything ever, so we did all this soundproofing using kind of like 3M [temporary, non-invasive] hooks and stuff like that.
>
> (Nic, personal communication, 19 May 2015)

By imposing strict controls over the use of the space through lease conditions, Council are able to dictate the terms on which the space is used by the residents, whose participation in the decision-making process around the space is limited to everyday matters, such as garbage, cleaning, and use of the kitchen, as Nic explains:

> we dunno how to state our case or prove that this is working, we don't know how to kind of quantify to the council how much work, how much this is doing, there is no like, after you get a grant, what's the thing you have to do? Acquittal, there's not like acquittal… so I just don't know… what we do to show them that this is really working for a lot of people and could work for a lot more… I dunno how Brand X goes about getting these spaces, and how they have to justify their use of them or whatever, but I know that we don't know, and I dunno how we can improve, it is a bit funny like that, not even really having like a chance to kind of prove your worth, you know what I mean?
>
> (Nic, personal communication, 19 May 2015)

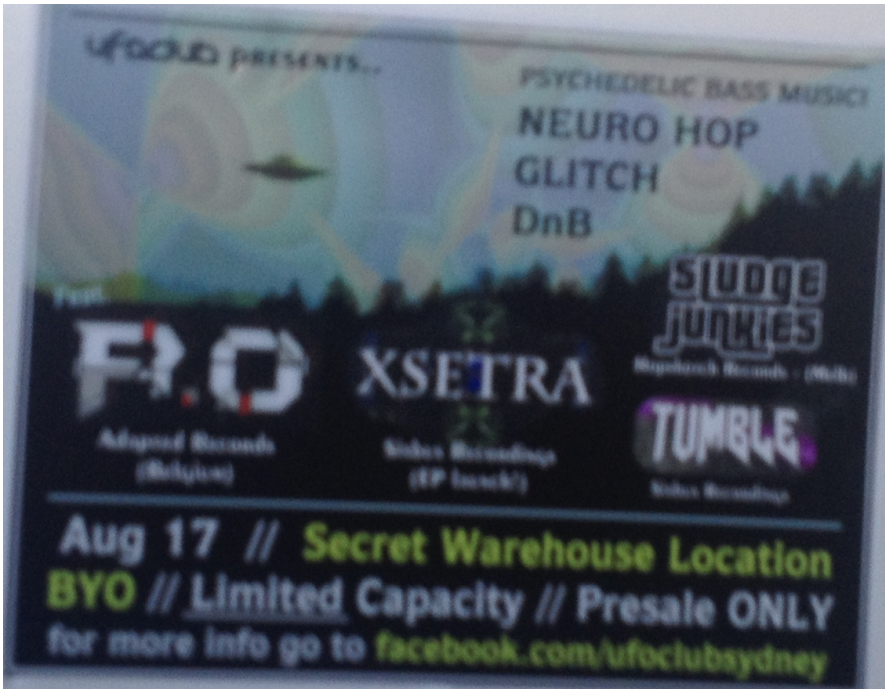
When discussing a different Brand X project on the North Shore of Sydney, James was certainly aware of this dynamic, stating that "[the] local community's understanding [is] that their neighbourhood's gonna change profoundly forever, and they're probably not going to be a part of that discussion" (James, personal communication, 3 June 2015). Here we see the contradictions inherent in the use of informality as a tool of governance, particularly in the production of Tempe Jets as a *formally informal* space. In the provision of rolling temporary leases and lack of access to deliberative decision making structures, precarity of access typical of informality is reinforced for tenants. In the rigid formalization of use, this precarity is further extended. And here we see the double-bind of neoliberal urban governance – a choice between precarious access, or the recourse to equally insecure informal space. This is a unidirectional, hierarchical process – whilst subjects must make their practices and livelihoods observable to local authorities, the same transparency does not apply to the authorities themselves (Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto, & Maringanti, 2007). The purpose of the state under neoliberalism is to introduce new approaches to uneven development that facilitate capital accumulation whilst ameliorating its more negative effects (Brenner & Theodore, 2002a). Most fundamentally, the tendency towards informalization highlights the negative outcomes that these processes can have upon groups already experiencing precarity of access. The intensifying gentrification pressures that evolve through the rent gap are a

form of structural violence enacted upon the most vulnerable people in society. This violence becomes only more pointed when taking place in "revitalizing" or "regenerating" neighbourhoods (Tonkiss, 2014). Under this logic, informality is not something to be celebrated for its own sake – on the contrary, an uncritical enthusiasm for informal urbanism glosses over the structural inequalities that lead to informality (Van Ballegooijen & Rocco, 2013). In the following and final section of this chapter, we will see how the enduring power of informal modes of socio-spatial organization persists, evading attempts at formalization.

