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**Disrupting the Violences of Public Space by Acting Publicly
The Production, Segregation and Potential of Public Space illustrated in Luton**

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Disrupting the Violences of Public Space by Acting Publicly

The Production, Segregation and Potential of Public Space illustrated in Luton

Julian Robert Shaw

PhD Thesis

for

Doctorate of Philosophy in Geography (Arts)

Research (Full-Time)

Abstract

The relationship between public space and violence is of increasingly urgent conceptual and topical interest in contemporary western cities. How the works of political theorist Hannah Arendt may inform and enhance geographical enquiries into such a relationship is greatly under appreciated. In stark contrast, the works of social theorist Henri Lefebvre form a common and established foundation for many of the most well-known studies on urban public space. As a radical and, at times, critical companion to the existing corpus of works on urban public space, this thesis will explore how a conversation between Arendt and Lefebvre can illuminate the role of dialogue, transgression, and violence in the formation of public space. Anchoring this conversation on Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1958) and Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1974), an argument is developed that the practical realisation of urban public space can possess the potential to transform existing geographies of segregation and violence. In making this case, emphasis will be placed on the heterogeneous practices, endless fragility, and inevitable violence involved in the production of public spaces. This dissertation will simultaneously interact with the Marxist roots of Lefebvre's idea of urban needs and his passing intellectual exploration of violence, thus offering an alternative notion of urban praxis premised upon plurality, non-violence, and the potential immortality of action.

To complement what is primarily a theoretical dissertation, the town of Luton in Bedfordshire – which has been repeatedly targeted by far-right and Islamist demonstrations in the last 10 years - has been engaged as an illustrative case study.

Acknowledgements

On 1st February 2011, when I submitted my application to study for a PhD at King's College London, neither I, nor my family and friends, had any idea of the 7-year journey that we were about to embark upon. A journey that would have to contend with the struggles of low pay and a precarious future in one of the most expensive cities in the world; have to meet the challenge of balancing study with the work of being a firefighter in London; get to experience the joy of marrying my best friend and getting to know my new nephews; and have the privilege of spending my final times with the greatest Grandad a grandson could wish for. So here we are now, at the point where this stage of the journey comes to a close. As this is the end of the journey I want to acknowledge, and offer my sincerest thanks, to all of those who have joined me for all, or part, of the way.

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- SM(ii).** Police and Crime Commissioner, Bedfordshire Tweet (27 Jun 2015)
- SM(jj).** Bedfordshire Police Tweet (27 Jun 2015)
- SM(kk).** Anonymised Tweet (27 Jun 2015)

Key Reference Codes

Publications by Hannah Arendt

- BPF** Arendt, H., (2006a) [1954] *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, Introduction by Jerome Kohn, London: Penguin Books
- EIJ** Arendt, H., (2006b) [1963] *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Introduction by Amos Elon, London: Penguin Classics
- HC** Arendt, H., (1998) [1958] *The Human Condition, Second Edition*, Introduction by Margaret Canovan, London: The University of Chicago Press
- OT** Arendt, H., (2009) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Milton Keynes: Benediction Classics
- OR** Arendt, H., (2006c) *On Revolution*, Introduction by Jonathan Schell, London: Penguin Books
- OV** Arendt, H., (1970) *On Violence*, London: Harcourt, Inc.
- PP** Arendt, H., (2005) *The Promise of Politics*, Edited and with an Introduction by Jerome Kohn, New York: Schocken Books
- WR** Arendt, H., (1994b) "We Refugees", Essay published in Robinson, M., (ed) *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile*, London: Faber and Faber, pp. 110-119

Publications by Henri Lefebvre

- CE** Lefebvre, H., (2014) *Critique of Everyday Life: The One-Volume Edition*, London: Verso Books
- NOM** Lefebvre, H., (1995) *Introduction to Modernity: Twelve Preludes, September 1959 - May 1961*, Translated by John Moore, London: Verso
- MP** Lefebvre, H., (2016) *Metaphilosophy*, Translated by David Fernbach, Edited with an Introduction by Stuart Elden, London: Verso Books
- PS** Lefebvre, H., (1991) *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing
- UR** Lefebvre, H., (2003 [1970]) *The Urban Revolution*, Translated by Robert Bononno, Foreword by Neil Smith, London: University of Minnesota Press
- WC** Lefebvre, H., (1996) *Writings on Cities*, Selected, translated and introduced by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing

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1. Introduction

The relationship between public space and violence is of increasingly urgent conceptual and topical interest in contemporary capitalist western societies. How the works of political theorist Hannah Arendt may inform this interest, and enhance geographical enquiries into urban public space, is however, greatly under appreciated. In stark contrast, the works of social theorist Henri Lefebvre form a common and established foundation for many of the most well-known studies on the topic. As a radical and, at times, critical companion to the existing corpus of works on urban public space, this thesis will explore how a conversation between Arendt and Lefebvre can illuminate the role of dialogue, disruption, and violence in the formation of public space. Anchoring this conversation on Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1998) and Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991), alongside his various contributions to a *Critique of Everyday Life* (Lefebvre, 2014; Lefebvre and Guterman, 1933; Lefebvre and Levich, 1987), an argument is developed that the practical realisation of urban public space can potentially transform existing geographies of segregation and violence. In making this case emphasis will be placed on the heterogeneous practices, endless fragility, and inevitable violence involved in the production of public spaces. This dissertation will also challenge the Marxist roots in Lefebvre's understanding of praxis, thus offering an alternative notion premised upon Arendt's ideas of plurality, non-violence, and the potential immortality of action.

Recent far-right nationalist protests, the murderous actions of some extremists, and multiple 'hate crimes' have disturbed urban public life across the world. These events provide the context in which this study is situated. In many cases these events have led to enhanced state funding for law enforcement to counter public disorder, especially in the UK. The perceived need to silence the extremes has led the UK government to seek solutions; solutions that have almost exclusively involved the creation of new laws and measures to restrict certain actions in public spaces. Since 1986 the public realm in the UK has been under the specific legal restrictions of the Public Order Act (1986). Included in this act are a number of limits placed upon political processions and marches; including giving the Police the power to change routes, dates, locations, and size of any planned march in the UK. Now, with emergence of renewed violent social unrest, public actions are being further restricted in the UK. The Terrorism Act 2000 brought a ban on both the threat of, and use of, certain actions in public; including specific threats to damage property. Then,

the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 has proscribed any “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs” (The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015). The cumulative effect of these measures goes some way to justify a claim that the urban public realm in the UK is today facing unprecedented levels of closures.

Closing off the urban public sphere interrupts the utopian notion of public space as a space of liberal democratic ideals; a space where all people have the freedom to appear and speak. Yet, it would seem that without these closures, aggressive and intimidating protests would be allowed to routinely disrupt the streets and the citizens of a country; an unpalatable option in any event. Commentators today therefore, have tended to oscillate between a demand for upholding democratic freedom of speech on one hand, and a demand for high levels of security and policing on the other. This second demand bases itself on the assumption that policing can ensure that exercising freedom of speech doesn't lead to violence, in turn protecting the liberal values of multicultural tolerance and coexistence. A number of questions emerge however, and remain unanswered at this impasse; what is an appropriate degree of restriction and control – the degree of legal violence - that can be exercised by the state to guarantee a free public space? Who, or what voices and opinions should be absent/restricted from appearing in the public realm? And, if the state oversteps the mark, is disruption and/or violence a legitimate response by non-state actors to address this? If we combine these questions, we summarily ask; does violence have a role to play in urban public space? And if so, what is this relationship between violence and disruption?

Exploring the relationship between violence and disruption, this thesis takes a unique approach for a Geographic enquiry into urban public space; claiming that acts of everyday story-telling, and the creation of everyday stories, can negotiate the line between violence and disruption, becoming in themselves an appearance of public space. This approach witnesses public space as both an artefact, and an ephemeral moment, appearing in the act of everyday story-telling. This, in itself, poses a further set questions; What is the nature of the relationship between story-telling and public space? And, how does storytelling disrupt, or act violently, in/towards public space?

To illuminate what will prove to be a densely theoretical discussion around all of these questions, the former industrial town of Luton, Bedfordshire, with its contemporary narratives of violence and extremist politics, has been used as an illustrative case study in this dissertation. Based upon a series of intensive interviews and a range of ethnographic methods carried out across a year in Luton, I have considered the actors and ideologies central to the production of public space and the moments of transformative potential that punctuate everyday life in the town. Bringing together the elements of a wide-ranging fieldwork, I ultimately present a conceptually grounded narrative of Luton, elevating the status of story-telling in everyday life, that provides empirical backing to my theoretical argument, and challenges existing dominant accounts of urban public life.

1(1). The Research Problem

Henri Lefebvre's various critiques of capitalist spatial forms has established his place at the foundation of countless geographical accounts on the urban condition. Indeed, the influence of his literary *oeuvre* still resonate in almost every new exploration into urban geography today. Lefebvre's influence pivots around his concern with everyday life and the contention that all space is social. These concerns are built upon an intellectual debt to Karl Marx and his categories of value, his understanding of the capitalist mode of production, and the condition of alienation that this invokes. An intriguing insight to emerge in Lefebvre's works as a result, is his contention that, amidst contemporary social relations of domination and oppression, permanent transgressions – disruptions to the status quo - are 'inevitable' in everyday life.

The Production of Space (1974) is one of Lefebvre's most frequently cited texts in Geography, in which he explores the different elements that are implicit in the construction of human places in the modern age. Every space, he contended, has a tripartite form necessarily present within its production; the conception of a space, the perception of a space, and the lived space. As part of his on-going critique of the urban forms of capitalism in the modern world, Lefebvre explained how two of these forms – the conception and perception of space – enable the production of alienating activities and structures by a capitalist society. He showed how capitalist relations thus facilitate a built form based on

the dominant homogenous perceptions and conceptions of an expert elite of planners, mathematicians and social scientists, ignorant to the heterogeneous and messy reality of lived space. With this realisation, Lefebvre embarked upon a revolutionary project to politicise these spaces. By turning to banal everyday life in urban space, Lefebvre promoted the messy and heterogeneous expressions of individuals, with their potential to disrupt and contradict the overarching logics promoted by capitalist superstructures. Lefebvre believed that a revolution of everyday life holds the key to disrupt the persistent inequality under capitalism and can lead to the inevitable collapse of its dominant mode of production. If therefore, we are to look at urban public space, as a liberal ideal in the modern age eroded by dominant producers of space, then the potential to disrupt this through everyday practices might hold the key to revealing the status and location of urban public spaces today.

Lefebvre's turn to messy, heterogeneous everyday life signaled a shift from a meta-structural focus of analysis, previously common to urban criticism. Drawing on Marx, who many claim developed the 'philosophy of praxis', Lefebvre's contribution in *The Production of Space* (PS) explored a necessary interrelation between the structure of capitalist production and the praxis of everyday life; between the structures conceiving and perceiving spaces, and the practices that establish the lived space. The important link between these elements, for Lefebvre, came in the potential for disruption (Lefebvre, PS: 23). This potential, he argued, comes from the contradictions between concrete abstractions of capitalist imagination and the lived reality of struggle in urban life. Contradictions that necessarily create a fissure in urban space, a place open to something unplanned and unsanctioned. This fissure is the space of everyday praxis for Lefebvre, a space holding the potential for a revolutionary disruption.

The notion of disruption is a key development in thinking about the notion of public space. Acknowledging an exploitative 'status quo' and a 'boring' everydayness in life under the capitalist mode of production (Lefebvre, WC), Lefebvre saw a necessity for change. However, change, in the face of past revolutionary failures and the growing pervasiveness of contemporary capitalist society, did not seem forthcoming. Identifying urban space as the location to seek this change, Lefebvre's was able to develop his enquiry into; how do we begin a change in space? Essentially, what Lefebvre suggested in answer to this, in line with Marx's philosophy of praxis, was that disruptive action was necessary. Disrupting the

production of space, through its conception, perception and lived reality, would be the only way to change the status of an exploitative capitalist system in the world. The only way to change the world therefore, was to change space (Lefebvre, PS). As such, public space, would have to be a space of disruption.

Given the central place of disruption in Lefebvre's call for urban revolution, it is necessary to develop a theoretical exploration and critical engagement with what such disruption actually means. Indebted to Marx, his notion of historical contingency, and the dialectical method, Lefebvre established his praxis of disruption as the fulfilment of urban needs. Lefebvre provides a meandering list of such needs, ranging from security to organisation of work and play, and many others in between (Lefebvre, 1996). Despite this list, a question that this study will be asking is; why *needs*? Why does Lefebvre see disruption to be premised upon the pursuit of needs? If disruption is in pursuit of a need, is this why he claims that "permanent transgression" is inevitable (Lefebvre, PS: 23)? In an attempt to answer such questions, this study also engages the work of the political theorist Hannah Arendt, for whom the notions of praxis and disruption are centralised, and also where the question of a pursuit of needs is problematised.

In contrast to Lefebvre, the works of Hannah Arendt are rarely found in the bibliographies of urban geographers, or even in the social sciences more generally. Usually restricted to the publications of political theory, Arendt's most (in)famous work on 'the banality of evil' dominates much of her intellectual legacy. However, across her corpus, Arendt made many more significant contributions to discussions on violence (Arendt, OV), totalitarianism (Arendt, OT), and praxis (Arendt, HC; Arendt, OR; Arendt, BPF). Of particular interest to this enquiry has been her work *The Human Condition* (HC) and her work *On Violence* (OV).

In *The Human Condition* (1958) Hannah Arendt developed the idea that there are three activities fundamental to human life; labour, work, and action. Between each of these activities, she argued, the spectrum of different ideals for life on earth are found. Labor's ideal is that of living longer and easier, work's ideal is that of creating either more beautiful or more useful things, and action's ideal is that of achieving greatness and immortality. With this in mind, Arendt held that action constituted the highest ideal of human existence. This, she explained, is because it is only through public action that individual humans can find freedom from the shackles of their finite worldly existence and biological needs, and

therefore become political subjects. In contrast, labour and work, to her, are seen as ultimately futile, given their relationship to needs, and their eventual and inevitable decay in the recurring cycles of nature (life/death, reproduction/decay).

Writing at the end of the 1950s Arendt bore witness to a 'modern world' which, through its elevation of health, happiness and consumption, revealed itself as a labouring society focused upon the fulfilment of wants and needs. Arendt showed that she could make this assertion only by turning to the objects – physical and mental - created and celebrated in the world that she lived in. Indeed, she claimed that both the ideals of labour and of action need such objects if they are to establish a measure of durability and avoid instant futility. As such it is through the created objects, the durable artifacts resulting from the activities of work, that the material manifestation of either labour or action emerges. In making 'useful' objects, biological needs can be pursued by labour, whereas in making 'unique' objects, the distinctions of individual actions are memorialised. Thus, to consider the vast plethora of these created objects as a whole, one could claim to witness the entirety of products in, and of, space; the production of space.

Lefebvre claimed that all space is produced, and is therefore social. Seeing all objects as the durable product of either labour or action, Arendt saw that the creation of all things are a manifestation of social ideals, and thus a reflection of the human condition; they are a human product. It thus becomes possible to ask; can Lefebvre's idea of disruption within the production of space speak to Arendt's notion of work? Arendt's understanding of work is that all created objects follow one of two distinct paths; the creation of a useful thing or the creation of a unique thing. I will argue that, in line with Arendt's critique of Marx, Lefebvre mostly pursues just one line of activity - labour; the creation of useful things, things to meet needs. Lefebvre suggests that individual lives differ in their combination of wants and needs, yet appears to neglect individual distinctiveness as it is revealed in unique speech and actions – the manifestation of uniqueness for Arendt. As a result of this omission, I explore what impact this has on Lefebvre's idea of disruption.

Lefebvre's disrupting praxis, in the pursuit of urban needs, neglects Arendt's primary requirement of praxis; to go beyond needs (Arendt, HC). The pursuit of urban needs in everyday life, I will argue, perpetuates the political limitations ascribed by Arendt to the activities of labour. These labouring activities, irrespective of acknowledging the different

wants and needs of heterogeneous individuals, are, according to Arendt, private activities; their fulfilment does not necessitate the presence of others. For Arendt a focus on private wants and needs does not amount to a political project. Instead, she describes pursuit of needs as a social project - a criticism she made of Marx's work. For a political, revolutionary, and ultimately emancipatory project Arendt declares that the focus must be upon public acts and public deeds. 'Publicness' for Arendt meant that one's actions, as a unique embodiment of oneself, must appear with and alongside other people as equals, free to speak, respond, act, and react to one another. It is in what Arendt calls the 'space of appearance', that the public faculty of action can be found. This faculty for action is the quality and focus of a political project according to Arendt. I therefore argue that urban public space must be re-imagined through the prism of 'action' in a 'space of appearance'. I will also subsequently ask; is the political project of Arendt radically different to Lefebvre? Or can a synthesis between Arendt and Lefebvre be established?

To answer these questions, I will suggest that Lefebvre's turn to disruptions in everyday urban life must be brought into alignment with Arendt's political project, and expressed alongside her notions of the public realm and the 'space of appearance'. This will require that, instead of disruptions pursuing an end - urban needs, must be understood as ephemeral moments of public action in everyday life. Moments which do not appear in some fixed urban public space, but appear because of some perpetual potential for appearance in everyday lived spaces. However, by linking Arendt's public realm to everyday life in urban spaces, I will uncover a material and empirical obstacle that many urban spaces exhibit; namely hosting a relatively fixed spatiality of segregated communities. Segregation, by its very exclusive nature, would seem unable to facilitate the plurality that Arendt demands of the public realm. As such, it will also be necessary to attend to the existence of segregation, and consider its impact on urban public space.

As part of an attempt to think about segregation, Arendt made a distinction between social spaces and public spaces. However, her descriptions of these spaces were often contradictory, ambiguous, and extremely contentious¹; claiming that social spaces were necessarily and acceptably built upon discrimination. Developing Arendt's thoughts on segregation will therefore be necessary, and through this exercise it will be possible to

¹ The most contentious of her publications was her *'Reflections on Little Rock'* published in *Dissent Magazine* in 1959

clarify and justify her distinction between public spaces and social spaces. This clarity will also open the opportunity to propose a scalar element to Arendt's notion of the public realm; what I have coined the 'publicness' of social space. Social spaces, I will argue, necessarily differ in the breadth of their plurality and in the potential immortality of actions they witness.

Next, returning to the fabrication of the world through work, one will consider how the creation of unique things, for the memorialisation of actions, become the *only* locations where we can find evidence for the praxis of publicness. These objects, created to remember an act beyond the end of its performance, are the only durable indicators of the presence of a public realm; the realm of politics². Given this realisation, it will be possible to identify a specific form for fabricating action, around which this thesis can discover the status of public space in its empirical setting. The fabrication selected, everyday storytelling, is chosen because it is an accessible and frequent form for the memory of past actions in lived spaces. Through telling stories, as well as re-telling or creating new stories, it will be possible to find many contemporary examples of public space in this thesis' empirical study.

There is however a tension in Arendt's idea of work and the fabrication of objects. This tension lies in the violence necessary in the creation of things. In *On Violence* (1970) Arendt declares that violence is anti-political and thus cannot be attributable to the faculty of action or to the space of appearance. However, in *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC) she says that the work of making an object always requires violation of the material world through labour; it always requires violence. So while an action cannot be violent, its memory – its material echo - must be. I therefore ask the core question driving this thesis; *is the praxis of disruption, as a revolutionary political project, necessarily non-violent, while its material memory is necessarily violent in public space?*

Violence, it will be argued, is necessary to fulfil the potential immortality of action; without stories and memorials – violently fixed reference points - acts would be immediately forgotten as soon as they ended. The key distinction that Arendt makes however, is

² Necessarily the point must be made here that distinctions between the public and private realms differs substantially from common ideas of publicly owned and privately owned spaces in modern nations and states.

between violence against the object in work, and violence against the subject in deeds³. Violence upon an object is the necessary violent fabrication of the material world. Violence upon the subject, the human, is an anti-political implementation of force to coerce people without seeking their consent; an anti-political deed. By turning to the production of public space, it will be shown therefore, that one necessarily embarks on a dual exploration of violence. Violence both in the violation of a natural material world to create objects and artefacts, and violence that may exist in the violation of human plurality. Using Arendt's discussion on violence (Arendt, OV), it is then possible to make the argument that the dominant producers of public space in Lefebvre's account (Lefebvre, PS) – those who perceive and conceive space – are highly susceptible to implementing subjective violence against human plurality. This will be shown to be especially the case under contemporary systems of State bureaucracy. However, it will also be shown how this violence is never legitimate, and that any disruption to dominant producers of public space will only be legitimate if it avoids the temptation of subjective violence.

Disruption, as already shown, is necessary for Lefebvre; it is necessary as a potential in everyday life for challenging the dominant production of space. It is also necessary for Arendt; as a component of public action, disruption starts something new whenever people step into public life. Disruption therefore, becomes a glue which can combine the works of Lefebvre and Arendt. It is also a core requirement in seeking the appearance of public space. Nonetheless, this disruption can only take certain forms. The disruption at the heart of public action, must be premised not only on *what* it disrupted, but importantly, also *how* it is disrupted. For this thesis, the act of story-telling will again be shown to be *a* form (one example of '*how*' to disrupt), that can fulfil, and reveal, both public action and the existence of public space.

Story-telling, and the "ability to produce stories", according to Arendt, is the way that we become "historical" (Arendt, HC: 324). Without a story being told, our actions and our imprint in the world could disappear. Instead, telling stories about our actions, gives us durability in the world. The act of story-telling therefore becomes a political act (Bryson and Lowe, 2002). Stories can be understood as *forms* that exists in-between people. In the case of one person telling a story to another person about a third person; the three people

³ A distinction that is exemplified in Slavoj Žižek's book *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (2008)

become linked by the story (as narrator, narrated, and audience). The story is the *space* in between each of them. Using this line of thinking, story-telling, and the story, can actually form the *public space* between people.

Turning to an illustrative case study of Luton, Bedfordshire, this dissertation will explore the everyday conflicting practices of producing public space, and unravel the fabrication of urban spaces found in a contemporary city. Necessarily seen as an exploration of violence, this case study will attend to the objective violations of the material building blocks of the town as well as the subjective violations to human plurality in its officially designated ‘public spaces’. This picture is complicated by the assembling of segregated social groups in the town, and the interference of bureaucrats and experts, whose conceptions and perceptions of public and private space, attempt to control its production. Developing the distinctions between private and public, and between social and public, will be creatively disruptive in developing my enquiry. On the whole I will bear witness to what emerges as a narrative on the imminent potential of action, the necessary ephemerality of the public realm, the complex entanglements of plurality in the everyday social realm, and the overarching administration of contemporary bureaucratic government in Luton.

1(2). Why study Luton?

All state bodies, social commentators, and public opinion makers acknowledge that those holding extreme views and violent prejudices are a small minority of the population. Yet, despite their supposed minority, these voices receive amplification in media narratives and state policy priorities. One of the results of this has been that a handful of geographical locations have faced sustained negative attention from both law enforcement and media outlets – Luton, in Bedfordshire, being a prime example. Indeed, towns such as Luton have become tarnished by such narratives; narratives that begin to imply that the town is dominated by far-right nationalists and religious extremists. This becomes *the* story told about the town. It is not however, the only story that can be told.

Interestingly the same urban locations where the media’s violent narratives are targeted, are also generally synonymous with another condition; multicultural segregation. Making a link between acts of social unrest and areas of marked segregation, the UK government

and national media have established a narrative that claims “multiculturalism has failed” (UK Prime Minister David Cameron, see BBC, 2011c). Such notions have had significant impacts on the way that public spaces and multicultural encounters are understood in towns such as Luton. Public spaces, often understood as a domain controlled by local government, have been elevated as the sites of multiculturalism’s failings and social unrest. As a result, changes to their form, financing, and policing have been unprecedented in scale in recent years.

Linked to these historic narratives of multiculturalism, economic trends of financial marginalisation and localised deprivation have hit many of these same locations. Initially associated with booming industry and large-scale manufacturing in the first two thirds of the 20th Century, many towns and cities expanded at an unprecedented rate, leading them to draw on immigrant labour from within the UK and beyond. However, after repeated economic crises, the adoption of neoliberal policies, and the loss of manufacturing in the years following, many of these urban areas have faced rapid financial decline. The result for many of these UK locations today is national economic marginalisation, localised job insecurity, and a rise in social problems associated with deprivation. Facing such challenges, political subjects in these towns often seek a platform to air their discontent; they seek a public space, a space that is equally being diminished.

Growing up adjacent to the town of Stoke-on-Trent, a post-industrial town associated with multiculturalism, marginal politics, economic hardship, and violence, I am familiar with the narratives described and the contradictions endemic to them. I am familiar with the different ways that such accounts influence everyday life. At one extreme I know people who won’t write their postcode on their address purely because a Stoke-on-Trent postcode, in their opinion, gives a bad impression and influences how others interact with them. At the other extreme I know many people who hold the identification of a ‘Stokie’ as a badge of honour, and will challenge anyone from outside who might look down on it. Instead of reflecting the lived reality, it is apparent that generalised accounts of multicultural, post-industrial towns reveal more about the condition of politics in the contemporary UK setting, than the towns they describe. However, these urban environments have, as a result, become key sites where restrictions on public space are enacted and contested most strongly in everyday life. As such, attending the conditions of the public realm in this study and looking to tell an alternative story, I decided to select the

town of Luton to be used as an illustrative case study to illuminate the dense theoretical base of this project.

Luton is a town, situated around 50 miles north of London. At the most recent census (2011), Luton's population was on the rise, increasing by 10% in ten years, to around 203,200 residents. The ethnic composition of Luton, revealed by the 2011 UK Census, showed 55% of residents identifying as 'White' and 30% as 'Asian' (UK Census Data, 2011). This data brought the town significant media attention on its publication, with *The Express*, among a number of newspapers (see also Philipson, 2013), running the headline that "White Britons are now a minority" in some towns in the UK (Dawar, 2013). In recent years this story, and many similar narratives on segregation, have become a prominent feature of the town, emerging from both mass media outlets as well as from the priorities of national government policies. Such narratives are particularly relevant for selecting Luton for this study.

In 2010 *The Guardian* published an article with the headline; "Luton has come to embody the failures of multiculturalism" (Manzoor, 2010). Other articles have included stories on damaged community relations (Walker, 2010), being named as the second worst place in the UK for culture (Sims, 2015), being criticised for hosting numerous segregated faith schools (Weale, 2016; and Pells, 2016a, 2016b), facing 'outrage' over a gender segregated swimming pool (Jamieson, 2016), and for hosting a significant number of undocumented immigrants (Rowley, 2016). Alongside this, the UK government's 2010-2015 national policy on Community Integration (DCLG, 2015) had highlighted Luton as a 'target area' for community based English language learning. This was simultaneously reinforced by a speech made by, the then deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, whilst he was in Luton in 2011 (Clegg, 2011). In this speech, Clegg expressed how "Luton [had] had to endure being associated in the national consciousness with some very grim imagery", and that there needed to be a "different Luton", one that showed it to be a "tolerant, strong, vibrant community" (Clegg, 2011). It was unsurprising therefore that a Luton Commission was established by Luton Borough Council in 2011, with the task of publishing a report on community cohesion in the town (see Luton Commission, 2011).

Linked to the narrative on segregation, frequent and prominent stories about Luton, in the years leading up to this project, also came from a series of disruptive protests in the town

and from associations with the town to international terrorism. These further highlight the relevance of selecting Luton for this study. In 2005 Luton was identified as being the place where the perpetrators of the 7/7 terrorist attack in London boarded their train to London (BBC, 2011a). Then in 2010 a suicide bomber in Stockholm was identified as a Luton resident, and in 2012 five residents were arrested for plotting an attack on a Territorial Army base in the town (The Guardian, 2012; Whitehead, 2013). Alongside these revelations, a protest occurred in Luton in 2009 against a home-coming parade of the Royal Anglian Regiment, which turned violent and made the national news (see Percival, 2009; BBC, 2010). Five men from Luton were subsequently convicted of “using threatening, abusive or insulting words and behaviour likely to cause harassment and distress” during this protest (BBC, 2010).