Constituting the *formally informal*, or informality as a *mode of knowing*

If it is the purpose of formal modes of socio-spatial organization to impose fixity over space in a reterritorialization process, and to impose order and affix value to new areas of everyday life, then it must follow that informal modes seek its opposite. In imposing un-fixity, via processes of deterritorialization, and undoing old orders whilst creating new ones, urban informality is typified by "*the constant negotiability of value.*" (Roy & AlSayyad, 2004, p. 5) Even though urban governmentality "constitutes the rules of the game, determining the nature of transactions between individuals and institutions and within institutions," there is always leakage, and informal modes persist within the contemporary city (Roy & AlSayyad, 2004, p. 5). This persistence is only exacerbated by the precarity of access to political and physical spaces of the city, as outlined in the previous section. As Nic explained in interview, he has discussed with a friend the possibility of relocating his studio to a new, artist-run warehouse space in Arncliffe, further out from the city centre, as Tempe cannot guarantee him ongoing access to the space.

This understanding of informality foregrounds the *relations between* the informal and the formal as the site of struggle. It is upon this terrain that the "lived experience" of informality in the landscape becomes crucial in understanding the role of the spatial in social reproduction, and in the production of new subjectivities. At Tempe Jets, the site itself operates as a conduit for informal networks, and ways of knowing the city. Whist attending a



performance there in January 2015, I was able to observe posters and stickers being placed on the walls of the building, promoting various events, shows and organisations. One of these stickers, depicted in Figure 6.29, was advertising an event hosing "psychedelic bass music, neuro-hop, glitch, and d&b [drum and bass]" in a "secret warehouse location." Tempe Jets, therefore, may potentially serve as an important informational resource regarding informal spaces. This information may be useful to local authorities seeking to enforce planning controls on informal spaces, or invite them into further formalisation processes. It is so far unclear whether *formally informal* spaces are directly used for surveillance of informal spaces in Sydney, however we do know that surveillance of informal spaces takes place (see Chapter 4 and 5). This relationship problematizes our previous conception of a unidirectional model of governance: if value is constantly being negotiated, then it is possible that new systems of value can emerge in order to challenge current neoliberal urban hegemony.

Figure 6.29: Sticker for a party in a "secret warehouse location" on the wall of Tempe Jets (photo: Craig Lyons)

This conception of the formal-informal divide also focuses on the politics of informalisation and the shifting definition of informality itself. Informal spaces and informal modes of occupation become increasingly formalised through the fixing of value and their incorporation into formal systems of governance through regulatory apparatuses. As a result, boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable acts becomes at the same time obvious (through their legal definition) and blurred (through the selectivity of legal application). This leads to increasing uncertainty for informal practitioners, and provides numerous justifications for enforcement by local authorities. As seen in Chapter 4, in recent years numerous *informally informal* spaces have been subject to enforcement by local councils, particularly Marrickville Council. These enforcement practices are central to the "soft gentrification" processes currently unfolding in Marrickville and other areas of Sydney – whilst formal (or *formally informal*) and compliant spaces are celebrated or established by local authorities, non-compliant spaces are subjected to violent enforcement (Raunig, 2013, p. 130).

Thus we see the emergence of Tempe Jets not as a fixed, vernacular border between the formal and informal worlds, but a place where both formal and informal modes of knowing the city co-exist, rubbing up against, negotiating, and coming into conflict with one another, in different ways for different individuals and groups. There is an important temporal and scalar dimension to this dynamic – in being able to "hold activity in place" on a temporary basis, Tempe Jets can be applauded, whilst still acknowledging that enclosure will take place eventually (Tonkiss, 2013, p. 322). Whilst Brand X might be negotiating access to a space on a monthly or six-monthly basis, individual residents move between formal and informal spaces, often many times over the space of one day. McFarlane and Waibel (2012, p. 6) note that "in this context, we might see informality and formality as modes of everyday sociality through which different urban constituencies (residents, planners, business people, activists, etc.) sift and sort through their hopes and desires."

We should be mindful, however, that the ability of individuals or groups to access the discourse of formality, to easily be able to code-switch and move seamlessly between the formal and informal worlds, is not only a marker of social and cultural capital, but a marker of class (Andersen & Hansen, 2011; Bourdieu, 1986). Whilst it is argued that "informality and formality are not neutral social positions as much as they are coeval dispositions in anyone," people and classes are marked by "not their implication in, but rather pretense at obeying

rules, following the law, and dutifully paying their taxes." (McFarlane & Waibel, 2012, p. 6) If the subjectivities encouraged in *informally informal* spaces make no pretense at obeying relevant regulations, and *informally formal* spaces only comply to the point that deters enforcement, here at Tempe Jets we see a new form of informal-formal relationship emerging. In simultaneously embracing the temporary security of spatial access whilst acknowledging the inability to influence broader political processes that will lead to their displacement, residents of Tempe Jets are producing what I would term a *formally informal* mode of socio-spatial organization. This differs from other examples of "meanwhile" uses of space that typify urban renewal projects (Deslandes, 2013), because at its heart lies an acknowledgement that the inevitable result is not only increasing gentrification, but a retreat back to informality. In this emergent stage, *formally informal* modes of neoliberal urban governance cannot fully subsume informal subcultural musical communities, as they seemingly have no purpose for them in central cities beyond strategic deployment in the service of gentrification.

Conclusion

Contemporary debates around informality tend to collapse the divide between formality and informality, whilst at the same time reinforcing the distinction. In the everyday lived experience of the space, Tempe Jets mimics this practice, constituting a new, *formally informal* mode of socio-spatial organization.

McFarlane and Waibel's (2012) multifaceted analysis of urban informality offers us a useful model for theorizing this new mode. As a *spatial categorization*, Tempe Jets occupies a marginal space within the urban landscape, typical of informal spaces, yet is owned and managed by local authorities in trust. Furthermore, through the spatial and locational trajectories of interview subjects we are able to see how managers and subjects of the space have moved through informal spaces toward formal spaces in their everyday lives, yet still maintain a presence in both. In its *organizational form,* Tempe Jets subsumes informal organizational structures and social networks into hybrid conurbations, strategically deploying them in the service of local government arts and culture policies and marketing strategies. This process involves the disciplining of unruly subjects and the production of new, *formally informal* subjectivities under neoliberal urbanism. As a form of *governmentality*, this new mode of socio-spatial organization codifies and legalizes particular forms of temporary or meanwhile usage of space, while disciplining others: it is in this stage of the process that the "gains" of informal urbanism are converted into a rule-based form that conforms with formal planning requirements. However, what is evident from the data gathered is that this process can only ever be partial – there is always resistance. In examining the production of Tempe Jets as a *formally informal mode of knowing the city,* we see the broader social and political implications of this thesis. Whilst it is possible for formal and informal modes of knowing the city to exist side-by-side, even within one individual over the course of a day, at Tempe Jets those ways of seeing are brought into direct confrontation with each other. It is unclear at this stage what the future holds for Tempe Jets: at the time of writing, its lease has been extended until December 2016. What is certain is that the questions it poses about the nature of informality in the contemporary city will continue to be asked for some time.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In November 2016, rumours were circulating in local media that somebody had purchased the Hopetoun Hotel, the "iconic" venue that was regarded as a hub for live music in Sydney from the early 1980s until its closure in 2009 (Campbell, 2013). Rumours regarding the sale of the hotel happen every few years – in the past, such rumours have suggested the venue was bought by a celebrity chef; most recently, it has been suggested the venue may have been purchased by a local record label owner (Kehagias 2016). Each time, the owner's lawyers issue public statements to the contrary (Kehagias 2016), and the issue fades from the news cycle. With each round of speculation, it becomes clear that the sale of the hotel is something of a non-issue for the musical community in Sydney: the drastic changes that have occurred to the landscape of musical production whilst the Hopetoun has been closed have changed the face of musical landscapes in Sydney, and challenged the centrality of licensed venues as live music spaces. Now, spaces of live music production in Sydney are increasingly produced through informal dynamics, and it is by understanding these dynamics – without relying upon a historicized narrative of "pub rock" – that we will better understand the importance of urban informality to the future of Sydney.