Supposedly in response to the disruption at the home-coming parade, a counter-protest group developed in Luton in 2009, calling themselves the United Peoples of Luton. This group made national headlines themselves when they hosted a public protest in Luton in 2009; a protest which ultimately turned violent when protestors clashed with police (Ellicott, 2009). Over the next 3 years The United Peoples of Luton changed its name and became the English Defence League (EDL) – now a notorious far-right group – led by a man from Luton who called himself Tommy Robinson. From 2011 through to 2015 the EDL carried out protests and events all across the UK, gaining a great deal of media attention each time. However, it was events in Luton during this period that stood out. In February 2011, about 1,500 EDL supporters and 1,000 UAF (Unite Against Fascism) protesters gathered in designated public spaces in Luton for a demonstration. Then in May 2012, a similar event resulted in 2,000 demonstrators from both the EDL and We Are Luton (WAL) marching in the town. This second event required marshalling by 1,500 police officers. Finally, in November 2014, around 350 protestors from the EDL descended on the town (BBC, 2015a).

These protests and demonstrations in Luton had some direct ramifications for the production of public space in the town. Given the disruptions, violence, costs to the local authority, and negative image that was being created, Luton Borough Council created a new policy on the appropriate uses of the public space in the town centre in 2013. This policy, approved by the Council’s Executive, contained a statement that Luton Borough Council would “not support any events which may cause[,] or lead to a breach of the peace,

disrupt local commerce, [a]ffect community cohesion or have a detrimental impact on the reputation of Luton” (LGA, 2014), effectively closing the town centre to protests or demonstrations. Instead the town centre would only be open to uses such as “funfairs, concerts, festivals and public information stands that do not disrupt local commerce” (LGA, 2014).

The decline of the English Defence League in the years following the town centre policy in Luton, was not the end of the narrative on disruption and extreme politics in Luton, however. Throughout 2014 and 2015, during the empirical research that was carried out for this study, another far-right group made frequent appearances in Luton; a group called Britain First. The first incidents to get national media attention from this group in Luton were videos posted on social media showing threats made to Muslims in the streets of Luton, and forced entries they made into Mosques in the town during January and May 2014 (see Channel 4, 2014). This was followed up with a march that was carried out in the town in June 2015 (see BBC, 2015b). This march, and the events surrounding it, make up an important part of the illustrative case study and analysis of this project.

With the varied narratives that surround it, Luton is evidently an ideal location to illustrate the theoretical arguments that dominate this project. The town is central to a geography of segregation, with distinct residential segregation along lines of ethnicity, and has an established narrative of multi-culturalism and community cohesion in the town. Likewise, it is relevant to a geography of protest and violence as it has been subject to numerous moments in the last decade from far-right political groups making disruptive and violent appearances in the town. Furthermore, the town is interesting for studying the geography of urban public space, once again as the result of the protests and public appearances that have marred the town, but also because of the town centre policy of 2013, and attempts to restrict public disruptions by the local authority. With this context, developing a familiarity with Luton would therefore provide ample opportunity to illustrate the production of public space, public space as praxis, the publicness of praxis in social spaces, and the violence/disruption that traverses each of these notions.

With this in mind, three core empirical research questions were posed for the fieldwork in Luton. These questions were designed to ensure that it addresses and tests the ideas developed in the conceptual framework. The questions are:

- *In the context of ethnic segregation and recent demonstrations, how does the state infrastructure in Luton facilitate the production of public space?*
- *In the context of ethnic segregation, how can various everyday gatherings in Luton reveal the current conditions of public praxis as it emerges across social spaces in the town?*
- *How do the various forms of violence continually or momentarily disrupt and destroy the public realm in Luton?*

1(3). Roadmap to Thesis

The main body of this thesis is formed around an extensive theoretical exploration of urban public space. This exploration is developed in the four chapters which follow this introductory chapter. Each of the chapters will situate the study amidst contemporary academic enquiry, and will develop an extensive and critical interpretation of an intellectual ‘conversation’ between Henri Lefebvre and Hannah Arendt on the notion of public space. This discussion will highlight the new horizons that emerge out of this exercise, and will pose challenging empirical questions that the subsequent illustrative case study can begin to address.

Chapter 2, ***Public Primacy: The Production of Public Space and Everyday Praxis***, will introduce and situate Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre, PS) within his broader work, locating his impact in the geographical literature, and interpreting his relevance for exploring the idea of public space. The chapter will also uncover the relevance of ‘everyday life’ to Lefebvre’s project; highlighting the revolutionary and disruptive nature that public space must therefore hold. Finally, the chapter will introduce the idea of praxis, drawn from Marx, and foundational to Lefebvre’s overall philosophical position.

Chapter 3, ***The Human Condition, Fabrication, and Endless Praxis***, will begin by exploring the work of Hannah Arendt, in particular her work on *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC) and will emphasise the spatiality inherent to her ideas. Following this, the notion of praxis, which also anchors much of Arendt’s work, will be brought into conversation with Lefebvre,

and will show some important areas of both complementarity and contradiction. This will lead into an exploration of praxis as it is linked to, and remembered by, physical and spatial artefacts. The chapter then ends by developing Arendt's notion of the 'space of appearance', and introducing the idea of action as endless praxis.

Chapter 4, *The Social Realm, Segregation and 'Publicness'*, focuses on the spatiality of the dominant contemporary realm for Arendt; the 'social realm'. This discussion incorporates a critique of today's post-political condition, and various critiques on Arendt's idea of an apolitical social realm. The chapter then turns to discrimination and segregation that are at the heart of Arendt's social realm, exploring Arendt's ideas in conversation with the body of literature on segregation already existing in geography. The chapter ultimately concludes by introducing a scalar element to Arendt's public realm, attending to her critics, and providing a new trajectory for investigating urban public space; the 'publicness' of praxis in social space.

Chapter 5, *Violence and the Limits to Public Praxis*, foregrounds the ambiguity in Arendt's notion of political action, asking; what constitutes action? To appropriately answer this question, the limit of action is sought through a consideration of violence. Using Arendt's detailed exploration of violence, and her idea of the limits of public action, the chapter considers the contrasting ways that Arendt understands violence, and links them to the ways that other intellectuals from across the academy have engaged with the notion. This leads to the realisation that a fine line exists between violence and public action, and only by bearing witness to a form of creative disruption can public space be found. Ultimately the chapter concludes with a reconceptualisation of urban public space in the form of the act, and artefact, of everyday story-telling.

Having made the case for the theoretical imperatives of this study, I then present an illustrative case study, in itself an act of telling and re-telling an everyday story, of the empirical work that was carried out to illuminate this theory; the fieldwork from Luton during 2015. First of all, in Chapter 6, I elucidate the methodology that was adopted during the fieldwork, explaining the reasons why some methods were adopted and others were deemed inappropriate. The findings of the research are then presented in three chapters. Chapter 7, *The Strength of Talking-For, and Fixing Public Space*, primarily focuses on the state infrastructure in Luton, and explores how it facilitates the production of public space

in the town. Chapter 8, *Social Publicness and Violence*, engages with the current conditions of public praxis in the social spaces of Luton, and builds a narrative of violence as it appears across the public realm in the town. Chapter 9, *The Genesis of a Story: A Fine Line Between Public and Violence*, then focusses on two key moments of public appearance in Luton, to consider the proximity of public space to violence as they appear in the telling and re-telling of everyday stories.

To conclude the thesis, Chapter 10 brings together the empirical narrative of Luton, with the theoretical insights that are foundational to the study. From this an assessment is made as to the importance and impact of the findings, alongside additional questions and insights that have emerged and the need for further study to cement the assertions made.

2. Public Primacy: The Production of Public Space and Everyday Praxis

The notion of public space, and its “powerful hold on the political imagination”, has an intellectual legacy that can be traced back to the agora of ancient Greece (Harvey, 2006a: 17). The concept encompasses a history of political struggle, from the Enclosure Acts in 17th century England to the ‘land grabs’ of the 21st century across Africa. Recent seminal works from Sennett (1992), exploring the ‘theatre of the city’ in 18th century London and Paris, and Habermas (1992), considering the salons of 17th Century Europe, have prioritised the academic agenda; turning attention onto the practices in public space, the pivotal role of public space in establishing political subjectivity, the relationship between the state and civil society in designating a public sphere, and the decline of public space in the contemporary world. Drawing inspiration from, and in many cases criticism towards, such ideas, many Geographers in the last three decades have likewise turned their focus to public space.

Probably the most well-known Geographical engagement with public space comes from Don Mitchell’s work on People’s Park in Berkeley, California (Mitchell, 1995), which was followed by an article on anti-homeless laws in the United States (Mitchell, 1997), and a hugely influential book *The Right to the City* (Mitchell, 2003). Underlying Mitchell’s work has been the idea that public performances, in particular disruptive or subversive performances – as seen in protests and in the lives of rough sleepers - are changing the nature of public space in contemporary society and importantly, challenging *who* is defined as the ‘public’. Another important geographical engagement has been Valentine’s (1997) consideration of childhood negotiations of public space. Here Valentine (1997) argued for the importance of questioning how, and who, it is that defines public space. A fixed a notion of public space is shown to be overlaid with restriction and instability, based upon the dominance of a single perspective. Instead, Valentine argues, the definition of public space should be emerging out of the negotiations of those being called the ‘public’ in public space. This is similar to McCann’s (1999) work on race and protest in US cities, which challenges the attempts by dominant structures in the city to define and control public spaces by homogenising race and identity.

What seems to link much of the body of Geographic literature on public space - which

includes, among others, Thompson's (2002) article on urban open space in the 21st century, Atkinson's (2003) article on the management of public space in Scotland, Barnett's (2008) piece on political affects in public space, and Springer's (2011) recent work on 'public space as emancipation' - is an attempt to both uncover, and to criticise, dominant structures of society, and to empower those *who* public space is supposed to be for. Interestingly, at the intellectual foundation of many of these geographical investigations, has been the ideas of a single French social theorist; Henri Lefebvre.

To begin a discussion of public space through Henri Lefebvre, one might start with a look at *Grundrisse* (1973 [1939]) by Karl Marx. Indeed, Loftus (2015) claims that "[o]ne of Lefebvre's signal contributions" came from Lefebvre's reading of *Grundrisse* (Loftus, 2015: 371). This contribution, "historicis[ing] the emergence of...abstract space" (*ibid.*: 371), is foundational to Lefebvre's seminal work *The Production of Space* (1991) and is central to his understanding of public space. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx argued that the concrete manifestations and exploitations of capitalism, the experienced lived reality of his time, were generally being obscured through the abstractions of theory and the dominance of a bourgeois mode of production. As such he declared that "The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse" (Marx, 1973: 101). This led him to suggest that, to understand the concrete forms of one's experience, first you had to unveil the abstract. This, he argued, did not mean that the concrete becomes reality through the abstract, it is already there in being. The abstraction helps to bring this being into thinking. Thus Marx centralised the notion of abstraction as part of his critique of capital, and of political economy more generally. It is this method, of unveiling abstractions, that Lefebvre used to develop his arguments in *The Production of Space* (PS); the arguments central to his understanding of public space.

In the opening of *The Production of Space* Lefebvre declares that he is looking to confront many of his contemporary thinkers who theorise space as a purely mental exercise - abstracting space to a 'mental space' - thinkers such as Foucault, who he claims "never explains what space it is that he is referring to, nor how it bridges the gap between the theoretical (epistemological) realm and the practical one" (Lefebvre, PS: 4). As such Lefebvre's suggestion is, in line with Marx, that spatial enquiry should seek to unveil the abstractions fundamental to the concrete reality of lived space. This, he explains, is why he used the notion of production in the title of the book (Lefebvre, PS: 69). The notion of

production, and its related concepts of product and labour, “lay the foundation for political economy” (*ibid.*: 69) and are thus, fundamentally, abstractions from reality. Indeed, Lefebvre suggests that these notions are in fact ‘concrete abstractions’ (Lefebvre, PS: 69); abstractions that become solidified in reality through spatial practices. Such solidification occurs when production is associated with answers to “‘Who produces?, ‘What?’, ‘How?’, ‘Why and for whom?’” (Lefebvre, PS: 69). Challenging the concrete abstractions emerging from production, Lefebvre (PS) claims, can help us to re-think space and challenge its dominant producers. For my particular purpose, these challenges can especially help to re-think the production of *public* space.

“Social relations, which are concrete abstractions, have no real existence save in and through space. *Their undermining is spatial.*” (Lefebvre, PS: 404)

A core abstraction that Lefebvre reveals in *The Production of Space*, as well as his broader works (Lefebvre 1996, 1968, 2003, 1995), is the idea of quantifiable space - a space devoid of quality. Such a space can never exist in a pure concrete form, Lefebvre (PS) explains, yet this abstraction is still being pursued in today’s world. This is because the abstraction, of quantity over quality, is ‘foundational’ to the capitalist mode of production (Harvey, 2014); emerging in a contradiction between use value and exchange value. Explaining this contradiction, Harvey (2014) showed how the capitalist mode of production has a tendency to make all things to appear as commodities, and as such become quantifiable objects. Such quantification makes all things exchangeable, because their value can be understood in relation to all other things. In the process of making this abstraction, the unique quality of things will seem to disappear. This is exactly the process through which Lefebvre (PS, 1996, 1968, 2003, 1995) sees the abstraction of space; by quantifying space, which assumes all spaces can be made equivalent, the very qualities attached to each unique space is lost.

Armed with this realisation Lefebvre focused his attention to the spatial form that he saw representing the complete domination of this abstraction; urban space (Lefebvre, UR). Writing his book, *The Urban Revolution* (2003 [1970]) Lefebvre prophetically claimed that “[s]ociety has been completely urbanized... This urbanization is virtual today, but will become real in the future” (Lefebvre, UR: 1). In this sense, what Lefebvre foresaw was the rapid and global growth of the urban concrete abstraction to replace the industrial spatial

formations, and modes of life, that had dominated the landscape in Marx's time. This urban abstraction included all the landscapes around the capitalist world where dominant producers were attempting to quantify and homogenise the space under their domain. In *The Urban Revolution* Lefebvre was not referring to the idea of the city when he spoke of the urban; indeed, he felt that the age of cities had passed. Instead he was interested in the 'urbanisation' of everything (Lefebvre, UR), the capitalisation of all space, the dominance of one concrete abstraction. This premised a global urbanity used by hegemonic capitalism as "a means of control, and hence of domination, of power" (Lefebvre, PS: 26); an idea that lay the foundation of Lefebvre's arguments in *The Production of Space*, and his understanding of public space.

Developing his criticism of spatial abstraction in *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre (PS) explained that there are two abstract *realms* responsible for the production of any spatial form; the historical realm and the economic realm. It is as a combination of these two realms, according to Lefebvre (PS), through which the spatial forms of the world are established. Considering these realms in the face of urbanisation, Lefebvre claimed that one witnesses urban space being primarily abstracted as a 'product' of the economic realm, defeating the idea of such space as a 'work' of history (Lefebvre, PS). This, he showed, came from the dominance of the capitalist mode of production - ignorant to social relations and history - and the dominant class position of its adherents; the dominant 'producers' of the space as a product. To back this idea, Lefebvre turned to the 19th century and the rise of industrialisation. Here, he showed, the concept of space lost its history to become incorporated into a new way of thinking by those of dominant social position; the scientific method of political economy. This way of thinking was dominated by positivism and 'counting', where space, products, and things, could all become abstracted into measures and numbers. Yet, this abstraction contained an immediate problem; "[t]hings and products that are measured...do not speak the truth about themselves" (Lefebvre, PS: 80). Mathematical measurements, devoid of history and social relations, could be used "to lie, to dissimulate not only the amount of social labour that they contain...but also the social relationships of exploitation and domination on which they are founded" (*ibid.*: 80-81). Thus, with the development of the sciences and technologies of political economy, Lefebvre saw the problem that urban space could be 'produced' - abstracted - to undermine social relations (Lefebvre, PS: 404), in the same way that Marx had seen capital, and the creation of a universal equivalent (money), undermine labour relations.

The mathematical language of urbanisation, used by urban 'producers', was a "highly general and highly specialized [language which]... set out to discriminate between and classify all...spaces as precisely as possible" (Lefebvre, PS: 2). Commanding and employing this language meant "the rationalizations of urban space by state bureaucrats and technocrats [could] facilitate the reproduction of capital accumulation and of dominant class relations" (Harvey 2013: 138). In other words, establishing abstract space as a quantifiable economic product, the dominant producers of space could establish and maintain their social status over those who used the space but did not produce it. Abstracting space into equivalent quantities - economic and spatial measures - producers of space made all space the same; all space could be given a price, and all space could be measured. As such the concept of space, under this abstraction, was homogenised. Public space, in this understanding, would therefore be considered as no different from any other space.

From this understanding, Lefebvre set out a schema to explain the production of space, both as an abstraction and as a concrete form. This schema, the basis of his work *The Production of Space*, was built around a conceptual triad of three elements; the perception of space, the conception of space, and lived space (Lefebvre, PS). This conceptual triad was also expressed by Lefebvre as; the representations of space, spatial practices, and representational space. In the discussion that follows, I will look at each of these in turn. However, it is necessary to mention that "the lived, conceived and perceived realms should be interconnected, so that the 'subject'...may move from one to another without confusion" (*ibid.*: 40). Lefebvre described his ideas as a 'dialectical triad' (*ibid.*: 39) - dialectical movement links the realms meaning that each cannot be considered in isolation from the others. Nevertheless, Lefebvre states that "[i]t is reasonable to assume that spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space" (*ibid.*: 46). Based on the historical and geographical circumstances in which we look at spaces therefore, the prominence of each notion will differ.

According to Lefebvre, today's "scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers" (Lefebvre, PS: 38) - the hegemonic producers of urban space - primarily establish and sustain their class dominance in space through the pervasiveness of their

mental abstractions. These are the dominant abstractions that I have already introduced - the quantification, economisation, and homogenisation of all space. For Lefebvre, these mental abstractions comprise two of the elements of his conceptual triad; the perception of space, and the conception of space. The perception of space, first of all, refers to the way that dominant producers of space become aware of urban space as a quantifiable economic product. This emerges, according to Lefebvre, from the normalised 'social practices' in space existing under the capitalist mode of production; "the realm of the *perceived*" (Lefebvre, PS: 40) in which "[t]he specific spatial competence and performance of every society member" is judged empirically by the standards of normal and homogenised practices (*ibid.*: 38).

The other aspect of dominant mental abstractions involved in the production of space, is the conception of space (Lefebvre PS). Conceiving a space, dominant producers devise an urban form that fits their economic abstractions; they project their perceptions onto concrete reality. These conceptions are described by Lefebvre as the 'representations of space' (*ibid.*: 38), and he claimed they form the "dominant space in any society" (*ibid.*: 39). This is because devising a space is an essential step from perceiving a space to producing an actual 'concrete' form, and as such it requires the dominance of its architects. Conceiving a space is the threshold of the capitalist pursuit for technocratic, scientific and homogenised economic spaces (Lefebvre, PS). The established concrete forms under capitalism are produced by the quantified economic conceptions and perceptions of its dominant producers. This is no different for contemporary public space.

Influential within the academic enquiry into public space, Habermas' (2001) work on the public sphere within bourgeois society, depicts public space as an idealised space where a normative relationship between the state and civil society designates its form for the purpose of public and political activity. This designation is deemed by Habermas to be, not only normative, but also universal; the public sphere is open to all no matter where/who you are. Reading public space in this way, it is clear from Lefebvre's analysis how a dominant conception and perception in the production of public space can co-opt such an idea. It fits comfortably in a universalising and homogenising understanding of space. As such, Habermas' (2001) understanding of the public sphere can be blind to existing power relations, and can actually serve to reinforce them. Indeed, Nancy Fraser (1990) echoes this point, arguing that we must realise there are "multiple, contending, often mutually

exclusive public spheres” (Mitchell, 2003: 34).

Despite the dominance of perceived and conceived public space however, Lefebvre (PS) claimed that “a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things” (*ibid.*: 83). All spaces, according to Lefebvre, have historical circumstances containing “a great diversity of objects” (*ibid.*: 77) created by the social relations within them. Given such creation, these objects do “not take place without many conflicts, without class struggle” (*ibid.*: 79). A space therefore, is not an “a simple object” (*ibid.*: 73) to perceive or conceive, but is instead a manifestation of relationships; as such all space is ‘social’ (*ibid.*: 26). Public space is a social space. As a result, all space must be understood to be constantly changing through production and is never able to escape from past actions or the present limitations of its participants. For this purpose, Lefebvre proposed the notion of ‘lived space’.

The idea of space as ‘lived’ is based upon the premise that, despite all abstractions, urban space must be experienced (Lefebvre, PS). Necessarily this experience is subjective; meaning there must be an “intertwinement of social spaces” (*ibid.*: 86). As such the lived space of one person cannot be considered in isolation from another. Thus lived space is where we encounter one another - it could appropriately be called public space. This makes all space a ‘hypercomplex’ space (*ibid.*: 88), filled with “individual entities and peculiarities, relatively fixed points, movements, and flows and waves – some interpenetrating, others in conflict” (*ibid.*: 88). The heterogeneity of this conception of space is clearly in contradiction to the uniformity and homogenising tendency of dominant mental conceptions and perceptions of space. This makes lived space an element of space where an individual has the ability to disrupt dominant abstraction and appropriate their lived experience. Lived space therefore contains an opening for segregated and alienated people to transcend their exploitation under capitalism, and revolutionise their condition (Lefebvre, 1996).

The opening in lived space exists for Lefebvre because lived space is aligned with the experience of *everyday life*; an experience where “confusion is *lived*” (Lefebvre CE: 213). In our everyday lives the dominant ways of making sense of the world are necessarily unsettled because real experiences will not match our ideologies and beliefs - there are too many contradictions and uncertainties involved within them. Everyday life therefore becomes a continual interaction between settling and unsettling the dominant productions

of space; it becomes a space that fluctuates between order and disruption. This interaction is referred to by Lefebvre (PS) as 'representational space'; "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols" which "is the dominated - and hence passively experienced - space" (*ibid.*: 39). While certain routines and habits can persist "in thrall to abstract space" in everyday life (*ibid.*: 59) - creating a sense of 'everydayness' (Lefebvre and Levich, 1987) - there is always the possibility for a different pathway to be taken (Lefebvre, PS: 117-8). No matter how passive the experience of urban space, claims Wilson, "one never retraces the same pathway twice" (Wilson, 1991: 3). Public spaces therefore, as both lived and abstracted, can provide both an *opening* to challenge the dominant social relations of capitalism, and a *closing* to this challenge, due to the pervasiveness of dominant abstractions. This is an essential realisation because, even in liberal democracies where the existence of public space is celebrated as evidence of the freedom lived by its citizens, the lived experience of public space rarely discovers this reality;

"[M]any constituents of public space are privately owned, managed, and regulated ...: the preponderance of media outlets, access to the Internet, many rights of way in the city and countryside alike, travel on railways, planes and buses, public houses, and so forth" (Low and Smith, 2006: 5).

2(1). - The Disruption of Everyday Life

"Man [sic] must be everyday, or he will not be at all" (Lefebvre, CE: 147)

Everyday life in lived space holds the heterogeneity of lived experience, and has the potential to disrupt the dominant homogenising abstractions of space (Lefebvre, PS). Yet, Lefebvre concedes that "everyday life [is] in thrall to abstract space, with its very concrete constraints" (*ibid.*: 59), and usually misses its potential. Throughout his life Lefebvre dedicated a substantial element of his published work to the *Critique of Everyday Life*; a project that spanned three published volumes and related articles from the 1930s through to the 1980s (see Lefebvre, CE; Lefebvre and Guterman, 1933; Lefebvre and Levich, 1987). It is important to explore this body of work, to reveal how the concept of everyday life, and its disruption, can develop Lefebvre's notion of public space.

Lefebvre claimed that his initial motivation with a *Critique of Everyday Life* was “to confront the ‘real’ and the ‘lived’ with their representations, their interpretations and their transpositions” in everyday life (Lefebvre CE2: 84). This motivation, similar to *The Production of Space*, drew upon the Marxist idea of a dialectic between abstraction and concrete reality. Indeed, Lefebvre saw that “*Marxism, as a whole, really [was] a critical knowledge of everyday life*” (Lefebvre, CE: 168). As such, the idea of the *Critique of Everyday Life* was to reveal the concrete abstractions that had come to define everyday life, and reveal the fissures and openings against them that a critical understanding could present. By the time that Lefebvre wrote *The Production of Space* (in 1974), and his final volume of the *Critique of Everyday Life* (in 1981) this investigation had formed, primarily, into the spatial enquiry considered above; everyday life as a complex interaction between the heterogeneity of lived spaces and the homogenising tendencies of dominant spatial abstractions. The complexity of this interaction, and its consequences for the notion of public space, is the direction in which I will now turn.

First of all, we can understand the everyday as the concrete lived reality of dominant mental abstractions; the concrete abstractions (Lefebvre PS). In this sense “the everyday constitutes the platform upon which the bureaucratic society of controlled consumerism is erected” (Lefebvre and Levich 1987: 9) and can be seen to be “profoundly boring” (Merrifield, 2006: 7). Such a version of everyday life supposedly developed in contrast to a former everyday life, prior to the modern age, where symbols and moral references dictated life and made it mysterious. This mystery was “thoroughly authentic, affective and passionate” (Lefebvre, 2014: 137) and was adopted to explain the scarcity that dominated everyday life at that time – developed upon the idea ‘give us today our daily bread’ (Lefebvre and Levich 1987). In contrast Lefebvre and Levich (1987) suggest that the new functional and rationally planned ‘boring’ modern world promotes endless signs of abundance. We can think for example of the various displays of abundance in billboard adverts, shop fronts, fashion, and driving ‘flash’ cars. However, the everyday “remains a sole surviving common sense referent” (*ibid.*: 9) to the contradictions of these signs. Despite all the signs of abundance that surround us, there is persistent scarcity and boredom in people’s everyday experiences of life. This problem is explored by Lefebvre primarily through two, dialectically interrelated, elements; space (focused upon in Lefebvre, PS) and time (focused upon in Lefebvre, 2013).

Everyday life can be witnessed first of all as a move towards homogeneity through space; through the alienating production of abstract space (Lefebvre, PS). This has already been explored above in the consideration of the concrete abstractions that make up *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre, PS). However everyday life can also be witnessed in its tendency towards homogeneity through time; through the problem of repetition and rhythm (Lefebvre, 2013). In everyday life, Lefebvre and Levich (1987) declare, we face two types of repetition; the cyclical repetition of nature (the life process), and the linear repetition of “gestures of work and consumption” (*ibid.*: 10). Under the cyclical repetition of nature Lefebvre implies that we can find beauty and the fulfilment of the natural world. However, under the linear repetition of the industrial worker in a capitalist system, Lefebvre and Levich (1987) declare that the vibrancy and naturalness of life is crushed by pure function. This establishes a chronological rhythm of everyday practices and kills creative practice (Lefebvre, 2013). Such is the tyranny of time as it is abstracted from the temporal cycles of nature.

The combination of homogeneity in space and time, and its subsequent erasure of difference, has been critiqued from the perspective of a financialisation of everyday life under contemporary capitalism (see Frank, 2000; and Harvey, 2006a). Harvey (2006a) has argued that cycles of everyday life under capitalism, has encouraged public space to fit a market logic, both in space and time. Public spaces become defined by quantitative economic transactions, and their design has been based on the pursuit of profit; creating a space for transactions to happen quicker and more frequently (the homogenisation of time), and for more commercial properties and less space for homes (the homogenisation of space).

For Lefebvre, the very ‘boring’ nature of everyday life in the modern world was the reason that it contained great potential for disruption, and also the reason that disruption is so essential for everyday life; to escape boredom. Out of boredom comes the motivation to ‘do something’. Disruption caused by a motivation to ‘do something’ is not always a good thing however. Boredom can make people susceptible to illusions (Lefebvre, 2014), such as “nostalgia for the past or dreams of a superhuman future”; the same kind of nostalgia that “gave the Hitler Youth movement strength until the very end” (Lefebvre, 2014: 150). So while Lefebvre saw the need for disruption, he also demanded that everyday disruption looked beyond illusion, the spectacle, the abstraction, to “discover the immense human

wealth that the humblest facts of everyday life contain" (*ibid.*: 152). Lefebvre promoted the potential in everyday life, not for its penchant to spectacle, but for its disruptive vitality and creativity (Lefebvre 2014). Lefebvre saw everyday life as the place where "genuine *creations* are achieved...[and] feelings, ideas, lifestyles and pleasures are confirmed.....[the] Critique of unfulfillment and alienation should not be reduced to a bleak picture of pain and despair. It implies an endless appeal to *what is possible*." (Lefebvre, 2002 quoted by Dawkins and Loftus, 2013: 669). In this sense the potential of everyday life is seen as "precious because it is so fragile; we must live it to the full, inhabit it as fully sensual beings, as total men and women, commandeering our own very finite destiny, before it's too late" (Merrifield 2006: 2). The question emerges however, if disruption is a latent potential amidst a boring everydayness in space, why is this important for a specific consideration of *public space*?

If we were to take an understanding of public space from the modern liberal perspective, like Habermas' (2001), then public space is designated by the state as a space open to all for the performance and negotiation of identity and values. Such a space would not apparently require 'disruption' – in the sense of unsettling a normative activity - because, in its physical/spatial designation, public space would be defined by a normative relationship "between civil society and the state" (Habermas, 2001: xi). However, for Lefebvre, this normative relationship has become a reality where the state exercises dominance and exploitation over civil society; a relationship that sees the state eroding the resource of free public space in favour of control and privatisation. Locating public space therefore, has proved challenging in contemporary society, driving much literature to decry an end to public space in the modern age (see Fraser, 1990; Cheah and Robbins, 1998; and Habermas, 2001). This is evidenced by multiple restrictions placed on the activities performed in 'public spaces' (see Low, 2006), and by the rise of individualism that is breaking traditional bonds between communities.

Authors such as Mitchell (2003) and Harvey (2013) however, have argued that the absence, or decline, of fixed public spaces, like those designated by Habermas (2001), does not necessitate an end to public space. Drawing upon Lefebvre, they suggest instead, that we re-think the fixed nature of public space, and instead see public space as a *potential space* that perpetually exists in everyday life. Mitchell (2003: 33) states that "[r]epresentation, whether of oneself or of a group, demands space". If such a space, where we can represent

ourselves, does not exist, then there is a need to find a space with the potential to disrupt the status quo. Taking the liberal ideal of public space, alongside Lefebvre's critique of the dominant production of space, thus shows that normative activity – the everydayness – and its attempt to *fix* space, is actually a barrier and restraint on the appearance or creation of public space. The latent potential to disrupt normative spatial production, that Lefebvre sees in everyday life, instead makes the everyday *the location* for public space to appear today – a space for the performance of identity and values from the great heterogeneity of society to appear. Disruption, in the midst of the homogenising dominant production of space, is essential for both the emergence of a public space, and also as an element of what makes the space public in the first place – i.e. the breakdown of normativity, where 'disruption is the norm'.

So, if disruption is so essential to the everyday life, how do we find, or locate, this disruptive potential and vitality that is within the banal and boring condition of life? Lefebvre, following a Marxist prerogative, suggests that the everyday life of the proletariat holds the key to the potential vitality and disruption of everyday life (Lefebvre, CE). Their unique position comes from that fact that, despite the "weight of toil" they face, they have "contact with the real and with nature...with fundamental health and a sense of reality" (Lefebvre CE: 163). In contrast, the bourgeoisie embody a deprived everyday due to their removal from reality of labour (Lefebvre, CE). Under this situation, for Lefebvre, the dominant abstractions produced by the bourgeoisie – both spatial and rhythmic – cannot continue without the perpetual chance of disruption amidst proletarian everyday life.

2(2). - The Urban Everyday

As already mentioned Lefebvre (UR) revealed the urban space to be the spatial form that represented the almost complete domination of abstraction in everyday life. With all the elements that make up the experience of everyday life - "[l]iving creatures, the products of industry, technology and wealth, works of culture, ways of living, situations, the modulations and ruptures of the everyday - the urban *accumulates* all content" (Lefebvre, UR: 119). Accumulation is how the urban space can become 'boring' and abstract. However, he also declares that the urban, as a process of urbanisation, is always incomplete. "Between the sub-systems and the structures consolidated by various

means...there are holes and chasms. These voids are not there due to chance. They are the places of the possible” (Lefebvre 1996: 156). As such there is always already the potential for disruption by the proletariat (Lefebvre, UR). Given the proximity of people in the urban space, “differences know one another and, through their mutual recognition, test one another” (Lefebvre, UR: 96). Thus the urban space becomes a space where people encounter one another and disrupt their rhythms in everyday life.

However, Lefebvre was not satisfied with simply *identifying* the urban space as an opening for the disruptive heterogeneity of everyday life. With a mundane and passive consumer society dominating his surroundings, Lefebvre demanded that the everyday become the site of revolutionary change. “A break with the everyday by means of festival – violent or peaceful – cannot endure. In order to change life, society, space, architecture, even the city must change” (Lefebvre and Levich 1987: 11). This change for Lefebvre meant moving from an urban space under the domination of abstraction, to its appropriation and possession through the actions of everyday life (Lefebvre, PS). A good empirical example of this can be seen in Bresnihan and Byrne’s (2015) selection of experiments with an urban commons in Dublin. They show everyday spaces being disrupted “in order [for the subjects] to do what they want”, including recreating the everyday space into “a space to work, to make food or to show films” (*ibid.*: 36). The authors stated that “[t]hose who piece together collective forms of creating and exchanging do so in order to meet concrete needs, and in doing so they confront concrete dynamics of power” (*ibid.*: 36).

Lefebvre coined his urban revolution of everyday life in the term, the *right to the city* - now familiar across the social sciences. This ‘right’ for Lefebvre meant the process of moving from domination to appropriation of everyday life in the city. “The *right to the city* cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right...It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*” (Lefebvre WC: 158). Thus Harvey (2013) explains that it is “both a cry and a demand” (*ibid.*: x). “The cry was a response to the existential pain of a withering crisis of everyday life in the city”, and the demand was “to create an alternative urban life that is less alienated, more meaningful and playful but, as always with Lefebvre, conflictual and dialectical, open to becoming, to encounters (both fearful and pleasurable), and to the perpetual pursuit of unknowable novelty” (*ibid.*: x). Importantly, “[t]he right to the city is...a collective rather than an individual right”, it is “[t]he freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities” (Harvey 2013: 4).

The publication of Lefebvre's revolutionary call in *The Right to the City* (1996 [1968]) coincided temporally with the May '68 political movements and civil unrest in France. In the afterword to *The Production of Space* David Harvey writes; "Much of [the] seemingly theoretical and abstract argument [in *The Production of Space*] was lived out under the aegis of the student movement which culminated in the extraordinary 'moment' of May, 1968" (Harvey in Lefebvre PS: 430); a moment sparked originally by a conflict between students and the controlling authority at the University in Nanterre - the university where Lefebvre was a professor and lecturer – and growing to a point where around a million people from all over France marched on Paris. Key to May 68', was the emergence of a new form of disruptive political action; the 'occupation' of hundreds of local everyday urban spaces. Factories, car plants and universities across France were occupied by employees and students, halting and appropriating their usual everyday rhythms. By the end of May 1968, almost two-thirds of the working population of France were involved with such direct action. This action forced the French government to arrange an impromptu general election.

People across France in May 1968 clearly rejected the dominant spatial abstractions that had created their routine everyday existence and instead took hold of the openings they found in their lived spaces to occupy and re-imagine their concrete everyday experiences. Seemingly, the events challenged urban space exactly as Lefebvre had theorised. Yet, we must consider that the *right to the city* is not "a simple visiting right...It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*" (Lefebvre, WC: 158). For an urban revolution of everyday life to have occurred, the persistence of a transformed urban life must also have occurred. The result of the May '68 'moment' might have led to a general election and to many changes in working conditions and pay, yet in terms of everyday life and the experiences of lived space post-May '68, many contend that everything returned back to how it was before. After May '68, Harvey (2005b) suggests, dominant producers of space - the powerful neoliberal capitalists - appropriated the political movement for their own dominant economic conceptions of space. Co-opting the ideas of 'individual freedom' and 'social justice', that had founded the May '68 movements, neoliberals perpetuated their ideas of market freedom and the growth of private property by making them look like compatible ideals. Similarly, Žižek (2009) sees this same misappropriation of the May '68 actions as a drive for 'cultural' consumption, meaning that

nothing of urban life in France ultimately changed.

While openings in the everyday urban space do offer the potential for disruption to the hegemonic order, there is clearly a similar opportunity for the persistence of dominant concrete abstractions. This suggests that a deeper exploration into the actual *practice* of transforming urban space is required. Indeed, what is it that makes urban practice *actually* disruptive in a way that the hegemonic order cannot establish its swift return? In answering this we need to consider how everyday practices are actually theorised, and ask whether such theorisations have a limited perspective on these practices? To start answering these questions I will begin by exploring the notion of *praxis*.

2(3). - A Philosophy of Praxis

The turn to praxis is undoubtedly building momentum in the discipline of geography (see Davis, 2017; de Souza, 2017; Griffiths and Brown, 2017; Halvorsen, 2017; Kitchin *et al.*, 2016; Mukherjee, 2017; Sutherland, 2017; Wright, 2017). Such interest reflects the intellectual turn of post-structuralism; moving away from meta-theories and spatial abstractions to instead centralising the nuanced realities and practices of everyday life that exist in the societies and communities that human geographers study. Evidently this turn aligns with the discussions of Lefebvre and his critiques of everyday life that have been made above. In the section that follows I will discuss how Marx, and subsequently Lefebvre, have contributed to the philosophy of praxis. I will then, in the following chapter, explore how praxis can be understood through Hannah Arendt, and consequently how her understanding relates to both Lefebvre and Marx, and also how it treads a new path for the geography of praxis.

“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.” (Marx, 1888: 199)

Marx is regularly referenced as being a philosopher of praxis based upon the call at the end of his *11 Theses on Feuerbach* quoted above. Calling for a step beyond philosophy into revolutionary action places an active demand upon adherents to his theories. A philosophy of praxis is understood as an attempt to dismiss the prominence of contemplation - the

activity *par excellence* of traditional philosophy. Arendt (PP) considers Marx's call to action to be evidence of his philosophical divergence from Hegel, despite his obvious intellectual debt to him. Arendt claims that this difference comes from the fact that "Hegel projected his world-historical view only onto the past and let its completion fade away in the present, whereas Marx "prophetically" projected it the other way around onto the future and understood the present only as a springboard" (Arendt, PP: 70).

Using Marx's notion of praxis, Lefebvre (1968) declared that "Philosophy explains nothing" (*ibid.*: 31). "[T]heory divorced from social activity and practical verification, have no value whatsoever" (*ibid.*: 34). While Marx's philosophy of praxis is not necessarily *anti*-philosophy *per se*, it does attempt to go "beyond philosophy... and at the same time...put an end to philosophical alienation" (Lefebvre, 1968.: 6). Lefebvre's turn to the disruption of dominant abstractions in everyday life clearly takes inspiration from Marx's philosophy of praxis. In *Metaphilosophy* (Lefebvre, MP) Lefebvre claims that Marx's praxis disrupted the entire tradition of contemplative philosophy, providing a theoretical gap. Into this gap, according to Lefebvre (MP), subsequent philosophers, like Sartre, have foregrounded individual and lived experiences into their theories. However, despite their efforts, Lefebvre claims that these thinkers failed in creating a philosophy of praxis.

For Lefebvre praxis has two necessary elements; the lived practices and the historical context (Lefebvre, MP). In the case of Sartre, his theories of existentialism only attempted to attend to one of these elements; the lived practices. Sartre had turned to the everyday, but neglected history, and thus theorised praxis as something to be understood from a purely individual perspective. Similarly, Lefebvre criticises the 'post-Sartrean' thinkers like Michel Foucault. Lefebvre (PS) claims that the theoretical abstractions dominating the works of Foucault, tend away from lived experience and historical context, returning to the dominance of abstract configurations and contemplations. Thinkers like Foucault, he explains, are in fact creating 'illusions' of reality, "a transcendental illusion: a trap, operating on the basis of its own quasi-magical power" (Lefebvre, PS: 29).

Beginning with a foundation that he developed from Marx, Lefebvre instead declares that "Man...comes to look upon himself as a historical being... He constitutes, creates, produces himself in the domain of praxis. There is nothing in him that is not a product of interaction among individuals, groups, classes, societies" (Lefebvre, 1968: 18). As such it is by being in

relation to others, through plurality, that human practices come to establish the human being according to Lefebvre. Such praxis, Lefebvre saw, opens the opportunity to “rehabilitate the world of the senses, rediscover[ing] their richness and meaning” (Lefebvre, 1968: 5). In doing this he declares that, instead of being restricted by philosophical mental abstractions, now “[o]ur senses become our theoreticians” (*ibid.*: 39). Thus, with our senses directing theory he claims, in the *Critique of Everyday Life Volume 1*, that “Action and action alone can guide critical thinking” (Lefebvre, CE: 205).

By a ‘world of sense’ Lefebvre is referencing the practice of “all human activities, need in general... as a condition of human life” (Lefebvre, 1968: 39). Praxis reveals “the need for security and opening, the need for certainty and adventure, that of organization of work and of play, the needs for the predictable and the unpredictable, or similarity and difference, of isolation and encounter, exchange and investments, of independence (even solitude) and communication, of immediate and long-term prospects.” (Lefebvre, WC: 147). Lefebvre sees a philosophy of praxis as revealing the complexity of human needs, even “specific urban needs...places of simultaneity and encounters, places where exchange would not go through exchange value, commerce and profit” (*ibid.*: 148). Lefebvre also understood human needs to be historically contingent; facing continual “change and become more sophisticated” over time (Lefebvre 1968: 41). The point being “that there are already multiple practices within the urban that themselves are full to overflowing with alternative possibilities” (Harvey 2013: xvii). In his book *The Right to the City* (2013) Mitchell uses this idea to reveal “the *practice...of public space in American cities*” (*ibid.*: 4) as “an ongoing struggle” over “who has the *right* to the city and its public spaces” (*ibid.*: 4) and who doesn’t. Mitchell explains how Lefebvre’s turn to urban needs in everyday practices is a vital step for an enquiry into public space. This is because it traverses the abstractions of state bureaucrats and economic ideologies, and reveals the need for an “alternative urban life” (Harvey 2013: x); a need representing a space of possibility, a space of potential disruption, a space for revolutionary change.

So we can see that for Lefebvre, praxis was hinged upon the notion of complex needs emerging as everyday practices in a context of heterogeneous modern society. These needs, based upon common situations (such as ‘urban life’) and the weight of history, are the driving forces of disruption in everyday life, in which Lefebvre saw the potential to alter the dominance of capitalist mental abstractions. However, considering the case of May ’68

above, we can ask; is the notion of 'need', common situation, and historical context adequate to theorise a disruptive praxis? Or maybe we could consider that such ideas are the reason behind the return-to-normal we have seen. Indeed, the disruptions of May 1968 in France turned out to be only momentary. To answer this question, one might turn to an alternative philosopher of praxis; for this thesis, we turn our attention to the work of Hannah Arendt.

3. The Human Condition, Fabrication, and Endless Praxis

The political theorist Hannah Arendt is widely read across the academy, with her works holding greatest influence in the fields of Philosophy and Political Theory (such as Birmingham, 2006; Canovan, 1994; Hansen, 1993; Honig, 1995; Kateb, 1984; Knott, 2014; Young-Bruehl, 2004). Within these fields, Arendt is frequently referenced as the primary thinker on the philosophy of praxis (Ball, 1977; Canovan, 1983; Habermas and McCarthy, 1977; Hinchman and Hinchman, 2012; Villa, 1995). It is possible to show therefore, how Arendt's understanding of praxis interacts in both complementary and contradictory ways to Lefebvre's understanding of praxis; providing nuance and greater complexity to our understanding. In the chapter that follows a detailed exploration of Arendt's work opens the discussion, focusing on the publications most relevant to the questions of praxis and public space, and using Arendt's seminal work *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC) as a point of entry into this. This is followed by a discussion on the complements and contradictions between Arendt and Lefebvre on praxis, and the consequence this has for our understanding of public space. Such discussion then leads to a reconceptualisation of public space; seeing it equally bound to time as it is to space, emerging as a 'space of appearance' of praxis. The chapter then closes with a contextual exploration of this reformed notion of public space as it exists, or fails to exist, in the face of contemporary bureaucratic democracy.

3(1). - Hannah Arendt and *The Human Condition*

Hannah Arendt explains that the title of her book *The Human Condition* (1998 [1958]) intentionally sought to distance itself from 'human nature' (Arendt, HC: 10). She wanted to establish humanity as creative of the conditions of its existence, not as slaves to some determined natural state. Turning to the human *condition* therefore, Arendt was putting political subjectivity and human plurality at the centre of her project. The starting point for this, was making a distinction between two elements of living common to all people; the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa* (Arendt, HC). Arendt describes the *vita contemplativa* as the life of mental activities; its most basic activities being thinking, willing, and judging (Arendt, 1971: 69). While each of these activities "are given in the world, or

arise from [one's] life in this world" (*ibid.*: 70) they are fundamentally located in the life of the individual, and in the mind. On the other hand, the activities of the *vita activa* are described as the active life of people who share in a common world. Arendt defined the *vita activa* as consisting of "three fundamental human activities; labor, work, and action" (Arendt, HC: 7) which are necessarily located in the world. Given the contrasting location of the activities of the *vita activa* to the *vita contemplativa*, it becomes evident that the former are the only activities that can exist in a worldly site of politics and freedom, thus becoming the *condition* of human life. This condition, containing the activities of labour, work, and action, are therefore necessary to explore, to show how *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC) is important for a consideration of praxis and of public space.

The first activity that Arendt explores is 'labour'; "the biological process of the human body...bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by labor" (Arendt, HC: 7). These activities, given their natural basis in the life process, are cyclical and repetitive, creating "nothing of permanence" (Biesta 2012: 687). All the products of labour are made to be consumed; they are created to be destroyed. Indeed, Arendt sees the activities of labour to be "[w]hat men share with all other forms of animal life" (Arendt, HC: 84), and as such she describes labour as the activity of *animal laborens*. Many prominent thinkers of the modern age - including Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Locke - Arendt showed, celebrated labour as a 'productive' activity central to human 'political' life. Arendt saw this as deeply problematic. Of particular concern to Arendt were revolutionary political thinkers such as Marx, who elevated labour as the core of his political project (Arendt, HC). Indeed, Arendt felt that Marx's project was founded upon the "politically most pernicious doctrine of the modern age, namely that life is the highest good" (Arendt, OR: 54). By elevating the animal wants and needs of human life to the centre of modern politics, Arendt feared that "[n]ot freedom but abundance became now the aim of revolution" (Arendt, OR: 54).

"abundance and endless consumption are the ideals of the poor: they are the mirage in the desert of misery" (Arendt, OR: 130)

The activity of labour is politically 'pernicious' for Arendt because labour does not *require* the presence of others, and can be an activity undertaken by the individual producer/consumer alone. Like the feeling of pain, the experience of the labouring activity

is individual and subjective. Labourers, according to Arendt (HC) can experience togetherness but not plurality. The labouring activity itself is non-political. Thus with labour promoted to the centre of the human condition, Arendt explains that each individual loses the compulsion to engage in public-political matters, except for the purpose of pursuing the means to live easier with the 'absence of pain', consume more, and live as long as possible (Arendt, HC). Here there is no *need* for a political space; a public space.

The second activity of the *vita activa* that Arendt explores is 'work'; "the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence...[providing] an "artificial" world of things" (Arendt, 1998: 7). Work is an activity defined by producing; creating more durable 'things' than labour and establishing for humanity some stability in the world. Works create "a world between men and nature" (*ibid.*: 137) and is defined by 'fabrication'. In contrast labour is the servant of nature (Arendt, 1998). "[W]ork generates lasting products that are not for consumption but for use" (Biesta, 2012: 88) or for remembering actions and moments in public life. While labour makes life possible, work makes it bearable and perhaps even enjoyable. A human world defined by works - the life of *homo faber* - according to Arendt, holds its highest ideal in the creation of things for greatest use or greatest beauty. Neither use nor beauty however are necessarily plural nor individual - you can share or covet useful or aesthetically pleasing things. Work can therefore play a part in both political (plural) activities as well as non-political (individual) activities. As such Arendt (HC) declares that work in itself is probably unpolitical. The fabrication of the world through work however, can be shown as instrumental to re-thinking public space.

Arendt's third and final 'fundamental' activity of the *vita activa* is 'action'; "the only activity that goes on directly between men" [sic] (Arendt, HC: 7). Arendt (HC) explains that the activity of action, which also encompasses speech, is defined by plurality - plurality as the host of the uniqueness of each person at the same time as acknowledging their sameness as equal humans. Of the three fundamental activities of the *vita activa* "it is only action that cannot even be imagined outside of the society of men" (Arendt, HC: 22). For Arendt this is the most political, and essential, activity because "men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world" (*ibid.*: 7). According to Arendt, action is the only activity that disrupts our servitude to nature and gives each individual the opportunity to begin something new among others with the potential for freedom, greatness, and immortality. Through action, Arendt explains, the human subject reveals *who* they are (in contrast to merely *what* they

are) and thus has the possibility to express their uniqueness among others. As a result, a society that is defined by action holds as its greatest ideal the promise of beginning something new in the world (Arendt, HC). Associated with this is the potential for individuals to perform great acts and deeds, and have the possibility of being remembered. Thus “[i]n contrast to Heidegger’s emphasis on human mortality, Arendt focuses on natality” - the beginning of something new - explains Dikeç (2013), and this he sees as “precisely because she wants to emphasise this human capacity for action” (*ibid.*: 80). For despite “the certainty of death” it was the “immortal fame in deed and word...that prompted [humans] to establish a body politic which was potentially immortal” (Arendt, OV: 68). As such it is the activity of action through which we can appreciate the existence of the public-political realm, and thus engage a re-thinking of public space; a space that Arendt coins as the ‘space of appearance’ (Arendt HC: 199).

“The miracle that saves the world...is ultimately the fact of natality, in which the faculty of action is ontologically rooted” (Arendt, HC: 247)

Absolutely central to Arendt’s theory of the *vita activa* across *The Human Condition* is her distinction between uniqueness and sameness of every person. Through the notion of plurality Arendt explains how both the uniqueness of a person and the sameness of all people *must* exist simultaneously, unlike the contemporary trend of emphasising one or the other as a fundamental political tenet. Without seeing the plural combination of both uniqueness and sameness, Arendt suggests that people become alienated from the world and from each other. The falsity of such alienation is highlighted by Walter Benjamin;

“Man cannot, at any price, be said to coincide with the mere life in him, any more than it can be said to coincide with any other of his conditions and qualities, including even the uniqueness of his bodily person” (Benjamin, 1996: 251 quoted in Swift, 2013: 363)

Here Benjamin shows that the shared sameness of the human subject, the ‘mere life’ they have in common, is equally insufficient to define them as the unique qualities they each hold. As such, some notion of plurality is vital. Likewise, Henri Lefebvre, among scholars from other political persuasions (such as Žižek, 2009 and Sen, 2009), can be seen to have reached a similar conclusion when he stated in *The Critique of Everyday Life (V.1)* that

“[i]ndividual and mass are two opposing terms, but, like thought and action, they are bound together” (Lefebvre, 2014: 203).

Arendt’s notion of plurality through the activity of speech and action, demands that equals defined by their sameness can reveal themselves as unique when they are together (Arendt, HC). “It is therefore through action - and *not* through labour and work - that our ‘distinct uniqueness’ is revealed” (Biesta 2012: 687). This is why Arendt decries any loss of the faculty of action (Arendt, OV) or any decline in the public realm (Arendt, HC). Without action in the public realm - i.e. without a public space - plural life is lost. However, Arendt (1977) talks about freedom, and political life in public not as a standalone condition, but as “a luxury; it is an *additional* happiness that one is made capable of only after the requirements of the life process have been fulfilled” (*ibid.*: 106, emphasis in original). The pursuit of action and freedom therefore, is inextricably linked to the other conditions of labour and work. With this in mind, one can now reveal a spatial link that brings these three human conditions into relation, in turn developing a critical enquiry into contemporary public space and the purported loss of the public realm.

3(2). - Fabrication of the World: Spatiality of Work in Arendt and Lefebvre

While Hannah Arendt is not renowned for the spatiality of her theoretical insights (Dikeç 2015), Howell (1993) has claimed that there is a “spatial language that pervades [Arendt’s] writings” (Howell, 1993: 314 quoted in Dikeç, 2013: 78). The core premise of Arendt’s seminal text *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC), is the claim that modern humanity faces a situation of world alienation, what she calls worldlessness (Arendt, HC: 115). This situation, she showed, comes from the decline of the private and public realms, and the growth of a social realm. As a consideration of *realms* - public, private, and social – one can argue that spatiality is central to Arendt’s *The Human Condition*. I would argue in fact, that the spatiality of realms is a core component across Arendt’s wider corpus.

Briefly exploring Arendt’s *realms*, we can introduce their latent spatiality, and show their relevance as part of a study into public space. First however, it is necessary to mention that the notion of a ‘realm’ is quite a peculiar one. It is not directly associated with a physical

spatiality, yet it holds a close affiliation with it. Indeed, the notion of a realm is generally seen to be a “field or domain of activity or interest” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016).

Throughout *The Human Condition* (HC), as well as her wider work, Hannah Arendt makes use of the term repeatedly (see also Arendt OT, OR, 1959). At times, particularly in her article *Reflections on Little Rock* (Arendt, 1959), Arendt also alternates between the term *realm* and the term *space*; although there seems to be little consistency in these uses. Despite these inconsistencies, from a geographical perspective, a ‘realm’ has to actuate somewhere in space, and hence becomes a physical necessity (Owens, 2012).

The first realm emerging from Arendt is the private realm. Arendt claims that this realm is characterised by “exclusiveness” (Arendt, 1959: 52). This is the space where we indulge in “the dark desires of the heart” and meet the “obscure necessities of the household” (Arendt, OR: 126). As such, Arendt declares that the private realm is one that contains “certain nonpolitical communal bonds between the subjects, such as family ties and common cultural interests” (Arendt, OT: 322). The second realm is the public realm; a realm that Arendt describes as “common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in [the world]” (Arendt HC: 52). Arendt sees the public realm as a space ‘in common’, declaring that it is “based on the law of equality” in contrast to the private realm which is “based on the law of universal difference and differentiation” (Arendt, OT: 301)⁴. The public realm establishes a ‘space of appearance’ in which all people can speak and be heard, and all can act and be seen as equals (Arendt, HC). Arendt sees the public realm as a space into which people step from their hidden private lives; what we might consider to be a public space. The third and final realm that Arendt refers to is the social realm. Arendt describes this as “that curious and somewhat hybrid realm which the modern age interjected between the older and more genuine realms of the public or political on one side and the private on the other” (Arendt, OR: 113)⁵. Emerging with the development of modernity, Arendt argues, this realm reveals the malleability of public and private spaces. Indeed, the development of the social realm is argued by Arendt (HC) to dissolve and breach the boundaries of both the traditional public and private realms. It is this

⁴ This specific quote she is referring to the public *sphere*, I am making the assumption that *sometimes* the terms public sphere and public realm are interchangeable.

⁵ In almost identical terms Arendt (1959) explains that “[s]ociety is that curious, somewhat hybrid realm between the political and the private in which, since the beginning of the modern age, most men have spent the greater part of their lives” (Arendt, 1959: 51) - Here the equivalence of public and political is more evident.

component of spatiality in Arendt that opens a question straight away about the conception of public space as a fixed space which fits within some discernable boundaries.