These dynamics, and the interplay between the formal and the informal, are captured in a final anecdote. Whilst finalizing this thesis, the most recent Punk Outside – the twenty-first "official" event in the series – was held in the same laneway off Sydney Steel Road discussed in Chapter 4, on a Sunday afternoon. The event featured eight local bands, including one band, Burlap, whose latest album was released on Black Wire Records, the record label associated with the store and performance venue discussed in Chapter 5. Four days later, I would see the same band play in a working class pub in the inner west. On the same street, the "Off Broadway" precinct, involving temporary uses of vacant shops of a kind described in Chapter 6, has recently finished its first trial run providing theatre and performance spaces for the Sydney Fringe Festival. The director of the Sydney Fringe Festival is the proprietor of a locally and internationally famous jazz venue – a venue that made a name for itself by operating informally out of the infamous Hibernian House in Surry hills for a number of years before moving to a new, compliant space in the same neighbourhood. In this very brief example, we are already beginning to unpack not only the *relational*, but the cyclical character of the production of informal spaces of musical performance in Sydney. Those involved in musical production in Sydney are able to move backwards and forwards between formality and informality as their circumstances, aspirations, and politics change over time.

The poster for Punk Outside #21 was drawn by a local artist and depicts a native bird, the Australian Ibis, foraging in a bin for food (see Figure 7.30). The Ibis, colloquially referred to as the "bin chicken"[11] are a large species of bird that have fled their native habitat due to environmental degradation of wetlands in Western New South Wales, and become adept at surviving in the urban landscape of Sydney. Despite being popularly maligned as a nuisance in Australian cities, it has been argued that the Ibis can teach us important lessons about adaptability in the face of rapid environmental change (Ross 2004). In their ability to deal

[11] For more information on nicknames for the Australian Ibis, visit http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/offtrack/behind-the-ibis-invasion/6842242

with processes of displacement, precarity, and conflict, the same can be said about informal spaces of musical performance in Sydney.

Figure 7.30: Poster for Punk Outside #21 (source: Facebook)

In this thesis, I have argued that urban informality is not just something that happens "over there"— in the academic imaginary of the Global South, away from the spaces researchers occupy and create in the everyday. Rather, this thesis has demonstrated that Sydney could not exist without informal interventions onto the city by individuals and communities. In examining the *everyday* production of informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney, not only have I contributed to the debates about informality that are occurring globally, but I have thoroughly examined the conditions and interactions that produce the spaces and communities that I live in and interact with daily. I have been able to demonstrate the sheer amount of time and labour that goes into the production of space, the maintenance of space, and the articulation of boundaries – between spaces and communities, insiders and outsiders, informality and the state – that allow venues to persist in spite of the odds. It is not my intention here to opine on the successes or failures of any particular space, but to try and articulate the lessons evident in my observations – for geographers, urban planners, scene participants, and those who have a stake in processes of urban change.

The thread running through this thesis, that links the case studies together, is how the case studies respond to *displacement*, as well as *precarity* and *conflict*. Beginning with the closure of "formal" venues, we can see how different communities try to carve out some space for themselves in conditions of uncertainty. These spaces then become threatened due to their potentially transgressive nature. This progression – from displacement, to production, to conflict – has wide ranging impacts upon the (re)production of inequalities in urban environments, and is manifest across all four of McFarlane and Waibel's (2012) four conceptions of informality – *spatial categorization*, *organizational form, governmental tool,* and *negotiable value*.

It is clear that informal landscapes of musical performance are produced through a variety of interactions, from individual desires to political-economic forces. In my research, the accounts participants gave for turning away from formalized spaces and to informality varied. For some, it is simply to create space for performance and social interaction; for others, temporary occupation and reimagining of public space; others still seek to provide a permanent or semi-permanent space for their respective communities. Many of the spaces discussed in this thesis are attempting a form of prefigurative politics, of "building a new world in the shell of the old" (El Khoury, 2015, p. 13). Indeed, it is the case that in the DIY/punk case studies presented in this thesis, that these forms may be valorized. Regardless of motivation, the creation of all informal landscapes captured in this thesis demonstrate clearly that the formalized, neoliberal capitalist urban world does not or cannot provide the appropriate spatial resources to meet the needs of many communities. The recourse to informality is predicated upon communities utilizing the resources they have at hand to achieve the best ongoing outcomes. This also demonstrates the fact that informality, as a mode of organizing space, can "hold" multiple motivations, desires, and visions for the future: the flexibility and liminality of informal spaces are able to sustain multiple kinds of possibilities at once.