Through the condition of 'work', explored by Arendt in *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC), it is also possible to explore another element of spatiality in Arendt's thought. While Arendt acknowledges that "[t]he distinction between labor and work which [she] propose[s] is unusual" (*ibid.*: 79), this distinction is essential to begin an enquiry into its spatiality. According to Biesta (2012) "[w]ork has to do with production and creation, and hence with instrumentality. It is concerned with making" (*ibid.*: 687). If we consider the activity of labour, we can see that work facilitates labour. We can produce or create things to be used as instruments for the labour process (such as tools and machines). However, the creation of these things, Arendt argues, is necessarily distinguished from labour itself (Arendt, HC). This is because, producing and creating things can also be for purposes other than labour, i.e. for action (for example we can create works of art or memorials to historical moments). The activity of work might be considered as the in-between, the convergence, of the other fundamental conditions of labour and action. This is why Arendt refers to works as "a world between men and nature" (Arendt, HC: 137). And it seems, especially in Arendt's use of the term 'fabrication' (Arendt, HC), that such works are necessarily appreciated for their spatiality.

Arendt explains that works are necessarily inscribed with both a beginning and an end (Arendt, HC). The material thing that is made as work does not occur in nature - it has to be fabricated - and eventually, despite its extended durability, will decay, erode, or face destruction (Arendt, HC). With this in mind, Arendt criticises any works created in the sole interest of labour. When something is created purely for utility, it becomes an end justifying any means of production (Arendt, HC). This is the dangerous logic that ultimately drives the works of totalitarian regimes as they fabricate the world (Arendt: OT). In contrast "objects which are strictly without any utility whatsoever...because they are unique are not exchangeable" (Arendt HC: 167), become meaningful due to their publicity. Unique public works, such as art and theatre, exceed the notion of utility, and become meaningful due to their aesthetic quality (Arendt, HC). Echoing Arendt, Marcuse declares:

“Play is *unproductive* and *useless* precisely because it cancels the repressive and exploitative traits of labor and leisure...” (Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, p.178, quoted in Baudrillard, 1975: 39)

Arendt suggests therefore, an important distinction “between utility and meaningfulness” of works (Arendt, HC: 154). Arendt claims that utilitarian works try to establish utility as a meaning in itself; a futile pursuit (*ibid.*: 154)⁶. All works however, whether for the purpose of facilitating labour or for the memory of action, necessarily encompass some element of meaning (*ibid.*: 172). Through a consideration of works therefore, we can look for the meaningfulness in their creation (and potentially their destruction/disruption). Creation, durability, and disruption in work are spatial elements through which we can explore the fabrication of the public world as per Hannah Arendt.

By emphasising the meaningfulness of unique objects, in contrast to mere utility, one can argue that Arendt comes into a discussion with Henri Lefebvre. In *The Production of Space* Henri Lefebvre explored how modern urbanism has created repetitious landscapes which “has everywhere defeated uniqueness” (Lefebvre, PS: 75), where everything becomes purely about function (Lefebvre and Levich, 1987); what Arendt may have called *utility*. The result, for Lefebvre and Levich, is everyday life becoming “a set of functions which connect and join together systems” (*ibid.*: 9) and are, as such, removed of their uniqueness. In almost all urban spaces today, according to Lefebvre, urban planners (and other technicians with similar remits) primarily produce their designs based upon utility and economic ideologies (see Harvey, 2006a; Mitchell, 2003). For Arendt, this futile elevation of sameness in modern society is a result of the pervasiveness of naturalistic and deterministic traits of Western thought, and shows an erosion of the public realm. For Lefebvre, building on Marx, the elevation is the result of the contemporary mode of capitalist production; production dependent upon reducing all life to mere quantity. Clearly Arendt and Lefebvre are converging in their thinking; sameness is everywhere being elevated in spatial works, and this is to the detriment of the heterogeneity and uniqueness found in everyday public urban life. This convergence is useful for developing our concept of public space, as we can start to suggest some theoretical convergence between the two

⁶ This futility is based upon the fact that utility demands that that things are *useful for* something. Whereas if something is meaningful, its meaning must be a property of the thing *in itself*.

thinkers.

There appears to be a convergence between Arendt's idea of utility in work, and Lefebvre's idea of dominant spatial abstractions. There also appears to be equivalence between Arendt's idea of unique works inspired by public action and Lefebvre's idea of everyday praxis in urban life. However, what I will show next, is that the second of these 'equivalents', is fact an imperfect match. Indeed, it may even be considered to be a point of contradiction between Arendt and Lefebvre. At the end of the previous chapter I argued that heterogeneous qualities in *lived space*, for Lefebvre, emerge through the disruptive praxis of everyday urban life. Yet, I also argued that this understanding of praxis was incapable of capturing the full potential of lived space; the potential for permanent change to urban life. As such, another so-called 'philosopher of praxis' was called for. Exploring Hannah Arendt's understanding of praxis in the section that follows, one can show how Arendt's notion of uniqueness revealed by action, actually has a much more complicated interaction with Lefebvre's idea of everyday praxis in urban life than mere equivalence or convergence.

3(3). - Arendt on Praxis

Turning to Arendt's understanding of praxis necessarily begins with her critical interpretation of Marx – drawing on her thoughts from *On Revolution* (Arendt, OR), *On Violence* (Arendt, OV), and *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC). Illuminating this critique reveals Arendt's own intellectual contribution to the notion of praxis and allows one to see the criticism of Marx's praxis applying to Lefebvre as well. Doing this develops an understanding of Arendt's broader critique of western philosophy, and reveals how Arendt arrived at her alternative philosophy of praxis. An alternative that guides the remaining theoretical enquiry of this thesis.

Going beyond philosophical enquiry to elevate everyday practices as life affirming, and life defining, Marx's philosophy of praxis appears to meet Arendt's call in *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC) for public action to be central in the pursuit of human freedom. However, Arendt (OV) claims that Marx's philosophy of praxis actually aimed at the exact opposite. Indeed, for Arendt, "Marx...[aimed] at a society in which the need for public action and participation in public affairs would have "withered away,"" (Arendt, OV: 22). While Marx

called for a philosophy of praxis, Arendt (OV) claims that he ultimately saw his philosophy as the pursuit of an end point; overcoming the capitalist mode of production.

In the preface to *Capital Vol.1* Marx explains how his project was to create a new science of political economy. He explained that this 'science' was new because his analysis did not use "microscopes nor chemical reagents" but instead the "power of abstraction" (Marx, 1990: 90). Immediately, Marx was setting a stall for his grand project; the 'science'⁷ of political economy. Marx evidently intended to organise a body of knowledge on the social relations under a capitalist mode of production. Now we have already seen that for Marx (in the *11 Theses on Feuerbach* quoted above), the point of this scientific interpretation of the world was to change it in practice. Indeed, Arendt claims in *The Promise of Politics* (2005), that this call to action is a major break by Marx from the tradition of Western philosophy. Elevating the position of action Marx was seemingly relegating the status of contemplation, and creating an actual philosophy of praxis. However, despite this appearance, Arendt reveals that Marx actually kept the privileged place of thinking as uppermost in his theory. The creation of a 'science' that one can step back with and observe all social relations and human practices, cannot be created without keeping contemplation foremost in its method. To Arendt, this adherence to contemplation, is the "fateful error" (Arendt, PP: 77) of Marx. What Marx's philosophy of praxis actualised for Arendt, was a new form of 'expertise' that could be claimed by its adherents, elevating their contemplation and enabling them to promote the practice of revolutionary change so long as the *vita activa* (active life) obediently followed the *vita contemplativa* (the life of the mind).

With Marx making such a 'fateful error', we can ask, given his dependence upon Marxist theory; did Lefebvre make the same errors in his understandings of praxis? In the discussion of Lefebvre already, it has been shown how Lefebvre understood praxis to involve attending to a diverse set of human needs that reveal themselves in everyday life and in the context of history. Elaborating on the notion of needs as purely biological (needs of food, shelter, reproduction), Lefebvre's notion of 'needs' was built upon the idea that non-biological 'needs' exist as the result of shared common ground and a common situation. With a common struggle to meet needs, Lefebvre postulates that an inevitable disruption will occur in the urban setting, changing the path of current dominant

⁷ Science, in this sense, can be understood as a "systematically organized body of knowledge on a particular subject" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016 'Science').

abstractions; this is the reason behind his title *The Urban Revolution* (Lefebvre, UR).

Now the implication of common, albeit circumstantial, needs suggests two trajectories which align with Marx's end-of-praxis. First of all, the very notion of a 'need' implies that there is some *thing* that looks to be met through practice. And once this thing, this need, is met an end is achieved. This obviously implies Lefebvre's adherence to an end-to-praxis theory. Secondly, the needs he develops are premised not upon the unique individual who holds them, but upon their unique situation; the implication being that anyone in exactly the same situation would face the same needs. In other words, Lefebvre's praxis is based upon the fulfilment of common needs in common situations. It is premised upon the sameness of people, not their uniqueness. With such a premise, it is entirely plausible that a 'science', or knowledge structure of 'needs' could potentially be developed. While such an enterprise would undoubtedly involve a highly complex and adaptable knowledge base - given the continued change and sophistication of needs (Lefebvre, 1968) - it is feasible within Lefebvre's discussion of praxis that such a structure could be attempted. The idea of Lefebvre's praxis is that there is a complete system, which, if all of the factors could be considered (i.e. the great variety of individual needs and the complete context of history), a total understanding of everyday life could emerge. Like Marx and Hegel before him, Lefebvre's notion of praxis therefore, does not escape the criticism levelled by Arendt in the preceding argument. This is exemplified by the following quote from Merrifield (2006);

"For Lefebvre, everyday life became a bit like quantum theory: by going small, by delving into the atomic structure of life as it is really lived, you can understand the whole structure of the human universe." (Merrifield, 2006: 5)

The irony of Merrifield's assertion, that Lefebvre saw everyday life like quantum theory, can be appreciated turning to Arendt's article *The Conquest of Space and the Stature of Man* (2007 [1963]). Here Arendt quotes one of the founders of Quantum Theory, Werner Heisenberg, in saying "man in his hunt for "objective reality" suddenly discovered that he always "confronts himself alone" (Heisenberg quoted by Arendt, 2007: 52). The very concept of quantum theory can be understood very differently from how Merrifield (2006) sees it. By going small, one of the things that quantum theory postulated was the 'wave-particle duality'. This revelation centres upon the premise that a quantum object can exhibit both wave-like and particle-like properties depending upon how it is observed.

Applying this to Lefebvre's method, we could say that by looking at the "atomic structure of life as it is really lived", Lefebvre needed to account for the observing position that he held; a position that would directly influence the "structure of the human universe" that he found. By 'going small', the assertion could be made that one doesn't understand the whole structure of the universe, but instead only finds oneself.

However, Lefebvre also explained that, beyond a unifying structure or theory, the praxis of needs will always "change and become more sophisticated" (Lefebvre, 1968: 41). The idea of constant change suggests that Lefebvre's notion of praxis actually tends *away* from Marx's *ends* of praxis in some ways; heading instead towards Arendt's call for never-ending praxis. Indeed, with constant change, the needs and activities that Lefebvre refers to evidently reject the generalisations and postulations of homogenising meta-theories, and could have an endless potential. That said, the notion of such activities becoming 'more sophisticated' is potentially problematic. A development in sophistication, evidently drawing on a Marxist historical account (from simple activities pre-industry to complex activities today), implies the development towards something; *i.e.* towards an end. Like the notion of 'progress' - an anti-political notion to Arendt (Arendt, OT) - the idea of a sophistication of needs, we can argue, does not require a perceived 'end' for an 'end' to still exist in reality. Indeed, the means can justify the end. Progress for progress' sake; sophistication for sophistications' sake.

It is the emergence of history as a determining factor - in this case, sophistication being the progress of history - that Arendt argues is another crucial junction in the error of Marx and Hegel (Fine, 2001). For Arendt "Historical relations of cause and effect replace an understanding of human deeds as carrying meaning in and of themselves" (Buckler 2011: 23). Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* said that "all fact and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice...the first time as tragedy, the second as farce" (Marx, 1852 quoted by Swift, 2009: 42). For Marx, tragedy and farce drew upon his analogy of theatre to depict the appearance of social relations as an illusion. An illusion that can only be escaped through some expert knowledge, some ability to step out of reality and look down upon humankind in its entirety (Swift, 2009) - this would allow us to laugh at the farce that follows tragedy. With this ability to step away from the present and look at the past, history necessarily replaces action and praxis in the pursuit of understanding.

The turn to history is where the philosophies of Marx and Hegel, it was argued by Arendt, turned away from praxis. The perpetual 'sophistication' of needs is where, I argue, Lefebvre turns away from praxis. In *The Life of The Mind Volume 1: Thinking* (Arendt, 1997: 82) Arendt recounts a story from Plato of the Thracian peasant girl who laughs at Thales, the thinker, who fell in to a well because he was too occupied looking up and pondering the movements of the stars. Maybe this story could be retold here with the peasant girl laughing at Lefebvre as he fell into the well because, while he appeared to be looking at the well, he was distracted by the past. Lefebvre seems to have the tendency to make the same 'fateful error' (Arendt, PP: 77) as Marx and Hegel in his understanding of praxis. The spectator of action, the theorist, ends up sustaining her/his elevation over the actor, over practice, because of a theory that sees the present practice as 'sophistication'; the determined consequence of progress from the past. Maybe, in this error is an explanation of why the so-called revolution of everyday life failed to do more than momentarily disrupt the dominant production of space e.g., in May 1968.

It could be argued that those calling for disruption in '68 failed to sustain the disruption because their meta-theories, on the economy and the weight of history, simply served to maintain their distance from the everyday practice they had initially inspired; they provided the spark but not the fuel. It could also be argued that by turning to praxis as the variety of individual needs in everyday life - in opposition to the banal homogenous needs dictated by capitalism - the opportunity to step beyond 'needs' was missed. As a result, an opening emerged for such diversity of needs to be co-opted into 'cultural' consumerism (Žižek, 2009), and allow for the status quo of capitalist relations to find its place once again. If meeting diverse needs is the key motivation for disruption, this would suggest that dominant abstractions could presumably re-produce space such that enough of those needs are met to extinguish the disruption—causing it to end. Interpreting May '68 in this way, Lefebvre's notion of praxis may in fact fall short of theorising the potential of praxis to establish a sustained disruption to the dominant production of space.

The above notwithstanding, Lefebvre's notion of praxis, his acknowledgement that practical needs in everyday life are always open to change, suggests that Lefebvre was aware of perpetual praxis; action with no end. This element of his theory is the single element through which, I argue, Lefebvre's turn to praxis does not fall to Arendt's criticism

of Marx. If there is perpetual change in praxis, then there is no end point to be found. Instead a philosophy of praxis can only reveal the conditions through which such praxis holds its potential; its potential as a perpetual beginning rather than an end. Thus we need an open-ended theory of praxis, which does not reduce the heterogeneity of everyday practices to any determined ends; whether these are the 'sophistication' of needs or the unrelenting weight of history. We also need a concept that centres upon actual practices in everyday life and not the contemplated abstractions of its theorists. With this in mind I will now explore how Arendt proposes an alternative philosophy of praxis, and consider how Arendt's praxis paves the way for perpetual disruption to the dominant abstractions that attempt to produce public spaces.

3(4). - Action as Praxis?

"I've taken an epigraph from ... [Karl Jaspers]: 'Give yourself up neither to the past nor to the future. The important thing is to remain wholly in the present'. That sentence struck me right in the heart, so I'm entitled to it." (Arendt, 1964, quoted in Buckler 2011: 1)

As shown, Arendt criticised the philosophy of praxis emerging from Hegel because of his contemplations on the past. Likewise, she criticised Marx because, while projecting on to the future, the past was still his springboard. Instead, as the quote above shows, Arendt demanded a philosophy of praxis that moved out of contemplation and emerged 'wholly in the present'; indeed, I would argue, this is the reason for the title of her book *Between Past and Future* (Arendt, BPF). It has already been shown in the opening discussion, on Arendt's *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC), that Arendt saw the conditions of human life on earth to be centred around three fundamental activities - labour, work, and action - performed in the present. Taking Lefebvre's ideas of changing needs in everyday praxis, he may have met Arendt's call for praxis in the present; a present without a turn to the past or a projection into the future. However, I will now show that it is more than activities just being in the present that Arendt demands of such praxis - activities must also have *presence*.

Biesta (2012) explains that "The basic idea of Arendt's understanding of action is...very simple: *we cannot act in isolation*" (Biesta, 2012: 688). Based upon this idea, actions must

thus be activities where an individual reveals himself/herself to others - we cannot act with others and not be seen, and thus revealed. In this sense Arendt claims that actions will always be capable of revealing the uniqueness of *who* the actor is (Arendt, HC). Therefore, action is dependent not only on the presence of others as witnesses, but it is fulfilled by revealing the uniqueness of the individual who acts in this company. Arendt states that "Action without a name, a "who" attached to it, is meaningless" (Arendt, HC: 181). I argue below that it is uniqueness, as revealed in action amid the presence of others, which is the foundation of her idea of praxis.

With uniqueness as the premise of action, the foundation of praxis, this necessarily means that we cannot completely predict such activities; a unique actor must be able to perform unique acts. As such, with the unpredictability of public actions, Arendt's idea of praxis is equally premised on disruption. "It is the function [she says,] ...of all action, as distinguished from mere behaviour, to interrupt what otherwise would have proceeded automatically and therefore predictably" (Arendt, OV: 30-31). Thus the uniqueness of each person is the foundation for their capacity to act - "the ability of initiative, spontaneous activity and innovation to disrupt causal chains of processes and practices." (Cloke, 2002: 596). Clearly this disruptive and unpredictable element of action is the foundation upon which Arendt criticised Marx for his apparent vision of an end-to-praxis; an end to the struggle. For Arendt, the condition of being human and having the ability to act in the present moment amidst the presence of others, requires that there is no end to praxis. There is always the potential of something new coming out of praxis.

I have already shown that Lefebvre can be argued to have sympathy with an endless-praxis idea (despite there being a tendency contrary to this). Lefebvre explained that practices, as everyday needs, will always have the potential to "change and become more sophisticated" (Lefebvre, 1968: 41). I have also shown, in his discussion of everyday life, that Lefebvre saw disruption as necessary to undermine the dominant abstractions of the modern capitalist system. However, I have not developed how Arendt's idea of *presence* - the need for plurality - can or cannot be found in Lefebvre's conception of praxis.

"Man...comes to look upon himself as a historical being... He constitutes, creates, produces himself in the domain of praxis. There is nothing in him that is not a product of interaction" (Lefebvre, 1968: 18)

The above quote points to the existence of plurality in Lefebvre's praxis; indeed, he claims that there is nothing in any person "that is not a product of interaction" (*ibid.*: 18).

However, we need to return to Arendt's idea of plurality to explore this further, for Arendt's plurality requires the appearance of an actor as a creative, and present activity in the presence of witnesses; in the process revealing *who* the actor is, not *what* [as a specimen of a category] they are.

Referring to plurality in the sense of a person being a 'product' of interaction Lefebvre instead implies that the individual contains an accumulation of some kind of residue of interaction; the resultant product of relations. This 'product of interaction', we would assume, becomes part of an individual's fixed identity, and remains even if the individual were to act alone; it becomes *what* the actor is. Praxis for Arendt is in stark contrast to such a product. Any mention of a product refers to some kind of fabrication, or work, that is made after an action has occurred. Instead action itself is a creative activity. As Biesta (2012) explains, "For Arendt to act first of all means to take initiative, to begin something new and to bring something new into the world" (Biesta, 2012: 687). As such Lefebvre's praxis significantly diverges from the immediate presence and plurality of Arendt's notion.

Arendt's notion of praxis, through the activity of action, offers an alternative emphasis for disrupting the dominant mental abstractions of public space. Marx and then Lefebvre, we have shown, called for a disruptive revolution to release the inevitable motion of the cogs of history, freeing the heterogeneity of everyday life and ending the dominance of philosophical and structural abstractions. Arendt however, has argued that the 'fateful' error of history, and the projection of a finished future, has thwarted this call. Instead she suggested that to disrupt the dominant homogenising abstractions of modernity, we must turn to the plural and present activity of action; the thing that "makes man a political being" (Arendt, OV: 82). I will now show how the activity of action can become the premise upon which it is necessary to re-think public space as praxis.

3(5). - The Space of Appearance: Public Space as Praxis

One challenge levelled at Arendt's notion of action, is that her discussion and elaboration on the form it can take is very vague. Bernstein (1977) suggests that this ambiguity is in line with her systematic theory of action, and indeed any prescribed clarity would contradict her broader theoretical ideals. Nonetheless, authors like Pangle (1990) stand by their criticism Arendt's ambiguity; suggesting that, as a form of activist politics, this ambiguity comes from turning a blind eye to much of established political theory. Despite this criticism, I would suggest that there is actually a great deal of discussion in *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC) where Arendt hints to the constitution of action by locating its appearance in a variety of moments from the past. If action can become the premise upon which re-thinking public space as praxis can emerge, it will be important now to explore these locations. In doing this I will reveal that, for Arendt, action is defined not so much by its content, but instead by its conditions and by the existence of spaces for its appearance.

With action necessarily being an activity that reveals an actor to a plurality of witnesses, we have already shown that it has the potential to be disruptive. Appearing in public and disrupting the everyday starts something new; a post-action situation. Once the activity of speech or action has occurred it is irreversible; it has happened. The new situation that results could not have been known before the action, and so the actor must acknowledge this unpredictability when they act. As a result, Arendt sees there being no end to the consequences of an action; in a way, the act must be understood as the genesis of a process (Dikeç 2013).

“The reason why we are never able to foretell with certainty the outcome and end of any action is simply that action has no end” (Arendt, HC: 233).

So Arendt is arguing that whenever a person steps into the glare of public life and speaks or acts, not only do they reveal their own uniqueness, they also begin a process that disrupts those around them, they have the potential for their act to be remembered, and as a consequence they initiate unpredictable and irreversible outcomes. Such a burden to be faced whenever one acts in public, claims Arendt, is why many choose to avoid appearing

in public (Arendt, HC). It is also why societies throughout human history have tried to give action a location, and subsequently tried to control the impacts of these actions. Arendt claims that, to account for the unpredictable outcomes of action, “the ancients called [it] “fate,” the Christians called [it] “providence,” and we moderns arrogantly have degraded [it] into mere chance” (Arendt, PP: 59).

With the ancient Greeks, Arendt (HC) explains, the *Polis* was created as an attempt to make a permanent space for the public appearance of citizens through speech and action. It was created so that each citizen had most chances to distinguish themselves from each other, but also to ensure that the unpredictability of actions could be contained. By providing citizens with a space for their appearances, the Greeks were trying to make the extraordinary fact of the uniqueness of each person into an everyday performance. This space was supposed to allow citizens to express their thoughts and ideas in the company of fellow citizens without judgement or restriction; allowing them to act freely and unpredictably. However, the reality was that the *polis*, through the attempt to control the impact of action, was distinctly limited. Non-citizens, women, and slaves were not permitted to appear in the public spaces and, as the accounts of Socrates show, dissenting voices were restricted. The hierarchy within the citizenry could not risk the potential disruption of speech and action if it were to maintain its order. So, despite the fact that the *polis* “defined itself explicitly as a way of life that was based exclusively upon persuasion and not upon violence” (Arendt, OR: 2), in reality, violence and restriction defined it.

Given the failures of the polis, Arendt turned her attention to the *potential* of public actions occurring *despite* the historical moment or the social institution they find themselves in. This potential, she claims, is found in the ‘space of appearance’ (Arendt, HC: 199-200). The ‘space of appearance’ is a space “where freedom can unfold its charms and become a visible, tangible reality” (Arendt, OR: 23). It “comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action” (Arendt, HC: 199). As such it can be said to come into being whenever people act among others in a way that reveals their uniqueness. There are no temporal bounds upon this space, such as the weight of history (Hegel) or the impulse of the future (Marx). Instead it is necessarily a space that exists in the present moment. In fact, Arendt states that “it does not survive the actuality of the movement which brought it into being, but disappears not only with the dispersal of men...but with the disappearance or arrest of the activities themselves” (Arendt, HC: 199). Thus it is an

ephemeral space, which exists only when certain conditions of plurality and activity are met. Arendt explains that “[w]herever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever” (Arendt, HC: 199).

Dikeç (2015) gives clarity to the concept of the space of appearance in his discussion of *sans papiers* demonstrations in Paris. Dikeç explains that it is actions of the *sans papiers* movement that is the catalyst for political subjectivity, and enables the protagonists to lay claims. Arendt’s ‘space of appearance’, Dikeç (2015) explains, is a ‘place in the world’ that humans require for political subjectivity. Yet this space does not require a designated and fixed public space, it emerges because “political action inaugurates space” (Dikeç, 2015: 40). In other words, political action is the praxis that creates public space. The ‘function’ of space, as Dikeç sees it, is to “provide the common domain of experience for individuals and putting them in relation to one another” (Dikeç, 2015: 41).

The space of appearance, it would appear, is not a space at all. It is the *potential* of a space; the potential for a spatially manifest moment of political action. Biesta (2012) explains that for Arendt the idea of the space of appearance, befitting the public realm, was “not so much a question of physical location as that it is about a particular quality of human togetherness which she characterises as ‘being together in the manner of speech and action’...In such terms the construction of public sphere can be understood as an ongoing process of ‘becoming public’.” (Biesta, 2012: 684). The space of appearance is not necessarily a man-made public space or even a fixed space. The space of appearance is created and inaugurated simultaneously through praxis; praxis that is both *present* (now) and *present* (among others).

The idea that the space of appearance is a potential, ephemeral space, which only emerges through praxis makes it impossible to pin down. Indeed, any claim to have witnessed a space of appearance is necessarily contested, and contestable. However, this does not mean that there was no appearance. The truth is, any discussion of an appearance, Arendt declares (Arendt, HC), always comes after the act itself and therefore becomes in itself a kind of fabrication - a violent mis-representation (Arendt, OV) - of the act. There is never a complete and incontestable account of appearance. This, I believe is why Dikeç (2015) claims that Arendt seems to offer “contradictory spatial imaginaries” (Dikeç, 2015: 51).

What is it that makes an activity fit to be called 'speech' or 'action' as Arendt understands it? As already stated, one of the criticisms against Arendt's concept of politics and action is the vagueness of her concept. Returning to the notion of 'presence' is the place where I believe we can address these criticisms. As already discussed, of the three activities that make up the human condition according to Arendt (HC), she declares that "it is only action that cannot even be imagined outside of the society of men" (Arendt, HC: 22). So while this does not mean that activities associated with labouring or working cannot be in the presence of others it suggests that there is something about action that makes presence *essential*.

In her discussion of labourers working together in the factory (Arendt, HC), Arendt refers to the necessary presence of others in this situation as a 'communion'. The communion of labourers is premised upon the sameness of each labourer as parts of a labour process. In contrast, actions in public are shown to be premised upon the uniqueness of those acting. The actions of these unique actors can initiate something new, but necessarily cannot be merely the product of some process. The labourer is seen to labour in communion. The actor is seen to appear in public. In this sense "appearances...need speech and articulation, that is, something which transcends mere physical visibility as well as sheer audibility, in order to be manifest at all" (Arendt, OR: 9). It is appearance beyond mere visibility or audibility that makes something fulfil Arendt's praxis of action.

The above does not mean that actions cannot occur amidst a communion of labourers, far from it. Indeed, Arendt explains that the political actions of the labour movement across Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries contains many significant and important moments where one witnessed a space of appearance (Arendt, HC). It also does not mean that actions cannot occur alongside works. In fact, Arendt suggests that it is alongside works that actions become important (Arendt, HC). For action "without the articulation accomplished by remembrance, there simply [would be] no story left that could be told" (Arendt BPF: 6). However, her point is to emphasise that it is not the activity of labouring or the activity of working that can fulfil action. Instead it is by stepping away from these activities through speech and action, and appearing as your unique self, that the praxis of action, the praxis of public space, is enacted. This is why Lefebvre's tendency to view praxis as the fulfilment of *needs* is inadequate; it is not a *need* to appear, for Arendt, but a *capacity* and a *freedom*.

“[The] wine of action...is the same as the wine of freedom” (Arendt: OR, 124)

The capacity and freedom to act and appear with others is the condition that Arendt puts at the foundation of the space of appearance. Dikeç (2015) suggests that it is also the foundation of Arendt’s understanding of political subjectivity. For Arendt, having a ‘place in the world’ where you are free to appear among others means that you can take hold of your capacity to act in this place (Dikeç, 2015). Engaging this capacity to act, Dikeç explains, thus “inaugurates [this] space” (Dikeç, 2015: 40) and in the process establishes your political subjectivity. In other words, fulfilling one’s capacity to act leads to one’s appearance as a political subject.

It is important to reinforce here that Arendt’s discussion of freedom is very different to ‘freedom’ as understood either through neoliberal ‘free market’ ideology, or through Marxist ideas of freedom as liberation. This is important to clarify because it allows us to develop the unique understandings that Arendt proposes for political subjectivity and the space of appearance, which in turn helps us in re-thinking public space as praxis. Under neoliberalism, Harvey (2005a) explains, ‘freedom’ has been appropriated to mean “freedom of the market and of trade” (Harvey, 2005a: 7). Such freedom, claims Žižek (2009), means in reality that capital is free to exploit, and workers are ‘free’ to be exploited. Harvey (2014) therefore asserts that the idea of a ‘free’ market is just a tool to cement the ideology of capitalist relations. In contrast Marxist notions of freedom are founded under an apparently opposing premise; that freedom is premised upon liberation from the chains of labour (Arendt, OR). We can see this when Marx states that for freedom “The reduction of the working day is the basic requisite” (Marx, 1991: 959). As a result, thinkers such as Lefebvre and Harvey have argued that freedom is dependent on reducing the toil of labour so that meeting our biological needs becomes a much smaller part of everyday life (Lefebvre, CE, Harvey, 2014). The result therefore being that people have more freedom to pursue what they choose (Lefebvre, CE: 193). For Lefebvre “There can be no concrete freedom for the individual without social, economic and political freedoms” (Lefebvre, CE: 192).

““Men do not fight and die for tons of steel, or for tanks and atomic bombs. They aspire to be happy, not to produce.” They aspire to be free, not to work- or else to work less.” (Lefebvre quoted in Merrifield 2006: 10)

However, Arendt warns that, in her opinion, “liberation and freedom are not the same” (Arendt, OR: 19). Arendt agrees with the criticism of neoliberal ‘freedom’ of the market, with its necessary un-freedom of labourers, but she does not see the Marxist notion, of liberation from labour, as creating freedom in and of itself. Indeed, she explains that liberation from poverty and the toil of labour could conceivably be established without people ever having the freedom to appear as political subjects; such as the case of a hypothetical despot providing for people’s needs through some technical means of redistribution (Arendt, OR). Instead, freedom for Arendt can only be found in the capacity to act as a political subject; when one steps out from labour and work, and steps into the plurality of the public realm, into the presence of others.

For Arendt, “Freedom is a political artefact, not an internal quality of human beings, and its origins lie in the political community” (Fine, 2008: 163). Liberation from poverty only establishes the ‘step out’ from needs, but it does not fulfil the ‘step in’ to public life. However, Arendt’s distinction between liberation and freedom has faced criticism. Challenging her suggestion that the step out from necessity is prior to politics, Jacques Ranciere suggests that Arendt “remains a prisoner of the tautology by which those who ‘cannot’ think a thing do not think it” (Ranci re 1995b, 48, quoted by Dike  2013: 84). Arendt, however, does not say that ‘labourers’ cannot, and therefore do not, think. Instead she suggests that the activity of *labouring* itself cannot involve thought outside of necessity. This is why she claims, “Nothing...could be more obsolete than to attempt to liberate mankind from poverty by political means; nothing could be more futile and more dangerous” (Arendt, OR: 104). For Arendt political acts can occur, despite often seeming impossible, only when people *step out* from their labour to speak and act in public. What this means for public space is that, it is the praxis of politics - understood as the fulfilled capacity and freedom of speaking and acting in public - and not just the ‘step away’, or liberation, from work and labour which establishes the appearance of public space. I would agree with Biesta (2012) therefore, when he claims that Arendt is “one of the most political thinkers amongst twentieth-century political theorists and philosophers” (Biesta 2012: 686).

3(6). - Fabrication of Praxis in Bureaucratic Democracies

Turning to the places where the concrete abstractions of modernity play out - everyday life - I have argued, using Lefebvre, that a revolutionary and disruptive potential resides in the heterogeneous praxis of lived space. Locating such praxis in a 'space of appearance' in this chapter, I have also shown that public space can only ever be found as a *potential* space, emerging at ephemeral moments in the everyday praxis of politics; this is what I have called public space as praxis. I now turn to the essential, but deeply problematic, relationship between fabrication - the work of producing space - and the praxis of public space. To achieve this, I turn to modernity, and consider how bureaucratic democracies negotiate the relationship between public space as fabrication, and public space as praxis. In doing this it will become clear that a bias towards the fabrication of works at the expense of the praxis of politics has resulted in a decline in the public realm and a simultaneous rise in a uniquely modern phenomenon; the social realm. This social realm, it will be shown, has simultaneously shifted both the public realm and the private realm, and forces us to re-think the potential location of politics and the praxis of public space. Such re-locations will also be shown to have implications in the ability of public space as praxis to disrupt the dominant homogenous productions of space. This will therefore demand making some adjustments to Arendt's notion of the space of appearance, in order to sustain its disruptive potential and to ensure its relevance for thinking about contemporary public space.

The structure of bureaucratic democracy is the dominant system of rule in the world today, particularly in Western states. However, according to Arendt (HC), if we were to consider ancient Greek thought, "the whole concept of rule and being ruled...was felt to be prepolitical and to belong in the private rather than the public sphere" (Arendt, HC: 32). The realm of politics, the public sphere, was political based upon its *absence* of rules. Indeed, Arendt (OR) claims "[t]he *polis* was supposed to be an isonomy, not a democracy" (Arendt, OR: 20). The reason for thinking this was because any structure or system that sought to control activities and force certain behaviours, necessarily took away some of the *freedom* and *capacity* of unique individuals to speak and act in public; the conditions

necessary for the praxis of public space. However, as I have already discussed, the public realm, despite requiring a free space for the appearance of political praxis, also requires some form of fabrication – a work that results from human activity reshaping the physical world. This is because the fabrication of praxis gives it the opportunity for permanence beyond its ephemeral appearance and subsequently can give it meaning. Therefore, can we consider the contemporary concept of rule, and being ruled, as providing this necessary fabrication, despite appearing to be pre-political?

Fabrication of praxis necessarily involves the creation of a thing for the purpose of remembering and memorialising an act. Such fabrications can be made manifest either in a physical object or they can be passed on in the form of a remembered story, song, or theatrical performance; a cognitive object. However, irrespective of the form that the fabrication takes, it will rely on some existing structures and systems in order for it to have meaning and durability. It will require that people can understand the meaning of the object and that they choose to preserve it by not destroying/forgetting it. While systems of rule are necessarily restrictive to the actual praxis of politics, they can also enable the fabrication of aesthetic objects for remembering and memorialising this praxis. Indeed, a democratically elected government can call for a day of remembrance, or a legal structure can name a new law after a landmark case, and even a tyrant can decide to order the building of a memorial. Obviously, under each of these structures there are quite different degrees of freedom in the praxis of public space, and subsequently the fabrication that results will reflect this. This is one avenue that is important to consider when turning to the fabrication of praxis; how does the fabrication reflect the status of the public realm? However, another important consideration is the balance between enabling the praxis of public space on one hand, and restricting the destructive activity of fabricating praxis on the other. In the case of the tyrant sanctioning the building of many memorials, clearly the balance has tipped towards the fabrication of praxis given that the actual freedom and capacity for people to speak and act in public has been severely diminished. With these considerations in mind I will again turn to Arendt, in particular her work *On Totalitarianism* (Arendt, OT), and consider how contemporary Western democracy as a system of rule relates to the public realm and the fabrication of praxis.

In order to contextualise Arendt's analysis of modern Western democracy, it is useful to first mention her writing on the public realm under the systems of tyranny and

totalitarianism. Arendt (OR) explains that “Tyranny...was a form of government in which the ruler...had monopolized for himself the right of action, banished the citizens from the public realm into the privacy of their households, and demanded of them that they mind their own, private business.” (Arendt, OR: 121). In this sense, the praxis of public space, under tyranny, is abolished for all except the tyrant and all that remains are the fabrications sanctioned by the tyrant; an “impotent” force which does not have the power found in the plurality of action (Arendt, HC: 202). Thus the space of appearance under tyranny is limited in two senses; a limited presence of the public realm, and a limited durability to its fabrication, since they are eliminated as soon as the tyrant is gone.

Differing from tyranny, Arendt (1977) declares that the system of Totalitarianism is defined by not only banishing citizens from the public realm, but also from ending “the whole sphere of privacy” as well (Arendt, 1977: 107). This is because, in contrast to a tyrant who rules by force, totalitarianism depends on “the sheer force of numbers” (Arendt, OT: 308) by mobilising a ‘mass society’ where people should have neither private hidden identities nor “opinions about, and interests in, the handling of public affairs” (Arendt, OT: 308). What this means for the praxis and fabrication of the public realm is more severe than that of tyranny. There is no public realm at all under totalitarianism - a mass can appear in communion, but no unique individual can be seen and heard from within this mass⁸. Thus there is no public praxis to fabricate in works. Fabrications can still dominate the mental and physical landscape but these will memorialise elements associated with the private realm; sameness, discrimination and the activities of labour. Any sense of politics disappears and the private realm becomes public.

Arendt describes totalitarianism as “an “iron band” that squeezed people together until they became one, thus eliminating the “public spaces” between them” (Benhabib, 2003:

⁸ Immediately one might wonder, what about Hitler or Stalin? Surely they appeared in the ‘public’ realm under the totalitarian regimes that they represent? Indeed, this is the case, and like tyrants explored already, the public realm was limited to their sanctioned appearance, and consequently their sanctioned fabrications resulted. However, pure totalitarianism is based upon the idea that no one can be distinguished from the masses. Hitler and Stalin both claimed to be speaking on behalf of the masses, not pursuing their own glorification. The fact that their appearances became the only public voices heard, and their images were fabricated all around their countries, suggests that in themselves they were also tyrants. Yet, it is the end of the public realm and the publicity of privacy (in the sense of sameness, discrimination, and labour) that are the important elements which define totalitarianism.

xiv). According to Arendt, this oneness (also known as 'mass society') can potentially "exist in every country and form the majority of those large numbers of neutral, politically indifferent people who never join a party and hardly ever go to the polls" (Arendt, OT: 311)⁹. The oneness of mass society is a foundation upon which totalitarianism emerges, and one which puts the praxis and fabrication of public space at greatest risk. As such it is the oneness of mass society, and its role in modern Western democracy, that I will now consider.

A component that Arendt saw as essential to politics and the public realm was the presence of a 'common world'. A world where people can be seen and heard in plurality, and can create new beginnings based upon common interests. This common world was dependent on both the existence of a space to appear, and the existence of common interests. I have already explored the reason that being seen and heard was essential for politics and thus is premised upon a space of appearance. However, the requirement for 'common interest' has not been considered. Arendt (Arendt, HC) explains that interest, or *inter-est*, is a concept that refers to some realm 'in between' people. It is the glue that holds "political parties or municipal governments or professional organizations or trade unions" together (Arendt, OT: 311). To have a common interest therefore, requires that there is some common ground, in between, those interacting. This common ground can include an infinite range of subjects (including employment, age, race, gender, sexuality etc.), but Arendt (Arendt, HC) suggests that the actual *subject* itself is irrelevant. What is relevant is that the common world contains at least some common interest.

Villa (1997) claims that for Arendt "the modern age witnesses "the destruction of the common world"" (Villa, 1997: 183). This is because, for Arendt, the modern world is defined, like totalitarianism, by the existence of mass society. Furthermore, it is the contemporary dominance of a labouring society, which has caused this (Arendt, HC). We can find an explanation of this logic from a Marxist account of capitalism. The capitalist mode of production, Harvey (2006b) explains, sees labourers as a form of variable capital; each person emerging as a quantity of some equivalent exchange value (what Marx calls 'labour power'). Each labourer, as a quantity, then becomes embedded and bound to

⁹ Although she does also explain that "Indifference to public affairs, neutrality on political issues, are in themselves no sufficient cause for the rise of totalitarian movements" (Arendt, OT: 313).

capital (Harvey, 2006b). Thus they become defined by the quantity of their sameness, their labour power, and not the uniqueness of their qualities. Defined by sameness, there is nothing to distinguish an individual labourer, except the *quantity* of labour power they possess.

Understanding themselves as a quantifiable commodity, there is the tendency for the labourer to become dominated by consumption and a kind of “organised passivity” according to Lefebvre and Levich (1987: 10). As a reaction to the homogenising and alienating elements of modern labour processes, people are lured into passively consuming the spectacle of ‘mass culture’. This mass culture includes, for Lefebvre and Levich (1987), passively consuming “violence, death, catastrophe, [and] the lives of kings and stars” (Lefebvre and Levich, 1987: 11). Eventually this consumption of mass culture reaches into every element of life, and so “Lefebvre suggests workers no longer feel at home even when they're not working; they're no longer themselves at home, given that work at home, production and reproduction - the totality of daily life - have been subsumed, colonized, and invaded by exchange value.” (Merrifield, 2006: 11).

Now the problem for the common world, and the reason for its destruction in the modern age for Arendt, is that this emergent mass culture is “not held together by a consciousness of common interest” (Arendt, OT: 311). Instead it is premised upon “Social atomization and extreme individualization” (Arendt, OT: 316). Their ‘mass’ is based upon “sheer numbers” and not any conscious sense of common interest (Arendt, OT: 311); what Amartya Sen (2006) calls “[t]he appalling effects of the miniaturization of people” (Sen, 2006: xvi). Thus Arendt (HC) declares that under the remit of mass society, “the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them” (Arendt, HC: 53). This sounds very similar to the theory of the post-political where, in the case of contemporary democracy, “the disenchanting opinion spreads that there isn’t much to deliberate and that decisions make themselves” (Rancière 1999: viii quoted in Wilson and Swyngedouw 2015: 6).

It is worth mentioning, that when Arendt (OT) is referring to ‘sheer numbers’ without the consciousness of common interest, this is not necessarily to say that under mass society the subjects of interest are so disparate that people cannot interact - indeed the mass consumption of the news, television, and film media would decisively contradict this claim.

Instead the lack of conscious common interest can be understood as a situation where the interactions between people exist, but they lack the potential for *disagreement*. Subjects of interest, where disagreements should be expected, tend unconsciously towards consensus - even if this consensus is apathy. For example, in the case of different political parties, they necessarily have common interests (in welfare, security, education etc) but they will strongly disagree in their opinions on these subjects. If there was no disagreement, there would be no political parties. Therefore, the proliferation of consensus (and simultaneously the absence of disagreement) is an indication of the prevalence of mass society, and consequently the erasure of the public realm.

“The foreclosure of critique empties the public domain of debate and democratic contestation itself, so that debate becomes the exchange of views among the like-minded, and criticism, which ought to be central to any democracy, becomes a fugitive and suspect activity” (Butler, 2004: XX)

This has significant implications for the praxis of public space and its fabrication. For indeed, while potential spaces for appearance can exist in a mass society, a lack of conscious common interest - a lack of disagreement - means that people will not appear. Instead, the fabrications of mass culture are likely to dominate the mental and physical landscape; fabrications which, I will show, must therefore take on the forms of the private realm (based upon sameness and discrimination).

In the modern age, “society expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to “normalize” its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement” explains Arendt (Arendt, HC: 40). Behaviour, a term familiar when referring to animal activity, implies that actions are predictable and as such, conform to certain expectations. We have already shown how this is incompatible with the activity of action and the public realm. However, Arendt declares that “[t]he phenomenon of conformism is characteristic of the last stage of...modern development” (Arendt, HC: 40); the development of modern democracy.

Modern democracy, for Arendt, is a unique system of rule because “the natural strength of one common interest and one unanimous opinion is tremendously enforced by sheer

number, [and thus] actual rule exerted by one man, representing the common interest and the right opinion, could eventually be dispensed with" (Arendt, HC: 40)¹⁰. As such, mass society and the concept of consensus, takes the rule of modern democracy away from the 'one-man rule' of monarchies (Arendt, HC: 40) to a condition of 'rule by nobody' (Arendt, OV: 81). With such rule, the public realm of speech and action, containing both the potential for disagreement and for concert, can disappear. The previous systems of rule, where the appearance of individuals was necessary (or of a single individual in the case of a tyranny), ceases and instead a system of invisible bureaucracy can emerge (Arendt, OV).

"...the latest and perhaps most formidable form of... domination: bureaucracy or the rule of an intricate system of bureaus in which no men, neither one nor the best, neither the few nor the many, can be held responsible, and which could be properly called rule by Nobody" (Arendt, OV: 38)

Bureaucratic structures, irrespective of the political party which is in government, are usually regarded as *implements* of the government; expected to carry out their tasks using rational means and without contest. Any sense of a 'political debate' is understood to be an activity within government which occurs before the bureaucrats implement the conclusion of such political discussion. The bureaucracies are understood to use their resources to achieve the goals set by the government. A government may be contestable by citizens, as might the efficiency of the bureaucrats, but the rationale behind the work of bureaucracy is not; they are 'only doing their job'.

One could argue that in contemporary governments, the separation between the government and the bureaucracy is blurred. Often the government, while supposedly directing the activities of its bureaus, will also get advised and influenced by the 'experts' that are contained within them - experts who often stay in their posts across successive governments. Jacques Ranciere explains that under modern democracy, "What generally

¹⁰ Arendt's reference to 'one common interest' is not necessarily a contradiction to her statement in *On Totalitarianism* that mass society is "not held together by a consciousness of common interest" (Arendt, OT: 311). The mention of 'consciousness' is key. I have already argued that common interest requires the potential for disagreement (which cannot happen without consciousness). If common interest occurs alongside unanimous opinion (as Arendt states) then there is no potential for disagreement. Thus the 'one common interest' referred to here is different - maybe a clearer description would be 'one same interest'.

goes by the name of politics is...the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution” (Rancière quoted in May, 2008: 40). The government and the bureaucrats together establish an organisational structure; both bureaucrats and members of the government are doing a ‘job’. Ranciere proposes “to give this system of distribution and legitimization another name...the *police*” (Rancière quoted in May, 2008: 40). The result being, under modern bureaucratic democracy, that those who work in state bureaus *and* those who work in government, increasingly come to see themselves as cogs in a machine, just ‘doing their job’. A job, not to contest and disrupt the bureaucratic machine, but to ensure that it functions effectively and efficiently.

The ‘machine’, for Arendt, is a key metaphor underlying modern bureaucratic government (Arendt, HC, OV). The bureaucratic ‘machine’ becomes the ruler of mass society, and as such fits the description of “rule by Nobody” (Arendt, OV: 38). This scenario is shown to be particularly dangerous by Arendt in her work *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Arendt, EIJ). Today, for Arendt, this ‘machine’ is allowed to continue because of an uncontested belief, across society, in instrumental rationality. Drawing inspiration from evolutionary sciences and Darwinist social theory, Arendt (OT) suggests that adherents to modernity expect all aspects of human life to be explained by logical and rational means. Believing in their ability to both explain and understand human wants, needs and motivations, the rational ideology expects to be able to create structures for the correct management and facilitation of mass society.

For Arendt, the error of instrumental rationality in bureaucratic government, can be seen in trying to make sense of the horrors of totalitarianism. In *Essays in Understanding* Arendt explains how “The gas chambers did not benefit anybody”, and thus any claim to understand the horrors of totalitarianism through rationality will fall short (Fine, 2001: 103). If no-one benefitted from the horror, there could be no rational explanation for it. Rationality completely fails when confronted with evil acts. What we are dealing with is actually “something...that does not fit within the rubric of instrumental rationality” (Fine, 2001: 103). Thus Arendt tried to make the argument that instead of looking for a reason or motivation to explain actions, we should assume that at all times anything could become permitted in human society (Fine, 2001: 104). We should not leave the interpretation of the human world to ‘experts’ who try and interpret the world purely through rationality, and consequently ‘stop thinking’ ourselves. The danger for the public realm under mass

society and bureaucratic government may not necessarily be that people *cannot* be seen and heard in public, but that masses may *choose not* to appear, leaving the public realm to expert opinion and bureaucratic fabrication.

I have already discussed how fabricating a world for use - to meet the wants and needs of the human as *animal laborens* - is destructive of the public realm and for the praxis of public space. Fabrications for use contain the quality of durability, but in themselves they are futile. Only the pursuit of fabricating uniqueness has been shown to have meaning and worth; through the pursuit of immortalising action. The instrumental rationality of bureaucracy, under the knowledge of its 'experts', necessarily pursues rational objectives towards meeting the wants and needs of its subjects based upon their sameness. There is no room for the unpredictable and endless consequences of action, nor for the fabrication of unique objects that it requires. Therefore, the mass public realm has "become overwhelmed by what [Arendt] calls the 'life process'" (Swift, 2013: 359). The consequence of this, for the individual who is necessarily unique, is a condition of loneliness. A condition that, under modern bureaucracy, has become *mass* loneliness.

Loneliness in mass society can be understood to result from the weight of consensus. As the consensus of opinion dominates the public sphere, the uniqueness of one's self becomes an obstacle. As such, to hide their uniqueness, "men have become entirely private...They are all imprisoned in the subjectivity of their own singular experience" (Arendt, HC: 58). King (2013) explains that this form of loneliness is "the extreme state in which one loses the capacity for that inner dialogue and loses the self *and* the world" (King, 2013: 37). As mass society requires that one 'fits in' to the mould, any differences you exhibit must be kept hidden from public. In her discussion on being Jewish in Germany in the 1930s, Arendt (WR) explains this condition of loneliness and hiding necessary for mass society; "The less we are free to decide who we are or to live as we like, the more we try to put up a front, to hide the facts, and to play roles" (Arendt, WR: 115). As difference (or uniqueness) is a condition of being human, this means that all people under mass society must retreat into a lonely state of hiding (Arendt, HC). Thus it is the existence of consensus that also makes mass loneliness a condition of the modern age.

A few examples from Geography show a correlation between loneliness and the decline in the praxis of public space. Looking at the "moral dimension of everyday life" in Leeds, UK,

Valentine and Harris (2014) have explored how a change in social values towards “the individualised ethic of self-interest” (Valentine and Harris, 2014: 84) has had significant impact on the encounters that people have in public spaces. Encounters in the everyday public realm are becoming less meaningful (Valentine, 2008). Similarly, Pinkster (2007) in her study of social mobility in the Netherlands, has shown that “[d]espite the importance of local contacts in the social life of individual residents, there is a considerable lack of social cohesion at the neighbourhood level... Indeed, public life seems to be delineated by anonymity” (Pinkster, 2007: 2594). And furthermore, Goss (1993) in an older article on shopping malls, quotes Kroker *et al.* (1989) on the experience of being in these spaces; “lonely people, caught like whirling flotsam in a force field which they don’t understand, but which fascinates with the coldness of its brilliance” (Kroker *et al.* 1989: 210). While the psychological and sociological impacts of mass loneliness are beyond the scope of this study (such enquiry can be found in Reisman *et al.*’s (1969) *The Lonely Crowd*), it is apparent that loneliness relates directly to the praxis of public space. Mass loneliness, it would appear, seems to emerge simultaneously with the decline in public space under the system of bureaucratic government and mass society.

From the macro-level growth of a bureaucratic system of government on one hand, to the micro-level emergence of mass loneliness on the other, one can argue that the contemporary system of rule has built a situation where the activities of the private realm - meeting the “obscure necessities of the household” and pursuing the lonely “dark desires of the heart” (Arendt, OR: 126) - are the sole fabrications to emerge in public. Public space as praxis under bureaucratic democracies will diminish as appearances in public become performances of mass consensus. There is no action to memorialise and immortalise in fabrication. As a result, the traditional separation between the private and public realm appears disrupted. The macro-level of government, “what is normally described as ‘public’” (Owens, 2008: 979), has become increasingly interested in private activities, and the micro-level of the individual has seen the lonely rise in “the man who judge[s] and use[s] all public institutions by the yardstick of his private interests ...[from] the responsible citizen who [is] concerned with public affairs as the affairs of all” (Arendt, OT: 336).

Drawing on Arendt, Owens (2008) suggests that contemporary change in the private and public realms consists of a blurring in the boundaries between them, which in turn has led to “the emergence of a realm that can be called the ‘social’” (Owens, 2008: 980). The rise

of a social realm, and its role in changing the perception and conceptions of public life, is therefore, a necessary turn for this theoretical enquiry. However, before embarking on this new direction, it is worth reminding ourselves that Arendt saw, despite the rise of the social realm, an unending capacity in people “of going *beyond* mindlessly applying the rules and blindly following the standards” (Dikeç, 2015: 21, emphasis added). The dominance of bureaucratic governments, the prevalence of mass consensus, and the rise of the social realm does not necessarily signal the end of public life, as I explain in the following chapter.

4. The Social Realm, Segregation and 'Publicness'

The rise of the social realm, Arendt (OR) argued, came from a change in status of the public and private realms under modern democratic bureaucracies. I have suggested that this rise signaled a decline in public space as praxis, and has led to the dominance of fabricating objects for use in today's world. In the argument that follows I will explore in more detail what the 'rise of the social' entails; including the dissolving of politics, the pursuit of wealth, the changing role of privacy, and the rapid emergence of 'identity politics'. This will open a discussion of, what Arendt calls, 'The Social Question', and enables us to explore a contemporary condition that has been coined the 'post-political'. This will therefore provide greater foundation to the claims of a declining public realm today.

Despite this foundation, I will also consider some criticisms of Arendt, aimed at her insistence on separating the social and the political realms in the contemporary setting. These criticisms will suggest that a rise in the social realm does not necessarily spell the decline in the public realm, and indeed the two can exist simultaneously. Then, to end this section, I will offer a counter argument to Arendt's critics, in turn preparing the way for a discussion of segregated communities in today's world.

4(1). - The rise of the Social Realm

Arendt explains that the social realm is "that curious and somewhat hybrid realm which the modern age interjected between the older and more genuine realms of the public or political on one side and the private on the other" (Arendt, OR: 113). I have already suggested that this realm appears when the distinction between the public and private realms dissolves as the result of "the emergence of mass society" in the modern world (Arendt, HC: 41). However, I have not developed details of what such a realm might contain - including what activities will be found in this realm - and, furthermore, I have not offered any explanation why it might be necessary to consider the 'social' as a separate realm from the public and private realms which have been in existence since antiquity.

While Arendt (OR, 1959) has suggested that the social realm emerged with modernity, she

also concedes that “[m]an [sic] is a social animal” (Arendt, WR: 116). As such we can assume that the social realm is not a new realm, unique to modernity, but instead its prominence, its rise, is the feature that defines it in the modern age. For Arendt this rise has created a previously unknown difficulty in understanding “the decisive division between the public and private realms...between activities related to a common world and those related to the maintenance of life” (Arendt, HC: 28).

If the human is a social ‘animal’, this implies that there is something ‘innate’ about being social. Indeed, as shown in the discussion of the *animal laborens*, an innate quality suggests an animal-like characteristic, and draws attention to the underlying condition of each person’s sameness as a member of the species. Such sameness is also a distinguishing feature of something that is non-political; i.e. something that pursues a private need. Framing the social realm as ‘pursuing a need’, we can correlate it with the private realm of labour. However, in contrast to labour - which does not require the existence of others - society is necessarily dependent on the existence of others. As such the social realm is also similar to the public realm. So if it is both similar and contrasting to the public and private realms, what are its distinguishing features?