Throughout this thesis, I have used McFarlane and Waibel's (2012) four conceptions of informality to frame ways of understanding informal spaces in Sydney. Firstly, let us turn to thinking about informality as a *spatial categorization*. Processes of gentrification and the densification of housing has reduced the amount of space that is amenable to the noisy

activity of live music production, whilst the extraordinary costs (both financial and temporal) of reaching compliance have made that path available only to a select, well-resourced few. The closure of popular, centrally located spaces of live music production, is thus contrasted with the dispersal and informalization of marginal DIY spaces. Over time, formal space, too, is mimicking the spatial patterns of the informal, spreading with it discourses of regulatory compliance and securitization. As spaces of musical performance move out of the nightclubs, pubs, and theatres of the city, and into the backyards, shopfronts, derelict warehouses and public spaces of the suburbs, merging with already-established DIY and informal spaces, the state intervenes, introducing formal plans to codify and reproduce that marginality. This raises important questions about the social reproduction of music scenes. Will this dispersal cause problems of accessibility, particularly for scenes increasingly being pushed to the urban periphery? How will this increasing lack of centrality for sites of subcultural activity affect the sustainability of subcultural practices in Sydney? If Lefebvre believed that part of the right to the city was the "right to centrality" (Merrifield, 2011) how will those rights be articulated in the future? At the moment, we can only speculate, but this will be an important area for follow-up research.

If the space between the formal and informal has been a central concern of this thesis, one crucial way in which this has been observed is in the ways in which the informal and the formal interact in the world of statutory planning. Currently, models of urban planning that operate in Sydney have no way of accounting for the informal way that space is produced, particularly when regarding spaces of musical performance. As such, they are categorized into "compliant" and "non-compliant" spaces, negating the many and varied ways that informal agreements are generated that replace formalized urban planning procedures, as well as the cautionary steps that are taken to limit the impact of live music activity in urban areas. It is hoped that the generation of my typology of informality – containing *informally informal, informally formal, and formally informal* spaces – will assist planners in accounting for the many shades of grey that constitute informal space, and ultimately create spatial outcomes that are more socially just.

Central to understanding my typology is the relationship to precarity and autonomy that each form entails. So while *informally informal* spaces remain the most precarious, quite often operating as temporary uses of space, it may be argued that they allow for the most autonomy in the urban environment. *Informally formal* space, by negotiating with the formal world through commercial leases and governance structures, is able to negate some, but not all, of the precarity engendered in informally informal spaces. It is through the informality of use and the negotiation of informal, hybrid, governance arrangements, that precarity is extended into informally formal spaces. Finally, *formally informal* spaces provide a certain amount of stability of access, but extend precarity into the world of the formal planning system by writing it into temporary lease agreements.

We can also view informal spaces as the site for the developments of new ways of being together, and organizing people – as sites for experimentation with *organizational form.* In Chapters 4 and 5, informal spaces have been demonstrated to be sites typified by immanent organization, where authority rests within the group itself. These forms of organization reject the transcendent, separated power of the state. Immanent organization, of the kind described in the informal spaces detailed in this thesis, are able to produce new ways of being

together. They are able to engage in practices of "commoning," and are based on the principles of volunteerism and mutual aid (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015). These forms of organization seek to trace "lines of flight," avoiding and disengaging with the "apparatuses of capture," desiring to create a "new land" (Purcell 2013). This process is constant, and constantly incomplete. Whilst forms of immanent organization continually seek to evade the apparatuses of capture, as with the example of Black Wire Records, they are constantly being captured, only to escape again. Once again, the social reproduction of informal modes of organization are called into question because of the constant interruptions bestowed upon it by an interventionist state. This demonstrates Purcell's (2016, p. 12), argument, that "the State is precisely the problem. It is the main reason we are so inexperienced, because it has prevented us from developing our ability to manage our own affairs. We do not need the State. We need democracy."