The first distinguishing feature of the social realm is when a group of people hold an understanding that there is no necessity for them to ever engage in politics. Wilson and Swyngedouw (2015) explain this as a situation where “‘The people’ - as a potentially disruptive political collective - is replaced by the population - the aggregated object of opinion polls, surveillance, and bio-political optimisation” (Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2015: 6). A population, whether the subjects of a bureaucracy or mass society, turn away from the disruptive interactions in the public realm, leaving any common interests in the hands of bureaucratic ‘experts’, to instead spend their time socialising.

The second distinguishing feature of the social realm, is the turn towards meeting wants and needs through wealth and abundance; the turn to economics. According to Arendt, concerns with pursuing wants and needs can occur completely outside of political debate. Indeed, she claims, that while “liberation may be the condition of freedom [it] by no means leads automatically to it” (Arendt, OR: 19). Once a population is liberated from poverty, this pursuit is no longer political. The social realm, for Arendt, is witnessed when this pursuit continues in the form of abundance and social wants; a pursuit that sees “life [as] the

highest good” (Arendt, OR: 54). This establishes a situation where “[c]itizens become consumers, and elections are framed as just another ‘choice’, in which individuals privately select their preferred managers of the conditions of economic necessity” (Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2015: 6); a “shift from a public logic to a market logic” (Biesta, 2012: 685).

The third distinguishing feature of the rising social realm is the changed status of the private realm. Turning to the relations between the state and its citizens, Owens (2012) explains how under modern capitalism a “government was established as the means to the end of protecting ‘liberty’, national defence and private property” (Owens, 2012: 302). In a change from facilitating the existence of the public realm, the modern state becomes like the traditional head of a household (Owens, 2012); supporting the social unity of its subjects, and protecting their private well-being. Such a relationship is exemplified when the state sees its primary role as one of protecting, providing for, and disciplining its citizens. This can be appreciated most prominently today in the design and policing of contemporary Western cities (see Mitchell and Staeheli, 2006; Low, 2006), and is why Archer (1997) claims that today “cities have taken on many of the characteristics generally associated with theme parks” (Archer, 1997: 322)¹¹.

The notion of privacy has also changed through the emergence of the private individual in public market relations. With the rise of ‘modern individualism’ Arendt (HC) explains, “We no longer think primarily of deprivation when we use the word “privacy[]”” (Arendt, HC: 38). Instead the deprived private sphere is celebrated and, through the rise of the social realm, brought into public consciousness. Looking specifically at neoliberalism, Foucault (2008) considers how the private individual is no longer permitted to reside in their hidden private lives, but instead must become ‘enterprises’. Under the contemporary neoliberal world, the subject becomes the “entrepreneur of himself [sic]” (Foucault, 2008: 226). Where once one could separate one’s private life from the social gaze of one’s labour, now this life becomes part of one’s labour. Indeed, under neoliberalism Foucault (2008) argued that *all* elements of private life, including one’s physical body, become incorporated into market relations. In a similar way Harvey (2014) talks about the incorporation of ‘social reproduction’ under contemporary capitalism. Social reproduction, Harvey (2014) argues,

¹¹ One could argue that underlying the theme park is the intention to allow the individual to indulge in “the dark desires of the heart”, and meet whatever “obscure necessities” they might have (Arendt, OR: 126) - the pure elements of the private realm.

embodies the necessary interaction between capitalism and the messy nature of everyday life (Harvey, 2014: 189). Historically social reproduction - the reproduction of the labourer and the reproduction of everyday life - Harvey says, was met by “vast amount of unpaid labour...traditionally and even to this day being done by women” (Harvey, 2014: 189). However, under neoliberalism, Harvey (2014) explains, the cost of social reproduction has been pushed into the private hands of the individual. The non-monetary exchanges that used to happen across a variety of associations in everyday life, the things one called community, friends, family, have become part of market relations (Harvey, 2014). Under neoliberalism all private forms of associational living are under threat (Harvey, 2014: 191). This is a significant change in the private realm associated with the rise of the social realm.

The final feature of the social realm, is the emergence of what has been coined ‘identity politics’. Identity politics being the idea that belonging to some fixed classification (such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, etc.) can be harnessed by an individual to engage in political dialogue. From belonging to one of these classifications, one is supposedly able to fight against the inequality they face. There is an endless range of classifications through which people can belong to, and a rise in social interaction (especially today with the rise of social media) enables individuals to classify themselves in new and previously unfamiliar ways. The variety of classifications can then find a voice and appear in public as the result of collective actions by individuals belonging to them. However, drawing on Marquand (2004), Biesta (2012) explains that “the idea of identity politics” (Biesta, 2012: 685) threatens both the private and public spheres. “[T]he assumption that ‘the private self should be omni-competent and omnipresent’ has made deliberative politics of any sort ‘virtually impossible’” (Biesta, 2012: 685). Simply by belonging, one is assumed to be always ‘present’ as a political actor, and always already ‘competent’ in knowing the course that one’s political action must take. Turning this understanding to Ranciere’s notion of the police order, May (2008) thus explains that “[i]dentity politics does not undercut the operation of police order; it simply substitutes another police order for the one that is being rejected... [I]dentity politics does not declassify; it reclassifies” (May 2008: 70). Identity politics does not provide the individual with the opportunity, as Arendt explains (Arendt, HC), to appear among others to show *who* one is. Identity politics merely fixes one in the social realm based upon *what* one is. This is why Honig (1995) says that Arendt “theorizes a democratic politics built not on already existing identities or shared experiences but on contingent sites of principled coalescence and shared practices of

citizenship” (Honig, 1995: 3).

For Arendt, the existence of identity-based social groupings, based upon “natural and always present differences and differentiations” (Arendt, OT: 301) - such as the religious identity of the Jewish people (see Arendt, OT) - is entirely ‘legitimate’ for the social realm (Arendt, 1959). However, like the other elements of the social realm, fixed identities are necessarily *not* political. The public realm must not be affected by the fixed identities that people have in the social realm (Arendt, 1959). The public realm must be built upon equality of all who appear, and the potential uniqueness of each appearance. The notion of identity politics therefore is a contradiction in terms. Identity - in its fixed form - should be “confined within the social sphere, where it is legitimate, and prevent its trespassing on the political and the personal sphere, where it is destructive” (Arendt, 1959: 51).

4(2). - The Post-Political Condition

The combination of turning away from politics towards needs, the change in status and understanding of privacy, and the emergence of identity politics, raises for Arendt (OR) “the social question”. This is a question of whether there is a ‘general will’, a ‘public opinion’, that can dispense with the traditional public realm. Indeed, if such a thing were real, then one could readily turn away from politics, assimilate private and public life, and elevate the status of identity. However, for Arendt such a notion would have to be premised upon the “existence of poverty” and the “absolute dictate of necessity” (Arendt, OR: 50). It is only in our needs, revealed most acutely under conditions of poverty, that we can experience any sense of a ‘general will’; i.e. the will to live.

As I have already shown, the pursuit of necessity is not political in and of itself according to Arendt (OR). As such the social question alone is, likewise, not political. Facing poverty and a struggle to meet our needs, we can turn to politics to change our situation. However, we could, likewise, turn to other actions, even violence. Irrespective of the means, the ends - the escape from poverty - can be met in any way. Therefore, Arendt (OR) demands that the social question “not be equated with the lack of equality of opportunity or the problem of social status” (Arendt, OR: 62). Instead the social question should in fact be a question of whether political appearance and disagreement is permitted to occur, or whether the social notion of a ‘general will’ denies it.

The question of a 'general will' dominating public life, through both state structures and dominant social voices, alongside the disappearance of political disagreements, is seen as a result of the rise of the social by Arendt (OR). This same situation has also been coined the phrase 'the post-political' by others, although they reach this point through a different logic (see Allmendinger and Haughton 2011; Clarke and Cochrane 2013; Crouch 2004; Goeminne 2012; Merrifield 2015; Raco and Lin 2012; Rancière 1999; Schlembach *et al.*, 2012; Swyngedouw 2007, 2010, 2011; Williams and Booth 2013; Wilson 2013; Žižek 1999). While each of these authors has a slightly different account and use of the term, according to Wilson and Swyngedouw (2015), the meaning of the 'post-political' "refer[s] to a situation in which the political - understood as a space of contestation and agnostic engagement - is increasingly colonised by politics - understood as technocratic mechanisms and consensual procedures that operate within an unquestioned framework of representative democracy, free market economics, and cosmopolitan liberalism" (Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2015: 6). Across the 'post-political' literature one can chart this situation coming from changing forms of governance perpetuating the dominance of neoliberal economic ideals, alongside a general political apathy in the last century.

As shown already, the rise in Western democracy has led to a loss of the public realm and the emergence of a mass society containing "large numbers of neutral, politically indifferent people who never join a party and hardly ever go to the polls" (Arendt, OT: 311). Despite originally writing this in 1951, Arendt's words are echoed today by Wilson and Swyngedouw (2015) when they reveal that the 'post-political' condition hosts widespread "political apathy for mainstream parties and politics, and for the ritualised choreographies of representative electoral procedures" (Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2015: 3). This apathy, according to Žižek (2009), emerges out of dominant voices encouraging citizens of the state to have blind and hopeless cynicism. Cynicism of politics, and cynicism of economic alternatives, that help to leave the status quo unchallenged; there is no obvious chance of anything else (Žižek, 2009).

Reading Arendt on the rise of the social realm (Arendt, HC) and the social question (Arendt, OR), evidently provides an interesting way of interpreting the 'post-political' era. Unlike many authors on the 'post-political' however, Arendt seems to explain the post-political era as the result of the rise and dominance of 'social' concerns; concerns predicated on

human needs. This argument has made Arendt's work unique, yet it has also meant that she is met with criticism. What follows is a consideration of some of these criticisms, and offer of a retort that, when approached from a specific angle, emphasises the continued relevance of Arendt's work.

4(3). - Criticism of Arendt's Apolitical Social Realm

The first criticism levelled at Arendt is the separation she makes between the social realm and the political realm. While sharing with Arendt an "understanding of politics as a matter of appearance" (Dikeç, 2013: 83), Rancière (2003 in Dikeç 2015: 53) on the contrary, says that politics should never be partitioned from the social realm. According to Dikeç (2013), Rancière disagreed with "Arendt's implicit commitment to political capacity as a given quality or destination" (Dikeç, 2013: 83). Rancière (2001 in Dikeç 2013) implies that there is no justification for the "realm of political life...[to be] different and distinct from...the realm of economic and social necessity" (Dikeç, 2013: 83). Creating such a distinction is instead a theoretical way of 'purifying' politics, making for "another form of policing politics" (Dikeç, 2013: 83) that declares true politics to be beyond the reach of those forced to exist only in the social realm of economic and social necessity. May (2008) says that if we are to seek "[a] progressive politics [we] must...take issue with the current hierarchies in place in a society. Whether those hierarchies are economic, political, or social, a progressive politics argues that they are unjust and must be changed." (May 2008: 60-61).

The second criticism of Arendt is her problematic distinction between the private and the public realms. One of the obvious reasons for this criticism is because of its apparent opposition to Feminist critical theory. A major achievement of feminist geography in the 20th Century has been breaking the tradition of seeing private and public space as distinct. The former distinction was premised around "private spaces [being] associated with the home and designated feminine, whereas public spaces...[were] determined as masculine" (Dowler and Sharp, 2001: 173). Gillian Rose (1993) goes as far to say that the gendered divide between public and private spaces is "one of the most oppressive aspects of everyday spaces" (Rose, 1993: 17 quoted in Reid, 2008: 491). Therefore, by reinforcing the necessity of distinct private and public realms, Arendt has been criticised for her

'masculine' conception of politics; politics as an activity belonging only in the public realm (see Brown, 1998; O'Brien, 1981; Moore, 1994; Pitkin, 1981; Rich, 1979).

Another way that Arendt's public/private distinction is criticised comes from the emerging field of 'biopolitics'. Championed by the work of Michel Foucault (1998), the notion of biopolitics demands that the realm of politics is removed from its elevated status among elites and state apparatus', and instead acknowledges its residence within the body and everyday lives of all citizens. "By cutting off the King's head in political theory, Foucault (2004) not only revealed the locus and scope of power inequalities beyond the state, he also problematised power's relation to politics" (Van Puymbroeck and Oosterlynck, 2015: 88). Feldman (1991), in his book on violence in Northern Ireland, draws on this concept of biopolitics to say succinctly "the body is a central medium of the political instant" (Feldman, 1991: 8). Obviously this account seems contrary to Arendt. The body would seem to be the most private element of one's life. Indeed, the activity belonging to the private realm for Arendt, labour, is premised upon meeting the biological needs of the body (Arendt, HC). If politics, the activity associated with the public realm for Arendt (HC), resides in the private body, then her distinction between the two realms and her reproach of the rising social realm might appear lacking at best, and at worse, simply false.

The above criticisms deem Arendt's attempt to define a distinction between the realms of public, private, and social a misguided (and outdated) enterprise. Instead, it is argued that the notion of politics finds its existence within and across the traditional realms of public and private space, and through the growing social and economic realms. Authors such as Foucault and Rancière attempt to broaden the concept of politics, whereas Arendt seems to limit it. This does not mean that critiques of Arendt meet at a consensus. Indeed, while Rancière agreed with Foucault's broadening of politics into everyday power relations, he was critical of the idea that something is political simply because power relations are involved (Van Puymbroeck and Oosterlynck, 2015). Instead Rancière saw power relations making politics only "whenever a part of those who have no part asserts its presence, as the embodiment of the universal principle of equality" (Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2015: 12). Nonetheless the realm of politics, whether embodying all power relations or the presence of a part who have no part, is premised upon the ability of politics to traverse the traditional realms of public, private and social.

When looking for how to address these criticisms and move forward with Arendt's thinking, it would be tempting to agree with these criticisms and find a way to adapt Arendt's accepted ideas on appearance, action and plurality; in the process neglecting the problematic distinctions between the public, private and social realms. However, Benhabib (2003) rightly claims that "the political qualities of distinguishing sharply and precisely between the public good, and the personal sphere are extremely important for Arendt" (Benhabib, 2003: 12). Indeed, I would argue that the distinction between these realms is a fundamental lynchpin around which much of her work, in particular *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC) and *On Revolution* (Arendt, OR), rests. At the centre of her work *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC), Arendt claims that she is addressing "the extraordinary difficulty with which we...understand the decisive division between the public and private realms...[and] between activities related to a common world and those related to the maintenance of life" (Arendt, HC: 28). The distinctions between private and public, and between public (the common world) and social (the maintenance of life), are not tentative conclusions in Arendt's work. They are decisive points that she wishes to address. In what follows therefore, I offer an interpretation of Arendt that simultaneously maintains a commitment to these realms, and acknowledges the above criticisms.

First of all, with regards to the public and the social realms, Arendt says that "misunderstanding and equating the political and social realms is as old as the translation of Greek terms into Latin and their adaption to Roman-Christian thought" (Arendt, HC: 28). The result of this being that in the world today the two realms "constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting stream of the life process itself" (Arendt, HC: 33). For Arendt the public realm is a realm "based on the law of equality" (Arendt, OT: 301), closely linked to the activity of action, which cannot be inhabited by the activities of labour (Arendt, HC). This realm is understood to require a 'space of appearance' which people necessarily step into from their hidden private lives. In contrast, the social realm was defined by its proximity to the life process, and the way that private lives and public appearances merged into one to become, like identity politics, a condition from which one cannot choose and cannot escape. The only similarity that Arendt seems to find in the social and the public realms is that they can be "common to all of us" (Arendt, HC: 52). Yet this commonality is spatial in the public realm - i.e. in the form of a "common world" - whereas the commonality in the social realm is that of needs - i.e. the sameness of the species.

The criticism that says the public and social realms can actually be intertwined and indeed, that there is no clear distinction between politics and necessity seems to be incompatible with Arendt's distinctions. However, Dikeç (2015) offers an alternative interpretation of Arendt that alters this conclusion. In Arendt's separation of public and social, Dikeç (2015) claims, she didn't deny the importance of necessity. Instead her project was to seek something beyond this (Arendt, 1977: 106). "[M]aterial issues are not excluded from [Arendt's] understanding, but they do not form the logic of action and politics as she wants to keep the focus on exposure in the public realm as the embodiment of freedom" (Dikeç, 2015: 54). Thus "Worldly concerns and interests...are not excluded from Arendt's conception of action and politics" (Dikeç, 2015: 57), they are simply not *necessary* for there to be action and politics. Arendt sees the activity of action alone as the activity of politics. Yet, within a common world and faced by common challenges (meeting our needs in the life process), it is extremely likely that much of our political dialogues will centre around these things. The world of needs is often the 'table' around which we discuss (Dikeç, 2015). Taking Arendt in this way, the distinction between the public realm and the social realm can be understood as a theoretical point. In contrast, the physical manifestation of these realms does not necessarily require distinction.

The second criticism to address is Arendt's separation of the public and private realms. Arendt claims that there is a "necessary" distinction between the private and the public (Arendt, 1977: 103). She says "the private and the public, must be considered separately, for the aims and chief concerns in each case are different" (Arendt, 1977: 103-104). Previously I have discussed at length the different aims and concerns associated with these respective realms. Of particular note Arendt claims that the private realm needs "security and a place of one's own shielded from the claims of the public [whereas]...[w]hat is necessary for the public realm is that it be shielded from the private interests" (Arendt 1977: 108). It seems unequivocal that for Arendt these two realms cannot intersect.

The criticism from Feminist critical theory and the field of biopolitics - that separating the realms ignores the necessary power relations involved - is primarily based upon a quest for relocating politics. In this sense the criticisms leveled at Arendt necessarily take her notions of the public realm and the private realm to be equivalent to public space and private space. Indeed, focusing on the spatiality of a public realm, Villa (1997) called her concept a

“hypermasculinist” notion of public space (Villa, 1997: 199). However, the majority of Arendt’s use of the notion of a *realm* avoids asserting any spatial specificities. In fact, for Arendt the public realm has no spatiality as it is always only a potential (Arendt, 1998: 199). In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (2009) Arendt states “[t]he division between private and public or social life had nothing to do with the justified separation between the personal and public spheres” (Arendt, OT: 336). Elsewhere she also states that “It should be clear that my distinction between private and public depends on the locality where a person moves” (Arendt, 1977: 104). What I read from this is that the material spatiality of the different realms, as they occur in specific temporal moments, are necessarily contingent. The public realm can become apparent in spaces traditionally associated with the private, such as the household, while the private realm can emerge in spaces traditionally seen to be public, such as the market. Therefore, by opening the potential spaces of the public and the private - which can indeed be the same spaces - this criticism of Arendt can be addressed. For Arendt the importance lies in the distinction of the concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’. Their spatiality can intersect, but if their concerns converge then she fears that this spells the destruction of politics, and the ultimate collapse of freedom (Arendt, HC).

This defence of Arendt, and the preceding exploration into the rise of the social realm in contemporary bureaucratic democracy, has shown the important changes that can be witnessed in the praxis of public space today. It has been shown that politics today has tended to dissolve in favour of the pursuit of needs, that the role of privacy and identity has changed significantly, and that important questions about a ‘post-political’ era must be considered. Furthermore, it has been shown that the distinctions between public, private, and social realms, as Arendt defined them, are in need of re-consideration. With this reconsideration, it has also been acknowledged that an interaction between physical spaces and conceptual realms would benefit from further enquiry; not least to re-assert Arendt’s relevance, but also to address some of her critics. With this in mind, I turn in the following section, to the existence of segregation in contemporary society. Segregated urban settlements can be seen to bring physical spatial settings into dialogue with the conceptual public, private and social realms.

4(4). - Discrimination and Segregation: Privacy or Publicity

There is an extensive history and breadth of engagement by Geographers with the notion of segregation and its impacts in the contemporary world. The notion has been used to explore residential patterns in urban areas (from Robert Park in the 1950s to Mugnano and Palvarini in 2013), inequality and the influence of powerful institutions (see Amin, 2005; Bolt and van Kempen, 2013; Gale, 2013; Kleinmans, 2004; Nightingale, 2012; Peach, 1996; Talen, 2002; Waters, 1997), the everyday activities of groups in society (Raanan and Shoval, 2014), and to highlight human encounters across a great variety of identity indicators from race and ethnicity, to class and wealth (Valentine and Waite, 2012; Valentine, 2008; Massey and Denton, 1993; Amin, 2002). Across much of the most recent literature on segregation, it is acknowledged that segregation is not merely a physical phenomenon, but an enactment of "socio-spatial inequalities and the insecurities [such inequalities] breed" (Valentine, 2008: 323). Indeed, according to Valentine (2008) the existence of segregation is never "free from history, material conditions, and power" (ibid: 333). As such, she has developed the notion of a Geography of 'encounter'; where everyday spatial negotiations and daily encounters with one another emerge as valuable indicators of segregation (see Valentine, 2008; Valentine and Waite, 2012).

Looking at the everyday brings the notion of segregation in line with our understanding of praxis and public space. Acknowledging that everyday segregation in urban spaces has an impact on how we encounter and interact with one another, evidently also impacts the public appearances we can have, and the opportunities which can be found for plurality. Everyday segregation and the shifting forms of our encounters is thus intrinsically linked to the status of contemporary urban public space. Valentine (2008) also suggests that, despite people being polite and friendly to one another in individual meetings in urban spaces, people are also often hiding their feelings of resentment towards one another; in essence, reinforcing lines of segregation through encounters. As such Valentine (2008) criticises the romanticism of urban encounters. Valentine (2008) demands that studies into encounter and segregation explore instead, the notion of 'meaningful contact' - encounters across identity boundaries of individuals where discussion and debate are able to occur freely with respect rather than tolerance. In a similar vein, Amin (2002), with a specifically spatial

focus, has acknowledged the importance of meaningful encounters through spaces of *interdependence*. The notion of interdependence can be seen as the motivation for meaningful encounters where all subjects have a motivation to engage in active debate rather than passive politeness. Amin (2002) offers that such spaces might occur in sports clubs, community gardens or the workplaces shared by people across fault lines of identity in the urban setting.

As a consideration of meaningful urban encounters, or as the location of everyday interdependence between urban dwellers, segregation, as a concept, seems to be premised upon both, the *separation* between different identifiable groups within society, and upon their *proximity* in encounters. Separation and proximity will necessarily impact upon the interactions and opportunities for public appearance, for public encounter, that individuals in a segregated space will have. These impacts will be felt in both the public realm - as the opportunities for plural dialogue is restricted - and the private realm - where the realm is extended by exclusive lifestyles and spaces which are routinely shared by members within a segregated community. What segregation seems to do is to disrupt the traditional spatial manifestation of Arendt's conceptual realms - private, public and social realms. I now turn to Hannah Arendt, and her discussions on and around the concept of segregation. This will develop my enquiry into the geography of segregation, and will add necessary clarity to the link between Arendt's realms - private, public, and social - and their spatial manifestation; important for my investigation into public space as praxis.

4(5). - Arendt on Segregation

Despite spending much of her life living and writing in the USA, Arendt rarely addressed the prominent debates on segregation and civil rights that dominated many political and academic circles at the time. One exception to this was her article written for *Dissent* magazine in 1959 titled *Reflections on Little Rock* (Arendt, 1959). This publication was one of the most controversial of Arendt's works (Owens, 2012), leading to outcries by many academics and outright rejection by others (for examples see Duran, 2009; and Burroughs, 2015). Indeed, the original article was published with a foreword from the editor that claimed "We publish [Arendt's article] not because we agree with it - quite the contrary! - but because we believe in freedom of expression even for views that seem to us entirely mistaken" (Arendt, 1959: 45). Despite these rejections, there has been some recent

interest in re-thinking Arendt's discussion of segregation (see Hinze, 2009; Cole, 2011; and Morey, 2014). With this in mind, I will now open up a discussion on *Reflections on Little Rock* (Arendt, 1959), and consider how this article, in conjunction with some of Arendt's other work (Arendt, HC, and Arendt, OT), tackles the concept of segregation. I will then attempt to bring a nuanced understanding of Arendt on segregation, showing her argument to be consistent, and relevant, to her wider academic project. This will lead me to a position where I can place segregation at the centre of my enquiry into public space as praxis.

In *Reflections on Little Rock* (Arendt, 1959), Arendt discussed the events at Little Rock High School, Arkansas, in 1957 where nine African American students enrolled for the first time after the policy on racial segregation in schools was abolished. Arendt (1959: 50) argued that removing segregation laws did not mean that equality would necessarily result in American society. What she was emphasising was that equality, as she understood it, is a condition that is only found as a consequence of appearing in the public realm. The removal of segregation laws alone does nothing to alter the existence of such a public realm. Instead, Arendt suggests that the rise of the social realm in the modern age actually creates further segregation and discrimination. This, she argues, is because discrimination is the "innermost principle" of the social realm (Arendt, 1959: 51).

Arendt declares discrimination to be a principle of the social realm is because, whenever an individual enters this realm they are either driven by "the need to earn a living or attracted by the desire to follow [their] vocation or enticed by the pleasure of company, and once [they] have entered it, [they] become subject to the old adage of "like attracts like" which control the whole realm of society in the innumerable variety of its groups and associations" (Arendt, 1969: 51)¹². In other words, because she defines the social realm to be a realm that facilitates encounters between people on account of their private wants and needs, such encounters are necessarily made manifest by the selective associations of those who enter it. In social life people choose to frequent certain spaces (bars, clubs,

¹² The idea of segregation being based upon 'like attracts like' seems to place Arendt firmly in the Chicago School of thought on segregation. Such a suggestion is very problematic because it seems to ignore the power relations that have been shown to have a strong correlation with segregation. However, I feel it is still necessary to consider the suggestion that 'like attracts like' when it comes to the association of people in social spaces. Power relations will play a part as well, but this does not mean that 'free association' is a void concept.

restaurants, religious buildings), and choose to associate with whomever they want. Indeed, Arendt (1959) says that “without discrimination of some sort, society would simply cease to exist and very important possibilities of free association and group formation would disappear” (Arendt, 1959: 51). Interestingly, this acceptance of social differentiation and segregation brings Arendt into proximity once again with Lefebvre (UR) and his criticism of the homogenising tendencies of contemporary capitalist urbanism;

“The affirmation of difference can include...ethnic, linguistic, local, and regional particularities... Inevitably, conflicts will arise between [these] differences and particularities, just as there are conflicts between current interests and possibilities. Nonetheless the urban can be defined as a place where differences know one another and, through their mutual recognition, test one another, and in this way are strengthened or weakened. Attacks against the urban coldly and lightheartedly anticipate the disappearance of differences, which are often identified or confused with folkloric particularities. Industrial ideology, whether technocratic or individualistic, is homogenizing” (Lefebvre, UR: 96)

However, while discrimination is argued to be a part of the social realm, Arendt also argues that ‘exclusiveness’ is not a part of it. Instead, it is the private realm, “in which we move and live together with other people...[which] is ruled...by exclusiveness” (Arendt, 1959: 52). What this means is that, in the social spaces of free association, there is the necessary caveat that they are not closed spaces. Conceivably any individual can become part of a social grouping¹³, and likewise any individual can leave. However, the more restrictive entry or exit from a social group becomes, the more closed it appears and thus it becomes less social and more private; more exclusive. The social realm, manifest as an open social group, for Arendt (1959) depends not on “personal distinction but the difference by which people belong to certain groups whose very identifiability demands that they discriminate against other groups in the same domain” (Arendt, 1959: 51).

We can start to see that a specific social space or social grouping is not fixed within the social realm for Arendt. As a social group closes its breadth of association to become more

¹³ While some social groups are supposedly premised upon family lineage or fixed visible identification attributes, any social group can change these premises should they choose. The categorisation for belonging to a group is in the hands of the group.

exclusive, it simultaneously becomes more private. Likewise, as a social space opens up to the appearance of more individuals, becoming more equal, the more public it becomes. Thus for Arendt, as a space traverses a sense of exclusivity, discrimination, or equality, it likewise traverses the private, social, and public realms. I argue that the existence of each realm is not mutually exclusive, but represents a scale of discrimination, from exclusionary privacy (a deprived status) at one end to public equality at the other.