My task in this thesis, therefore, was to examine how we are able to develop forms of immanent organization that not only evade the apparatuses of capture, but are able to develop forms of *spatial governance* that *equitize and make just* access to urban space. Indeed, the state's grip over spatial governance is observed in the varying spatial outcomes of the case studies described in this thesis. This process has affected the case studies discussed in my thesis to varying degrees. The *informally informal* spaces – DIY Harder and Birdrib – have struggled to maintain a foothold in the landscape. Whilst other groups of people continue to organize performances in the same public space, DIY Harder has not occurred since 2015. Birdrib, after being forced to move out of its warehouse in Sydenham, has gone underground, and its location is being guarded as a well-kept secret, with enforcement of planning and building code violations in the area becoming more frequent. The *informally formal* case study – Black Wire Records – considered relocation due to a tripling of its council rates as a result of local council amalgamations[12]. The amalgamations have also led to the loss of the relationships built up with councillors and council staff over a number of years. Despite some troubling times, the venue has managed to remain in its current location, however its future is uncertain. The *formally informal* case study – the Tempe Jets live music business hub – was set to vacate its premises in June 2016. Despite no formal redevelopment plan for the site being put in place, the managers of the site were having difficulty renegotiating a temporary lease due to council amalgamations. At the eleventh hour, their temporary lease agreement was extended until December 2016, and the space is still in operation – however precariously – at the time of writing.

Informally informal spaces have shown us how immanent organization can transform areas of the urban landscape on a temporary basis. In day- or weekend-long projects, they are able to take a disused or underutilized area of the landscape – a walkway, a back garden – and turn them over for public, common use. In this sense, they have traced a line of flight, giving

[12] In May 2016, three local government councils – Leichhardt, Marrickville, and Ashfield – were forcibly amalgamated by the New South Wales state government, creating the Inner West Council. With all sitting councillors of the three local government areas dismissed, and with an appointed administrator holding decision-making authority over the new council, the ability of spaces to participate in local government – through the loss of social capital built up over a long period of time – was drastically reduced.

us a glimpse of a different kind of city. These spaces show us that alternative ways of organizing society and governing space, based on forms that are spontaneous, tacit, affective, and immanent, are possible. The challenge, however, rests in being able to sustain these spaces over the medium to long term. As we saw with the example of Birdrib, attempts to negotiate permanent or semi-permanent *informally informal* space ultimately results in displacement due to local enforcement.

This desire for stability – or at least some form of spatio-temporal continuity – is at least partly responsible for informal spaces choosing to negotiate with the state. The difficulties inherent in creating, establishing, and sustaining informal space whilst avoiding the apparatus of capture, as well as the violence of displacement, is what motivates spaces to gesture towards some kind of formalization process. Viewing informality as a *governmental tool,* it is clear that the state clearly has the upper hand when discussing governance of space. We have seen in this thesis that informality is able to generate new, innovative and affective forms of spatial governance. In Sydney at least, these modes of governance do not compare to the extraordinary and overwhelming power that the state has over the distribution of spatial resources. It is hardly surprising that *informally formal* spaces attempt to reach a level of implicit or tacit compliance that ensures their ability to continue to exist, and do work in and for their communities.

There is much work to be done by the planning profession in order to understand the role that informal spaces play in the city. Informal spaces make a valuable and necessary contribution to urban life, and face many challenges when dealing with complex systems of regulatory compliance. Particularly as cities undergo rapid gentrification, spaces for marginalized people will not only become harder to access for those who need them, but those spaces will find it harder to exist in a complaint- and compliance-driven planning system. The planning profession is thus faced with a more fundamental political question – does it try and empathize and *understand* the ways in which informal space is produced, thus engaging with informality on its own terms? Does this require a rethink of how statutory planning controls are produced as a political document? Or on the other hand, does urban planning try and engage with informal spaces to allow them to reach compliance in a way that won't lead to financial ruin? Do we need to radically reconsider *what we consider planning to be*, in order to account for the variety of ways that city-making takes place outside of regulatory and statutory urban planning systems? These are important questions for both professional planners and planning academics that will resonate long into the future.

It is clear, however, that local authorities do not or cannot envisage any type of permanency for informal spaces whilst cities are undergoing rapid gentrification and densification. Conversely, the state is actively seeking to reinforce the precarity of informal spaces, through the creation of temporary, "meanwhile," "pop-up," *formally informal* spaces. These sites pay lip service to concepts like "creativity" and "innovation," whilst ultimately only valuing the contributions of their communities until a site is able to be redeveloped or transformed to a higher and better use. As a result, spaces of musical performance and production are viewed through a narrow neoliberal framework that only sees the value in the contribution of musical communities to a narrowly defined set of capitalist economic parameters. What is left out of this framework is the contributions that informal spaces of musical production make to the social and cultural lives of participants and the wider community. As a container for economic

arrangements such as sharing, re-appropriation, and cooperation, informal spaces are an important test sites for alternative ways of structuring economies. As cities become more unequal, with the ongoing automation of labour, and with the continual rolling back of the welfare state, these experiments are going to become more useful for a larger section of the population.

Ultimately, we need to reconfigure our understanding of the way that cities function in the Global North, in order to account for the growing informalization that is going to take place as neoliberal urbanism and globalization continue to make our cities more unequal places. Informal spaces already provide an alternative model for organizing space and society, by creating a new city in the shell of the former. As a form of direct action, they lead by example, pointing towards what is possible. As urban residents, we are able to move between the formal and informal in our everyday lives, often many times over the course of a single day, in many and varied parts of the city, and for a variety of purposes. The problem, then, is a question of scale – how can informal practices grow, in order to not only become a constant and visible presence in the urban landscape, but to make a viable claim to a stake in the urban decision making process? Is it possible for informal practices to "scale up," without being subsumed into the project of neoliberal urbanism? Is it possible for the *negotiable value* of informal spaces of musical performance to provide a genuine vision of an alternative urban future?

In Sydney, evidence of this transformation in the current moment is scant. The recent series of "Reclaim the Streets" protests, occurring in the CBD and the Newtown area, have protested against a variety of issues, including the "lockout laws" and the unpopular WestConnex freeway via a series of free street party protests. Central to these mobilizations have been the "sound systems" that have encouraged a street party atmosphere. Informal spaces have provided a key role in these mobilizations, with many "crews" emanating from the informal spaces of the city. This process is necessarily messy, and problems of co-optation abound. In the "scaling up" process, the voices of the oppressed – women, queer people and people of colour in particular – are marginalized, despite playing a key role in producing informal space. Whilst these protests may have roots in the informal, it is precisely the nature of informal space that allows for radical future visioning. Elements that have become fairly standard practice in informal space – Safer Spaces policies, Acknowledgement of Country – are not observed at large-scale rallies. The protests have been so far unsuccessful in their aims of overturning the lockout laws, and stopping the development of the WestConnex freeway. Furthermore, scant attention has been paid by these movements to other serious issues of socio-spatial exclusion in the city – particularly the eviction of public housing tenants in Millers Point, and the closure of women's shelters in Sydney. In both cases, action has taken the form of small scale, direct action, using similar tactics to informal spatial practitioners. Thus, it remains unclear whether "[making] public claims on behalf of small-scale tactical interventions in the city which often thrive on a form of invsibility" will lead to the creation of a "new city" (Iveson, 2013, p. 947).

Researchers interested in urban informality and cities should build upon the relationships I have described in this thesis – *informally informal, informally formal,* and *formally informal.* By conducting an insider ethnography of spaces that to the casual observer may look very similar, I have tried to uncover and explain the many different ways that informal spaces are

produced in the city. What this thesis has attempted to do is to provide a snapshot of the operation of urban informality, via an analysis of the production of informal landscapes of musical performance in Sydney. In the process, I have developed a distinct set of socio-spatial relationships that typify the informal-formal relationship under systems of neoliberal urban governance. It is unclear whether the typology developed would be applicable to other forms of practice in city, and these remain possible areas for future scholarship. It is hoped that in the development of this thesis, I have contributed to the knowledge base of DIY musical practices in Sydney, as well as the scholarly literature of both popular music studies and critical geography. The battle for the future of the city will be fought in the space between formality and informality. In order to create more socially just cities, it is of crucial importance that we understand this relationship, so that we may apply this knowledge not only in our research, but in our everyday lives.

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