From this perspective one can consider the nature of segregation in contemporary society. Indeed, segregation takes a number of forms; from residential segregation to segregated everyday spaces, and across endless tropes of identity (race, ethnicity, religion, wealth, sexuality etc.). Under all of these forms of segregation we could therefore consider the breadth of association that groups and spaces hold, and consider the opportunities or restrictions that exist for widening these associations. Indeed, the different forms of segregation will represent different positions on the scale of discrimination. Residential segregation, the tendency for people of a certain grouping to be housed in proximity, would appear to tend towards exclusivity - because homes are most frequently associated with privacy. Whereas social segregation (in clubs, eateries, and leisure venues etc.) would appear to tend towards greater openness and equality - dependent on how welcoming they are to newcomers.

Arendt exemplifies this discussion in her consideration of the history of Jewish people in Europe from her work *On Totalitarianism* (Arendt, OT). Throughout their history of being in Europe, Arendt (OT) claims that the Jewish people were generally defined by the body politic as being outsiders. The segregation of the Jewish people she declared, made them socially unequal (Arendt, OT: 14). However, she explained that Jewish "social inequality was quite different from the inequality of the class system" (Arendt, OT: 14). This was to make the point that social discrimination of the Jews came as a result of them being a distinct group and not, as many anti-Semites tried to claim, because of their position in the class system (Arendt, OT). By being segregated, the Jewish social realm was necessarily distinct, and thus was necessarily socially discriminative and therefore socially discriminated themselves. However, Arendt declares that such discrimination alone is always "politically sterile" (Arendt, OT: 55).

Social discrimination for Arendt is the consequence of free association. However, political

discrimination is a tyrannical form of rule that attempts to eradicate differences - simultaneously ending both free association and free speech. This was the horror behind the Nazi regime, and is the fear that Arendt has of the rise of mass society. As I have already shown, mass society attempts to homogenise a population, based upon their sameness, and is doing so destroys the inevitable social differences and associations that exist between people. This is why she claims that mass society is “a danger to society as such” (Arendt, 1959: 51). In either circumstance, when the ability to freely associate in social spaces is reduced, or when the ability to freely appear in public is reduced, then “The less we are free...[and] the more we try to put up a front, to hide the facts, and to play roles” (Arendt, WR: 115); this was the reality of existence that Arendt experienced as a Jew in Germany.

On the other hand, Arendt was also prompted to state that in the Jewish case, an ignorance of “the political dangers of antisemitism, caused [Jews] to be oversensitive toward all forms of social discrimination” (Arendt, OT: 54). In itself this statement seems insensitive, however I would argue that Arendt is making an important theoretical point. She is highlighting that there is a tragic vulnerability faced by socially distinct groups when they are unable to distinguish between their political discrimination and their social discrimination. Political discrimination says that because of *what* you are, you cannot appear amongst others as free and unique; reducing you to ‘bare life’. Social discrimination says that because of *who* you are, you have chosen to associate in certain groups, and these associations have no bearing on your freedom to appear in public as an equal and unique person. This distinction is why Arendt says “discrimination is as indispensable a social right as equality is a political right” (Arendt, 1959: 51).

The existence of segregation therefore, has some interesting implications for public space as praxis. If segregation necessarily discriminates on the appearance of some people in segregated spaces, then there can be no completely public praxis to speak of in this realm. However, if we take the notion of a scale of discrimination, then it is possible to consider that the degree of openness within a segregated space - through opportunities of outsiders to appear and become a part of the space - will alter the degree of publicness that is possible. Segregated spaces can therefore offer elements of enhanced exclusivity - and thus privacy - as well as potentially offering elements of public appearance. I would tentatively suggest that it would be more appropriate to seek therefore, the ‘publicness’ of

praxis in social space.

Referring to the 'publicness' of praxis ends the problematic association of the public realm simply with a fixed space; a public space. Instead we can use Arendt's distinction of realms to find an *extent* to which a space of association (a social space) is more or less public. Using the concept of segregation is therefore a useful spatial concept because it emphasises the fact that spaces of association will necessarily vary in their affiliation to a distinct social group; from the privacy of residential segregation to the more public nature of everyday segregated streets, restaurants, and leisure venues. It is therefore important to now elaborate the private and public extents of different segregated spaces by drawing upon the segregation literature.

At one end of the scale just discussed, segregated social spaces can represent exclusive spaces, allowing social groups to reinforce their specific identity and develop their own consensus on public matters. If, as Arendt claims, every citizen should have the right to challenge society and prevailing customs - this is their private business (Arendt, 1959: 53) - then segregated social spaces can provide sanctuary for the expression of this private business. Such social spaces must necessarily be seen as proximate to the private realm, if not actually located within it. There are a number of different ways that the privacy of segregated spaces has been discussed in the literature. In what follows I have separated this literature into two themes; the appearance of private bodies in segregated spaces, and the private ownership of segregated social spaces.

The private nature of some segregated spaces is evident by the fact that the appearance of certain bodies - the most private realm of an individual - are immediately welcome or unwelcome. Looking at segregation and violence in Northern Ireland, Feldman (1991) says that "[i]f social space and body space continually predicate each other and if both are subjected to an ongoing reconstruction by violence, the notion of a stable relationship of agency to nomothetic social frames, such as class, ethnicity, or political ideology, becomes problematic" (Feldman, 1991: 4). In other words, as the body - the *what* you are, not the *who* - becomes relevant for the appearance in social space, then the agency of the person is lost, and as such the segregated space becomes private for those bodies that belong there. The relevance of the body in space in this way is also mentioned by Mitchell and Staeheli (2006) in their discussion of homelessness in 'public'. Here, in public owned

spaces¹⁴, the social space is segregated by the appropriateness of certain bodies appearing. Homeless individuals are seen as ‘problematic’ and as such redevelopers look for ways to exclude such bodies. The social space is thus segregated in such a way to become exclusive, and private.

The private body is also seen to establish exclusivity in segregated social spaces by authors engaging the concept of a ‘geography of encounter’ (including Valentine 2008; Valentine *et al.*, 2014; Raanan and Shoal 2014; and Amin 2012). Stating that there is an error in “the social [being] reduced to the communal” (Amin, 2012: 4), Amin (2012) criticises the dominant romanticised idea that physical and verbal contact in social spaces are the necessary means to break down differences in society. Instead it is argued by Valentine (2008) that meaningless contact of this nature more often hides the persistence of exclusive lives in segregated spaces. Meaningless physical and verbal contact in social spaces will mean that encounters with difference will be so brief that they are limited to *what* someone is. This makes segregated social spaces ‘tolerant’ of difference, but empty of any publicness - the appearance of *who* someone is. Such conclusions are made both by Raanan and Shoal (2014) in their discussion of women living in Jerusalem from different religious background, and by Valentine *et al.*, (2014) exploring families encountering difference in Leeds, UK and Warsaw, Poland.

Segregated social spaces can also be considered more exclusive, and more private, based upon the private ownership that has emerged in many such spaces. The development of private property rights in the last 200 years has expanded into many formerly publicly-owned spaces so that today many urban spaces today are mis-conceived as publicly-owned when in fact they are privately-owned (see Garrett’s article on Privately Owned Public Spaces for *The Guardian* in 2015). With this in mind, some authors have focused upon the development of ‘gated communities’ across the contemporary West. Harvey (2013) explains that “[t]he rich these days have the habit...of sealing themselves off in gated communities within which an exclusionary commons becomes defined” (Harvey, 2013: 71). Turning to gated communities in New York and New Jersey, Low (2006) shows how

¹⁴ I intentionally mention that Mitchell and Staeheli (2006) are referring to publicly owned spaces, as opposed to ‘public spaces’, in order to avoid confusion with the notion of ‘public space’ that I have developed in my argument thus far. In fact, I would argue that the publicly owned spaces that they often refer to, are more manifest as segregated social spaces.

throughout their history gated spaces have not only put up physical restriction to private residential homes, but also to the surrounding social spaces. As a result of neoliberal governance, Low (2006) explains that many areas have been made to feel afraid of strangers, and think that gating is necessary to protect themselves. In a similar way Mitchell and Staeheli (2006) explore the redevelopment programs of San Diego from the 1970s to the 2000s, and in particular the building of the Horton Plaza Mall. The authors declare that the building of this mall was like a fortified garrison to the outside world which “turned its back on the city” (Mitchell and Staeheli, 2006: 147) as part of a plan to keep ‘safe’ the users of the mall. With surveillance, architectural design and spatial regulations, the Mall was a completely segregated social space designed by the private owners of the space to be exclusive for certain users, and to guard against the entry of others.

Through these private and exclusive elements in contemporary social spaces, it is not surprising that Sen (2006) says “[t]he uniquely partitioned world is much more divisive than the universe of plural and diverse categories that shape the world in which we live” (*ibid.*: xiv). The partitioning of social spaces through either unwelcoming bodies, or through private ownership and exclusive access, is a divisive tendency that we can witness today, and does not fulfil any publicness in the praxis in social space. However, as already suggested, social spaces can also be considered from the opposite perspective; in which we can see ‘micro-public’(ness) in praxis.

Amin’s (2002) work on ‘micro-publics’ draws attention to interactive public life as always happening at the local level through boundary transgressions and everyday shared lives; what he refers to in another publication as the “everyday mingling in public space” (Amin, 2012: 9). While segregation does have a limiting impact on local public lives, it does not entirely preclude association and encounters across lines of segregation that inevitably happen when people from different identity tropes cross paths in their everyday lives. However, while acknowledging that such local level interactions across lines of segregation can become public, in the ‘micro-public’ sense, Valentine (2008) criticises any simple romanticism of this idea. Instead, turning to the behaviour of individuals across different identity strands appearing in social spaces, Valentine and Waite (2012) show how, despite holding certain views in private, people’s conduct in public often contradicts these beliefs. This suggests that everyday encounters at the local level often act as a cover, or facade, to one’s opinions. Such public interactions may not in fact be public in the sense of revealing

who you are. As for the publicness of praxis in social spaces, it is important to look at the everyday interactions that occur in social spaces and consider whether such interactions create “improved forms of intercultural understanding and respect” (Andersson et al, 2011: 618), or if in fact private feelings and beliefs are merely hidden under a charade of public behaviour; making the social space more private (and deprived).

There is evidently a potential publicness to the appearances across lines of segregation, while there is simultaneously a necessary importance in considering the nature of these appearances, and not taking interaction just at face-value. Sen (2006) makes a distinction between “multiculturalism” and a notion of “plural monoculturalism” (Sen, 2006: 156). He asks; “Does the existence of a diversity of cultures, which might pass each other like ships in the night, count as a successful case of multiculturalism?” (Sen, 2006: 156). If spatial segregation makes spatially exclusive lifestyles between different communities or cultures, the opportunity for meaningful encounters is diminished. If there are many distinct communities crossing paths yet do not create something new together out of shared interaction, there is no publicness - this is what Sen (2006) means by ‘plural monocultures’. Whereas if different communities have meaningful interactions, that don’t necessarily look to end segregation of differences, but seek something new from across their differences - this is what Sen (2006) means by multiculturalism. Multiculturalism amidst social segregation can lead to greater publicness in the praxis of social space.

For Arendt (HC) the ‘public’ “can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity” (Arendt, HC: 50). “[A]s soon as we begin to reduce plurality...we begin to eradicate the very conditions under which action is possible and freedom can appear” (Biesta, 2012: 689). I have shown that segregated spaces, based upon exclusivity, privacy, and meaningless interactions will fall short of such publicness. However, segregated spaces that remain open to change, based upon free associations, micro-publics, and meaningful encounters, can indeed fulfil a degree of publicness. Indeed, as I have shown, “[f]or Arendt [the public] is not so much a question of physical location as that it is about a particular quality of human togetherness which she characterises as ‘being together in the manner of speech and action’...In such terms the construction of public sphere can be understood as an ongoing process of ‘becoming public’.” (Biesta, 2012: 684). A segregated space can be considered as becoming public, or it can be considered as becoming more private/social. This, I feel, is the argument that Arendt (1959) is making in *Reflections on Little Rock*. It is

also this sense of 'becoming public' that makes segregated spaces so important for an exploration into the praxis of public space; through the 'publicness' of praxis in social space.

In this chapter I began with an understanding of public space as both praxis and potential, accompanied by a necessary, and destructive, fabrication. The contemporary fabrication - bureaucratic democracy - alongside the emergence of mass society and mass loneliness, has been shown to invoke the dominance of what Arendt (HC, OR) has called 'the social realm'. I have explored the idea of a social realm, and have developed its associated elements; relating it simultaneously to literature on the 'post-political' and Arendt's 'Social Question' (Arendt, OR). Questions and criticisms have also been considered of Arendt's work - in particular the separation between her three conceptual realms - and these were responded to with a unique take on Arendt; necessarily separating her 'realms' from spatial specificities. This approach has been elaborated through the example of contemporary segregation in Western societies, and exploring how social spaces can exhibit elements of both the public realm and the private realm, along a scale of discrimination. To this end, I propose a notion of the 'publicness' of praxis in social space, as a compliment to my thinking, and to add a necessary scalar element to this reconsideration of public space.

5. Violence and the Limits to Public Praxis

Biesta (2012) asks the question of Arendt; “what kinds of actions and relationships are actually possible in ‘public’ spaces”? (Biesta, 2012: 686). Indeed, reinforcing the need for this question, Wellmer (1997) states that even Arendt herself was “never able to explain what the content of genuine political action could be” (Wellmer, 1997: 37). Throughout my discussion on the praxis of public and social space thus far, I have also failed to provide many concrete ideas for the content of action befitting the public realm. This has however, been intentional. According to Arendt (HC), the common world necessary for the public realm is not dependent on the *particular* forms of common interest, but merely that some form of common interest exist. In a similar way, I would argue that the praxis of the public realm is not dependent upon certain forms of action, but merely that any action takes place in a form common to the plurality of people present. This does not mean that it is appropriate to leave the discussion of public praxis here. What it means is that, instead of pondering specific forms of speech and action, instead one should first consider what the limits of such activities might be. Indeed, by seeking to find activities that are *not* befitting of action, despite their apparent publicity, one can better grasp Arendt’s ‘faculty of action’ and public space as praxis.

I have already shown that the activities of speech and action have a requirement to be disruptive. As such, it is the idea of disruption through which I have chosen to seek the limits of action. With this in mind, I ask; are violent acts (necessarily disruptive) appropriate for speech and action, and for the praxis of public space? I will explore this question, focusing on the concept of violence, the relationship of speech and action to violence, and on the different ways that violence can be understood in relation to the space of appearance. Likewise, given the violation involved in the fabrication of speech and action, I will also consider the role that violence plays in the relationship between political praxis and its fabrication. This will ultimately lead me to answer to this question and, in the process, will offer a specific form of action around which the empirical section of this thesis can focus.

“I am inclined to think that much of the present glorification of violence is caused by severe frustration of the faculty of action in the modern world” (Arendt, OV: 83)

5(1). - Arendt on Violence and Violation

The enquiry of this section will draw heavily on Arendt once again, in particular her work *On Violence* (Arendt, OV), and also upon a range of other theorists who have made important contributions to the study of violence (e.g. Balibar, 2015; Benjamin, 2007; Butler, 2004; Feldman, 1991; Gregory and Pred, 2006; Loftus, 2015; Mitchell, 2003; Sen, 2006; Springer, 2012; Thrift, 2006; Tyner and Inwood, 2014; and Žižek, 2008). I will show the complexity of violence as a concept and the various ways it is understood. I will also explore how common usage of the concept is extremely problematic; a result of reducing violence to moments of physical aggression. I will conclude this enquiry with revelations of how the concept of violence is essential in understanding the limits to praxis, and the complex ways that disruption and violation are essential in giving public space both durability and meaning.

“Violence...has a geography and for this reason, geography must lie at the center of any discussion of violence” (Tyner and Inwood, 2014: 771).

The place to start an investigation of violence is the exploration of what the concept means, and the various interpretations that have been made of it. Doing this will meet Žižek’s (2008) demand that we “resist the fascination of subjective violence, of violence enacted by social agents, evil individuals, disciplined repressive apparatuses, fanatical crowds” (*ibid.*: 10), and instead stop and think about the underlying premises, and varying manifestations, of the concept. Similarly, Butler (2004) says that we must “let neither moral outrage nor public mourning become occasion for the muting of critical discourse and public debate on the meaning of historical events” (Butler, 2004: XIV).

It is true that “[o]n the surface, violence appears to be a simple concept: it is the act of doing harm, injury, or desecration through physical force” (Mitchell, 2003: 52). But, as Žižek (2008) describes, these are only the “obvious signals of violence” (Žižek, 2008: 1); the reality of violence is much “more complicated” (Mitchell, 2003: 52). Such complications, we will show, can come from “the ligatures between power, politics, and the production of public spheres” (Gregory and Pred, 2006: 3), the ambiguity of “politics when it is

confronted with violence” (Balibar, 2015: 1), “the resonances of violence within the now orthodox political economic model of neoliberalism” (Springer, 2012: 136), violence in the “dialectical process of abstraction” (Tyner *et al.*, 2014: 902) and even the “*biological structuring*” (Thrift, 2006: 274) that plays a part in making “violence...all but constant[] of human life” (Thrift 2006: 273). As such it is clear why Arendt stated;

“No one engaged in thought about history and politics can remain unaware of the enormous role violence has always played in human affairs” (Arendt, OV: 8)

However, accounting for the variety in interpretations of violence needs structuring to create some coherence. This way I will be able to reveal how each interpretation helps in understanding the relationship between praxis, public space, and violence. As such I have split the following chapter as follows. First there is a detailed discussion of the different ways that Arendt understands violence. This is followed by a discussion of violence as a split between subjective and objective violence. Then I develop the idea of violence as dialectic and as abstraction. This leads to a brief discussion of the agency behind subjective violence, before concluding with a discussion of disruption and the potential genesis of a new beginning.

I have already shown that the praxis of public space is dependent upon plurality; the fact that our actions are seen and our speech is heard in the public presence of others. This is why Arendt suggests that “*we cannot act in isolation*” (Biesta, 2012: 688). In *On Violence* (Arendt, OV), Arendt develops the idea of plurality and praxis further. She explains that the *amplitude* of praxis, of speaking and acting, can be enhanced through the concert¹⁵ of many speakers and actors. This idea of amplification of praxis is then the premise upon which Arendt develops her notion of ‘power’. “Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert” claims Arendt (Arendt, OV: 44). Thus, like the notion of public space as praxis, she claims “power always stands in need of numbers” (Arendt, OV: 42). The more people speaking and acting in concert, the greater the amplification of praxis; the greater the power. This is a very different way of conceiving power to the more familiar references to the concept as a noun; as a property belonging to a single entity, with some

¹⁵ Concert in this sense, I would argue, is referring to an action of mutual agreement. It requires the active participation of all involved (or at the very least consenting obedience). It cannot be equated with passive agreement; which we may call unquestioning obedience. This would not fulfil the amplification of speech and action.

kind of *dominion over* other entities. While Arendt concedes that the plurality of power is an unfamiliar conception, she argues that this re-defining is essential (Arendt, OV). This is because she was looking to make a clear distinction between the idea of power and the idea of violence. For Arendt, these two terms had, in recent times, started to develop a grammatical convergence, establishing “a kind of blindness to the realities they correspond to” (Arendt, OV: 43). Instead she claims “Power and violence are opposites” (Arendt, OV: 56).

In contrast to the plurality of power, Arendt explains that “violence...can manage without [others] because it relies on implements” (Arendt, OV: 42). Instead of the amplification of praxis through concert, violence seeks to stifle praxis through “unquestioning obedience” (Arendt, OV: 41). Taking both terms to their ultimate ends Arendt explains “The extreme form of power is All against One, the extreme form of violence is One against All” (Arendt, OV: 42). This makes violence an implement used by an individual, or a single body of unquestioning obedient people, to *force* others to act in certain ways, irrespective of their will or persuasion. As such violence is necessarily anti-political (Arendt, OR: 9).

However, Arendt is not simply making an argument for anti-violence, and in doing so neglecting “the enormous role violence has always played in human affairs” (Arendt, OV: 8). Instead, taking the instrumentality of violence and its anti-political foundation, Arendt actually argues that there *is* a justification for violence. A justification, however, that can only ever be found in the affairs of the private realm (Arendt, OR). Now, this assertion must be immediately met with some substantial caveats. First of all, Arendt says that while “Violence can be justifiable... it never will be legitimate” (Arendt, OV: 52). Thus Arendt establishes definite separation from Benjamin’s problematic proposition that there is an existing “distinction between legitimate and illegitimate violence” (Benjamin, 2007 [1955]: 279). Even violence fulfilling some justified end can never be posited as a legitimate means for Arendt.

So, what is Arendt referring to when she suggests justifiable violence? In *On Revolution* (Arendt, OR) Arendt implies that the only justification for violence is “the cause of necessity” (Arendt, OR: 106). Similarly, in *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC) Arendt states “Because all human beings are subject to necessity, they are entitled to violence towards others; violence is the prepolitical act of liberating oneself from the necessity of life for the

freedom of world" (Arendt, HC: 31). Necessity, it is worth re-iterating, is the sole motivation that Arendt sees behind the activity of labour (Arendt, HC). It is the necessity of finding food and water, of finding shelter and protection from nature, and ultimately of fulfilling our existence as *animal laborens*. Therefore, the only way that violence could be justified is in the 'struggle' for survival. As Kearns (2006) acknowledges, "Some may turn to violence as one of the few avenues of resistance open to them" (Kearns, 2006: 8). Yet even in the desperate struggle to survive, Arendt still maintains that violence is illegitimate.

It is also important to highlight that Arendt's justification for violence in the private *realm* is not a justification for violence in what we might regard as private *space*. The political movements against modern day slavery or against domestic violence are entirely legitimate under Arendt's argument, and the violence, against which they protest, is entirely unjustifiable. The private realm, as we have already shown, is the exclusive place of the individual where they indulge in "the dark desires of the heart" and meet whatever "obscure necessities" they might have (Arendt, OR: 126). While private spaces, such as the home, are regularly the location of this realm, they are not automatically equivalent.

In her discussions of the Ancient Greeks Arendt clarifies the violence of the private realm through a distinction between the *polis* and the *oikos*. The *oikos*, or the household, was the private realm where citizens met their needs of sustenance and reproduction. Greek understanding was that the life lived in private, struggling to meet these needs, was 'slavish' (Arendt, HC). The only way that a citizen could escape from the slavish life in private was to find a way to fulfil their needs without taking up all of their time, and then use their spare time to appear in the public, political realm. Such fulfilment of needs, Arendt revealed, was achieved at that time through violence and dominance by the head of the household; forcing slaves, women and children to labour on their behalf (Owens, 2012). "In Greek self-understanding, to force people by violence, to command rather than persuade, were prepolitical ways to deal with people characteristic of life outside the *polis*, of home and family life" (Arendt, HC: 26-27). In contrast, "the Greek *polis*...defined itself explicitly as a way of life that was based exclusively upon persuasion and not upon violence" (Arendt, OR: 2). However, Arendt (HC) is clear to explain that while for the Ancient Greeks the violence of the *oikos* was justifiable - there did not appear to be another way of meeting your needs at the time - it was not a legitimate use of violence. This is much more evident in the contemporary Western setting.

Violence of the *oikos* was seen to be justified by needs but, once needs were met, there was no further justification for violence¹⁶. In the contemporary West therefore, where the fulfillment of needs (not including wants or greed) of food and shelter does not require so much toil thanks to technology and machines, there is almost no justification for violence. Furthermore, with the different status of individuals in the contemporary West - the political subjectivity of all citizens irrespective of gender or labour, and the illegality of slavery - means that the private realm no longer reflects the domain of the household. As an exclusive realm of dominion the private realm in the modern sense more accurately can be depicted as an internal realm belonging within an individual to indulge in “the dark desires of the heart” and meet whatever “obscure necessities” they might have (Arendt, OR: 126). The private space of the home, or the business, does not necessarily equate to this private realm. Thus Arendt explains;

“All rulership has its original and most legitimate source in man’s wish to emancipate himself from life’s necessity, and men achieved such liberation by means of violence, by forcing others to bear the burden of life for them. This was the core of slavery, and it is only the rise of technology, and not the rise of modern political ideas as such, which has refuted the old and terrible truth that only violence and rule over others could make some men free” (Arendt, OR: 104)

With the possibility, thanks to technology, of all people having their needs met, there is the potential for all to become free to appear in public without the need for any violence in private. The violence we witness today therefore, attempts to be justified, according to Arendt (OV), by falsely thinking of “power in terms of command and obedience, and hence to equate power with violence” (Arendt, OV: 47). Despite not needing to use violence to meet biological needs today, violence is being ‘justified’ as a means for maintaining the order that allows such needs to be met. Indeed, Arendt claims that there is a problematic chain of reason; “the fateful equating of power with violence, of the political with government, and of government with a necessary evil” (Arendt, OR: 128). What this means for my discussion of the relationship of speech and action to violence is that violence

¹⁶ Arendt (HC) explains that any hoarding of wealth or things were seen as equally slavish to the Ancient Greeks. Thus any household that wasted effort in over-consumption, rejecting their public life, was frowned upon. Once needs of the household were met, no further toil was necessary.

cannot, for Arendt, play any part in speech and action. Speech and action require the concert of many. Violence requires the unquestioning obedience of many. Power - the amplification of speech and action, the amplification of praxis - is therefore in opposition to violence (Arendt, OV). "Violence can always destroy power; out of the barrel of a gun grows the most effective command, resulting in the most instant and perfect obedience. What never can grow out of it is power" (Arendt, OV: 53). For Arendt, "Violence appears where power is in jeopardy" (Arendt, OV: 56). So the praxis of public space cannot include violence. Violence is the destruction of public space in favour of privacy and obedience.

"Where violence rules absolutely...everything and everybody must fall silent"
(Arendt, OR: 9)

Violence for Arendt is "incapable of speech" (Arendt, OR: 9) and thus can be considered almost entirely 'mute'. This is why it is in opposition to the praxis of public space. In *The Human Condition* Arendt (HC) makes a distinction between speech and idle talk (Arendt, HC: 208). In this sense speech is seen as an act of intentional communication; a performance that intends for others to be in concert with it. It is an act appropriate for the public realm. Whereas if we engage in idle talk, the plurality of others is either not present or not intended to be in concert with the speaker. The communication is not regarded as fit for public performance and it must therefore be mute in the public realm. Like idle talk, the mute-ness of violence makes it inappropriate for the public realm.

Villa (1997) helps to clarify the distinction between speech and talk by referring to performance and expression. Villa asserts that Arendt is interested in speech as performance and not as some kind of expression (the exercise of idle talk). Expression for Villa, suggests a formed self that is expressed in public. In contrast, performance implies that the self is created through its performance. This is how Arendt sees the public appearance, a creative making of the self in that moment. "Like Nietzsche, Arendt challenges the assumption that a single, unified subject resides behind action" (Villa, 1997: 190). As praxis is dependent upon plurality to appear, we can say that praxis is *performed*. In contrast, we can therefore say that violence, like idle talk, is *expressed*. Speech and action, the praxis of public space, is dependent upon some kind of distance between the performer and the witness; a distance that allows the witness to respond. Between the performance and the response there is the space to create something new. There is no

restriction on the people involved in praxis; neither the performer nor the responder. Violence and talking, in contrast, abolish distance between the actor and the target leaving no space for response, and no space for something new. This is why violence and talking can be considered as convergent activities. They are in opposition to the activities of action and speech that make up the praxis of public space.

5(2). - Subjective and Objective Violence

Despite this preceding discussion on violence, as an anti-political activity that could only be justified in private, there is another perspective on violence that Arendt offers; violence as it is involved in the fabrication of works. Fabrication for Arendt, by definition, destroys something in order to make something new (Arendt, HC). Arendt declares that “violation and violence is present in all fabrication” (Arendt, HC: 139). Yet, fabrication is necessary for action to be meaningful (Arendt, HC). Does this mean that violence for Arendt is therefore, necessary for praxis, and necessary for public space?

First of all, it is important to understand that Arendt outlines two necessarily distinct forms of violence. The first form of violence - the anti-political activity of illegitimate violence in private - is understood as a destructive act directed against a person. It can destroy the distance between people, and can destroy the freedom to be seen and heard by these people. It requires the presence of another person to suffer as the victim; as the subject of violence. We can call this ‘subjective violence’. On the other hand, the second form of violence - the activity of work involved in fabrication - can be understood as a destructive act directed at a non-human entity towards a definite objective. Such an act will destroy the natural existence of an entity in order to change its use. In this case violence involves the destructive activity of creating something new for the fulfilment of an objective, without the suffering of a human victim. We can therefore call this ‘objective violence’. The distinction between subjective and objective violence however, is not made explicit by Arendt. As such, one cannot be certain that Arendt ever intended such a distinction to be made. However, turning to the work of Žižek (2008), among others, I will now explore how developing this distinction assists in understanding the relationship between praxis and violence in the formation of public space.

Žižek opens his book, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (2008), by asking us to confront

ourselves and our automatic assumptions about the concept of violence. Žižek says that there are the “obvious signals of violence” (Žižek, 2008: 1) that we see in the warfare, terror and crime of the world around us. However, he claims, it is important to pause and think critically about the “background which generates such outbursts” (*ibid.*: 1). As a result, Žižek creates a ‘triumvirate’ of violence, what he refers to as the SOS of violence; Subjective violence and two forms of Objective violence – ‘symbolic’ and ‘systemic’ violence. This distinction between subjective and objective violence clearly resonates with the distinction that I have already developed from Arendt’s understanding of violence. However, given that Arendt does not explicitly acknowledge such a distinction in her work, Žižek’s understanding will be a useful accompaniment to develop the notions, and to see how the notions interact with one another. It will also be useful to incorporate Žižek’s work because of its interaction with a plethora of other theorists on violence.

Through my reading of Arendt, I have explored a notion of subjective violence to be any destructive act directed against a person. It can destroy the distance between people, and can destroy the freedom to be seen and heard of these people. It always requires the presence of another person to suffer as the victim; as the subject of violence. Similarly, Žižek (2008) refers to subjective violence as the “violence enacted by social agents, evil individuals, disciplined repressive apparatuses, fanatical crowds” (Žižek, 2008: 10) in a way that causes physical and mental harm to others. In this sense subjective violence emerges as the forceful physical moments performed by individuals or crowds (by their own volition or under the instruction of others) that we readily associate with violence ‘as seen on TV’ (Žižek, 2008). This is the type of violence that Arendt, I have argued, dismisses as always illegitimate and anti-political. It is thus a violence that has the potential to destroy the public realm.

Taking violence as purely the subjective aggression against a person, Amartya Sen (2006) and Nigel Thrift (2006) reveal the consequence of this understanding. Sen (2006) suggests that subjective violence, as it is regularly justified around the world, prompts “the cultivation of a sense of inevitability about some allegedly unique - often belligerent - identity that we are supposed to have and which apparently makes extensive demands on us” (Sen, 2006: xiii). The aggressive and destructive actions of people and communities around the world, for Sen, are premised upon a pervasive belief that one’s identity requires the willingness to fight against any perceived threat to it; the belief is that one’s biological

make-up is the foundation of one's identity and that violent protection of this identity is a pre-given state of nature. Thus the conclusion for Sen (2006) is that subjective violence has emerged as an inevitable public disruption whenever an identity feels threatened. Seeing an inevitability to subjective violence, Thrift (2006) concedes that, while work can be "concerned to produce a democratic politics", he feels it must always be "at the same time realistic about human capacities, and especially their *biological* structuring" which lead to the eruption of subjective violence among people and communities (Thrift, 2006: 274). Thrift does acknowledge that there is a risk in this approach of "imagining that violence should be counted as just a pre-given state of nature" (Thrift, 2006: 274). Yet he says that violence, while having other causes, *does* have a pre-given natural element to it. He makes this conclusion because "so far as we know, aggression and violence are all but constants of human life" (Thrift 2006: 273).

However, countering such a naturalisation of subjective violence, Arendt (OV) declares;

"Nothing, in my opinion, could be theoretically more dangerous than the tradition of organic thought in political matters by which power and violence are interpreted in biological terms" (Arendt, OV: 75)

For Arendt, "so long as we talk in non-political, biological terms" then violence can be seen inevitable (Arendt, OV: 75). If subjective violence between people is regarded as inevitable then this would make any call for anti-violence futile. Given that Arendt calls for the necessity of non-violence in the public political realm, she therefore believes that violence should not be interpreted only in biological terms. In particular, she is claiming that violence in the public realm, the realm of politics and action, cannot be interpreted in these terms. This does not mean that certain moments of violence could not be interpreted as biologically determined for Arendt. Indeed, in the "struggle for survival" (Arendt, OV: 75) to obtain one's needs, outbreaks of violence can be interpreted biologically. Such violence is regularly employed, for example, in the animal kingdom as competitors fight for food and shelter. However, this violence, and the fulfilment of its objective, does not make us human for Arendt. It only reveals our status as *animal laborens* (Arendt, HC). Only by stepping away from this behaviour in private into the public realm of the *vita activa* and *homo faber* do we become human, and political, for Arendt (Arendt, HC). Therefore, we cannot find subjective violence - as a biological necessity - if we are exploring the praxis of public space;

inevitable subjective violence would be its antithesis.

As a result of the physicality and immediacy of subjective violence, Žižek (2008) claims that attending to this type of violence generally “drown[s] out all other approaches” (Žižek, 2008: 9). “The overpowering horror of violent acts and empathy with the victims inexorably function as a lure which prevents us from thinking” (Žižek, 2008: 3). Thus Žižek (2008) demands that we stop and think about violence and, as such, explore violence in a way that attends to something other than subjective violence; *i.e.* through attention to objective violence.

As already stated, the notion of objective violence that I have developed from reading Arendt, refers to any destructive act, which is directed at a non-human entity with a definite objective in mind. Such an act will destroy the natural existence of the entity in order to change its use. This can be through the fashioning of an object to help with the activity of labour, or to memorialise the activity of action. Importantly, the act of objective violence does not directly inflict suffering on a human victim, and indeed, this need not be the ultimate objective of such violence. Having said that, it is conceivable that the fabrication of objects, say in the creation of tools for labour, can indirectly lead to increased toil and pain for those who are made to suffer them. However, Žižek’s (2008) notion of objective violence is seemingly very different from this understanding. By objective violence Žižek explains that he is referring to “the violence inherent to [the] ‘normal’ state of things” (Žižek, 2008: 2). This, he elaborates, is the violence which manifests itself in language and its related ‘universe of meaning’ as well as through the “catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems” (*ibid.*: 1). Furthermore, he explains, this form of violence takes on two guises; ‘symbolic’ and ‘systemic’ violence. Before exploring each of these guises in detail, first of all I will explain how actually this description of objective violence is, despite its seeming divergence, complementary to the understanding of objective violence that I have already developed from Arendt.

When Žižek (2008) refers to the ‘normal state of things’, we could say that this is a description of the everyday functioning of the human world; a world made up of human artefacts. Turning to Arendt’s notion of ‘work’ as “the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence...[providing] an “artificial” world of things” (Arendt, HC:

7), we could argue that the 'normal state of things' is actually the everyday functioning of works. Works are also understood to be the necessary fabrication of things; the objective violence done to an entity in order to create something artificial and new. Therefore, the 'normal state of things' is equivalent to the normal functioning of the activities of fabrication for work. Likewise, we could argue that some of the 'artificial' worlds, that Arendt refers to as the actual results of work, include the variety of systems of language, and the "economic and political systems" that different societies have created. These are the same systems that Žižek (2008) refers to as holding "catastrophic consequences" for many people; the result of his notion of objective violence (Žižek, 2008: 1). As such, we can argue that the notion of objective violence that I have developed from Arendt, directly converges with Žižek's (2008) notion.

One of the guises that Žižek (2008) claims is adopted by objective violence, is symbolism. Symbolic violence, he explains, is the way that language and other forms of communication between people serve to create a "certain universe of meaning" (*ibid.*: 1) with distinct limits as to what can be expressed. This means that, by communication, the world of things (the realm of Arendt's activity of work) and the world of people (the realm of Arendt's activity of action) are reduced to their symbolic representations. As a result, Žižek, drawing on Hegel, sees this as the 'mortification' of the things and people of the world (Žižek, 2008: 52). This is in line with Lefebvre's (PS) warning that, as a system of signs, language has "the power of destruction because it has the power of abstraction" (*ibid.*: 135). Such destructive symbolic violence is one of the ways that the 'normal state of things' is maintained.

Lefebvre suggests that language, because it necessarily abstracts reality, is potentially the death of everything it describes (Lefebvre, PS). Even the act of reading, or visualising, is destructive according to Lefebvre (Lefebvre, PS: 146). Examples of this destruction in the contemporary world can be found in Gregory and Pred's (2006) book *Violent Geographies*. Exploring the symbolic violence of language many of the book's contributions reveal how a narrative of everyday fear has come to dominate western societies; succinctly referred to as "Banal Terrorism" by Cindi Katz (Gregory and Pred, 2006:350). Similarly, Katz, in her chapter for Low and Smith's (2006b) *The Politics of Public Space*, reveals how the language of a "democratization of danger" is regularly used to justify the developing tendency in the USA to privatise public space (*ibid.*: 107), and to create a state of fear of the urban environment. Turning again to Lefebvre's *Production of Space* (Lefebvre, PS), we can also

see how symbolic violence extends beyond language as communication. Lefebvre (PS) hosts a discussion on the violence of visual constructions of spaces under modernity. "The arrogant verticality of skyscrapers...have ever been the spatial expression of potentially violent power" he claims (Lefebvre, PS: 98)¹⁷. Size and visibility are expressed by Lefebvre as physical manifestations of growing force over the ever shrinking size and invisibility of living-quarters of the majority of people, and the hidden social architecture (social relations) that enable such skyscrapers to function. Through images, signs, and symbols the powerful producers of space, Lefebvre explains, can violently dominate spatial experiences. The visible symbols in space bombard us with messages, and push our experiences of space to a secondary position (Lefebvre, PS).

An example of extra-linguistic symbolic violence can be found in Low's chapter in *The Politics of Public Space* (Low and Smith, 2006). Here Low explored how a number of security and intimidation methods were used by wealthy residents in Los Angeles to 'protect' their public spaces. The use of visible symbols and intimidating artefacts were erected around so-called 'public spaces' for the purpose of making unwelcome members of the public feel uncomfortable in their use of the space, and thus stop using it. In a similar vein Gray and Wyly (2006) explored how the militarisation of US city streets following 9/11 became a visible form of symbolic violence designed to reinforce a narrative of the constant threat of subjective violence. In the process, these symbols also instilled an everyday sense of fear among members of the public occupying these cities.

It is clear why Žižek (2008) claims that symbolic violence does not act neutrally, but instead divides people; "it is because of language that we and our neighbours (can) 'live in different worlds' even when we live on the same street" (Žižek, 2008: 56/57). Symbolic violence, Žižek claims, enables people and things to be rendered 'worldless', lesser, 'Other', or inferior. Under symbolic forms of violence therefore, we could explain how nationalist and extremist views can be fostered, how a normal state of things can exist where long standing prejudices against women, disabilities and certain ethnicities continue, and how ideologies can proliferate myths, such as 'chance' being the cause of inequality (Žižek, 2008: 76). But how does the notion of symbolic violence develop my discussion of public

¹⁷ Obviously it must be mentioned here that through Arendt's reading of power - which I am adopting - one cannot accept Lefebvre's notion of 'violent power'. Instead we can assume that, if taking Arendt's notion of power, Lefebvre would have instead referred to 'violent force'.

space as praxis?

If symbolic violence fulfils a status of objective violence, we might consider that it is necessary in the fabrication of speech and action. For example, a public act cannot be fabricated in memory without some form of language or symbol to do this. This seems an inevitable conclusion. However, Žižek's (2008) useful demand that such violence does not act neutrally adds a complication to Arendt that we must consider. In the process of fabricating action into works - the act of objective, symbolic violence - those who do the fabricating (the story tellers) will be able to influence the way that public actions are remembered. While this may demand that the motives of fabricators are thus explored, such a psychoanalytical demand is beyond the scope of this research. However, if we acknowledge that fabrication is never neutral and, dependent upon the fabricator, will result in a variety of works, then there are elements that we must consider in this exploration of public space.

First of all, any limits to the variety and scope of fabrications will result in a particularly limited memory of praxis; limits make the mortification by symbols more profound and a greater degree of objective violence can be inflicted. Secondly, one must also consider that certain fabricators will be more dominant in their ability to disseminate their works than others. This means that the greater the dominance of a small number of fabricators, the more restricted the potential fabrications will be and thus, again, the greater the objective violence inflicted. In the case of a moment of public praxis therefore, the variety and the dominance of different fabricators referring to this moment will differently damage the memory of the original act.

The second 'guise' of objective violence that Žižek (2008) offers is systemic violence. Systemic violence, Žižek (2008) explains, is the "catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems" (Žižek, 2008: 1). Consequences which are 'violent' because they have a detrimental impact on the ability of individuals to live in the world. For Žižek this form of violence in the world today hinges upon some inevitable contradictions in the 'smooth functioning' of capitalism. Seeing normalised individualism as endemic to capitalism, Žižek argues that this is an example of systemic violence because it necessarily leads to persistent economic inequality, limits to an individual's freedom (through lack of economic choices of the poor), and the ability for financial speculation to

be made for other's wealth. Evidently Žižek's (2008) 'systemic violence' is a development of the Marxist critique of neoclassical economics and the various inevitable contradictions and exploitations that Marx argues this economic model is dependent upon.

In line with this argument, Springer (2012) claims that "neoliberalism must be considered as an integral part of the moment of violence in its capacity to create social divisions within the constellations of experiences that delineate places" (Springer, 2012: 138). Likewise, Mitchell and Staeheli (2006) offer an account of such 'violence' by turning to the notion of property. Property, they declare, is defined by "specific relations of exclusion" (*ibid.*: 149), and such exclusion "necessarily implies a violent act" (*ibid.*: 149). This is because exclusion establishes a space in the world, the space of the property, where the ability of all but the owner to appear and use the space is limited. This argument is reinforced if we turn again to Lefebvre's (PS) discussion of homogenous spaces controlled by dominant structures in modernity. Lefebvre (PS) claims that singular control over multiple spaces, making them homogenous and repetitive under modern functionality, is based upon violence. For Lefebvre (PS) any repetitious and homogenous space "must rely on violence to endure" (Lefebvre, PS: 11). Indeed, we can turn to a variety of studies that refer to the systemic 'violence' of capitalism through arguments based upon a Marxist critique of capitalism (for recent examples in Geography see Tyner and Inwood 2014, Jeffrey et al 2012, Loftus 2015, and Vasudevan 2015). However, it is necessary to ponder how systemic violence, as Žižek (2008) has developed it, relates to the notions of objective violence and the fabrication of praxis that I have developed from reading Arendt in the preceding sections. Indeed, I have already shown the problematic relationship that Arendt has had with Marx's economic theories. So we might assume that there will be some difficulties incorporating systemic violence - a notion heavily dependent on such Marxist interpretation - into a discussion on the praxis of public space. In what follows I will develop this discussion on 'systemic violence' by returning to the discussion of fabrication and the distinction between objects for use and objects of uniqueness. In doing this I will show that it is in fact, the relationship between systemic violence and the ability to appear in public which makes the concept of systemic violence relevant to this study.

Under the activity of work Arendt explains that the fabrication of things is necessary. Such fabrication, we have reiterated on many occasions already, is dependent upon destruction. This destruction is necessary to meet any objective that the activity of work is pursuing;

thus I have called it objective violence. I have shown that the activity of work in general is a support to either of the other fundamental activities in Arendt's theory in *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC); labour and action. Works can be created for use by labour (in the forms of tools and machines) or they can be created for their uniqueness as the memorialisation of action in the public realm (in the form of stories, songs, and art). It is these contrasting objectives which is crucial to the discussion of systemic violence.

The structure of capitalism as the dominant economic system of today's world is undoubtedly an artefact of human society. Indeed, we could call this meta-structure one of the vastest 'works' ever created by humanity. It is a structure that involves the fabrication of almost every thing in the world¹⁸. As a 'work' therefore, we must ask, what is its 'objective'? Is it a work for use or utility, or is it a work to fabricate uniqueness or meaning? It is clear that as a 'work' in Arendt's sense, irrespective of its architects, capitalism is a structure with the objective of being 'used'. Used for the purpose of 'supporting' the activity of labour¹⁹. This is why all promoters of capitalism, and all critiques, focus upon the role of labour in the process. We could not argue, in contrast, that the structure of capitalism has the objective of memorialising action in the public realm. From this, we can appreciate that Žižek's (2008) term 'systemic violence', refers to the destructive fabrication of the world occurring in the creation of works for the activity of labour; for use. In the case of capitalism as a 'work', the systemic violence that one finds is the emergence and persistence of new struggles faced by labourers in meeting their needs. These struggles come, not just as the natural biological struggle of survival, but as a direct consequence of the 'work' - the structure of capitalism - that was supposedly designed by humans for the purpose of labouring itself. Systemic violence, is the objective violence found inherently in the fabrication of the world for use. This makes it significantly different from symbolic violence.

Symbolic violence, I have shown, is involved in the necessary objective violence of fabricating the praxis of public space. Systemic violence, as just shown, instead seeks to

¹⁸ This is why Marx declares at the start of *Capital Vol.1* that "The wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as 'an immense collection of commodities'" (Marx, 1990: 125). The commodity is the fabricated form of nature that has undergone the work of capitalism.

¹⁹ This does not mean that it is used for supporting the labouring activity of all people; just some of them.

fabricate the world for use; what we might call the praxis of the private realm. It would appear therefore that the systemic guise of objective violence can tell us nothing about the praxis of public space; it is purely associated with the activity of labour, the praxis of the private realm. So is systemic violence irrelevant for my exploration of public space? I would argue not. If we turn to the impact of systemic violence on a person's ability to be seen and heard in public, I will show that in fact, there is great relevance to exploring systemic violence for a study on the praxis of public space.

Understanding capitalism as a 'work' for the purpose of labour, we can argue that it is made in the interest of the private realm. In the private realm, the activity of labour is used to meet the biological needs of one's body (Arendt, HC). Like a tool or a machine therefore, capitalism - as a 'work' for the purpose of labour - can be understood to fabricate the things of the world in order to alter the toil required in meeting one's needs. However, like we have already seen in the structure of slavery used by the Ancient Greeks, it can be argued that capitalism does not ease the toil of labour for all; it does not *work* for all. Many people are unable to escape the activity of labour. Capitalism can therefore create conditions under which Arendt would argue there can be justified violence; violence for "the cause of necessity" (Arendt, OR: 106). It also can create conditions under which some people have greater opportunity to escape the activity of labour than others, and with greater ease.

Under capitalism an undeniable consequence emerges; the disparity in wealth across members of a population (of course there are arguments on all sides of the political spectrum to account for why this is). This disparity in wealth could also be interpreted as a disparity in the ability of citizens to meet their biological needs. Understood in this way, a person with a vast inherited wealth may never have to labour him/herself to meet his/her biological needs (like the ancient Greek head of the household - Arendt, HC), and as such they will be free to enter the public realm and fulfil the praxis of public space whenever they choose²⁰. In contrast, a person who can only just meet their needs through constant labour, may find themselves able to appear in public only on rare and short-term occasions, if at all. The opportunity to appear in public and be seen and heard by others - the praxis of

²⁰ Of course there are other needs, such as companionship and reproduction which cannot necessarily be met by wealth, for which wealthy individuals will still retreat into privacy. Although it is hardly surprising that even these needs have found a distorted way into the market as 'purchasable' items.

the public realm - is more readily available, therefore, to the person with vast resources, than to those with little, who struggle to meet their needs. The praxis of public space therefore is available with differing ease and differing regularity to different people as a result of the systemic violence inherent in “the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems” (Žižek, 2008: 1). This is why we must pay attention to systemic violence as part of an inquiry into public space.

5(3). - Dialectical Violence

As a result of pervasive systemic violence a number of authors see a direct, and sometimes reciprocal, link between this form of objective violence and the eruption of subjective violence around the world. As we have already seen, Arendt (OR) has argued that subjective violence could only be justified under “the cause of necessity” (Arendt, OR: 106); a cause which we have shown can be exacerbated by systemic violence. In the following section therefore I will explore in more detail the potential links between objective and subjective violence, and consider how this can be used to develop an enquiry into the praxis of public space.

“Inequality begets violence, and violence produces further inequalities” (Springer, 2012: 139)

In a similar vein to Žižek (2008), Springer (2012) claims that any conceptualisation of violence “must consider its objectivity and its subjectivity” (Springer, 2012: 137). Yet to view these two notions as separate, as I have done in much of the discussion so far, Springer (2012) claims is counter-productive (Springer, 2012: 137). Instead he suggests that a combined approach is necessary; what he describes as a ‘dialectical approach’ (Springer, 2012: 137). Likewise, Tyner and Inwood (2014) say that “the time has come for the social sciences to (re)theorize violence and specifically to develop a dialectics of violence” (*ibid.*: 772). This is because they see a problem, similar to Žižek (2008), that “the *act* of violence and the social conditions that produce and are produced by violence in the first place becomes a black box, assumed, acknowledged, but rarely theorized” (Tyner and Inwood, 2014: 772). So, what exactly is a ‘dialectics of violence’?

Tyner *et al.*, (2014) start their enquiry by explaining that “[r]eality, from a dialectic vantage

point, consists not simply of disparate 'things' but rather *processes* and *relations*" (Tyner and Inwood, 2014: 774). As such studies of violence as dialectical should not be interested just in things - riots, fights, attacks - but also in the processes and social relations that surround the moment (Tyner and Inwood, 2014: 907). There are no pre-givens in understanding violence according to Tyner and Inwood (2014), "violence is neither transhistorical nor transgeographical; it has no pre-social existence but comes into being through political practice" (Tyner and Inwood, 2014: 774). Therefore, what the proponents of the dialectics of violence are suggesting, is that violence be used "as a theoretical vantage point for a more comprehensive and sustained analysis of social and spatial relations" (Tyner and Inwood, 2014: 776). It is not to deny the reality of a violent act, nor to deny its impact, but to ensure that the act is understood in context. By exploring the processes and relations that surround moments of subjective violence, the suggestion is that one will be able to account for the structures and everyday realities - the elements we have already shown to be the foundation of objective violence - that set them off. This will therefore counter "[t]he overpowering horror of violent acts and empathy with the victims [which] inexorably function as a lure which prevents us from thinking" (Žižek, 2008: 3).

5(4). - Objective and Subjective, Abstract and Concrete

In the discussion of violence so far, the notions of *objective* and *subjective* violence have been isolated. However, in the majority of studies on the dialectics of violence, the authors instead make reference to notions of *abstract* violence and *concrete* violence. Broadly speaking these correspond with objective violence and subjective violence respectively. However, given the necessity under a dialectical approach to express concepts in relation to one another, I will develop these new terms simultaneously to show how they differ from the discussions that have already been made. I will also consider how viewing the relationship between subjective and objective violence as 'dialectic' may not be the only, or the best, approach to understand this relationship. This is despite the adherents of the idea claiming that "There is no avoiding this dialectic approach" (Springer, 2012: 137). In doing this, one will be able to more confidently elaborate on the relationship between violence and action, and build on the already complex picture of praxis as public space.

“It is difficult to overestimate the violence generated by processes of abstraction” claims Loftus (2015: 366). Similarly, Tyner *et al.*, (2014: 902) say “violence is always and already a dialectical process of abstraction”. So, the concept of abstract violence is actually a concept of ‘violence’ that results from abstraction. As I have already shown, much of Lefebvre’s work was premised upon his development of Marx’s notion of abstract and concrete labour; creating for Lefebvre his understanding of the production of space by abstraction. Indeed, Lefebvre explained; “*there is a violence intrinsic to abstraction, and to abstraction’s practical (social) use.*” (Lefebvre, 1991: 289, quoted in Loftus, 2015: 366, emphasis in original). What this use of abstraction asserts, is that the process of knowing or ‘understanding’ requires some distance between reality and an object of the mind, expressed in some kind of symbolic communication.

Any structure of understanding necessarily abstracts, and necessarily reduces a thing to its expression; what we have already described as the violence of fabrication. This becomes increasingly violent when there is a single abstraction that dominates over other abstractions. This is why Lefebvre says “The dominant form of space, that of the centres of wealth and power, endeavours to mould the spaces it dominates...and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there” (Lefebvre, PS: 49). This would explain how symbolic violence and systemic violence both form Žižek’s (2008) notion of objective violence; symbolic violence is the abstraction resulting from dominant forms of communication, systemic violence is the abstraction resulting from the dominant economic logic of capitalism. As a result of abstractions, proponents of the dialectics of violence explain there will be the appearance of concrete forms of violence. This concrete violence is the pursuit of practices, which “structure the abstraction of violence in particular concrete forms” (Tyner and Inwood, 2014: 777). It is the everyday consequences of using dominant forms of communication (in the case of symbolic abstract violence) or of adopting the dominant economic logic of capitalism (in the case of systemic abstract violence). The practices of concrete violence are the activities themselves which move violence from a destructive fabrication in the mind, such as the use of language or the creation of economic systems, to a destructive act that physically impacts people in everyday lived experience.

Clearly the abstractions and the concrete forms of violence are mutually dependent; this is the premise behind a *dialectics* of violence. The dialectic requires that we understand this

relationship - what Lefebvre referred to as the 'unfolding' - as mutually defining both ideas. Any abstraction of reality becomes violent only in its concrete practice. Equally, any concrete form is dependent upon the violent abstraction, which conceived it. This means that there is always, simultaneously, the existence of objective and subjective violence. Using the example of London, where he lives, Loftus (2015) explains this dialectic of violence; one is coerced through symbols and the built environment to see London as a 'thing' - a violent abstraction of the heterogeneous lived reality of the space - and thus one feels bewildered by who to blame for the mess - the concrete feeling that emerges from the abstraction.

Through reading authors on a dialectic of violence (Springer 2012, Tyner and Inwood 2014, Tyner *et al.* 2014, Loftus 2015, and Žižek 2008) one can develop the claim that subjective violence - in the form of actual aggression against a victim resulting in physical harm - is always and already premised upon some form of objective violence - in the form of an abstract process developed in language or systems of economic or political control. The dialectic relating abstract and concrete violence (as in Loftus, 2015) appears equivalent to the dialectic between objective and subjective violence (as in Springer 2012 and Žižek 2008). Indeed, we have already quoted Springer (2012) claiming that there is "no avoiding [the] dialectic approach" to violence (Springer, 2012: 137). However, in my discussion on violence from reading Arendt there is the contrasting suggestion of a definite separation between objective and subjective violence. Objective violence was shown to be the inevitable consequence of fabricating the world of labour and action. Whereas subjective violence was not an inevitable consequence but was premised upon the agency of the actor or actors who performed it against a victim. Dependent on the unique agency of the actor, Arendt argued that subjective violence could never be legitimate (Arendt, OV); indeed, any sense of inevitability would have given it legitimacy. Therefore, the distinction between objective and subjective violence was essential. So, does this mean that the distinct forms of violence developed from Arendt is incompatible with the convergent forms developed from a dialectic of violence. I will now show that despite this appearance, I think that compatibility can be found. This can be achieved by elaborating the terms 'objective' and 'subjective' violence, and use this to argue for a dialectic of *objective* violence which is distinct from the agency of *subjective* violence. Indeed, this compatibility will form an essential premise in developing my understanding of the praxis of public space.

In the discussion on objective violence that came from reading Arendt, I argued that objective violence involved the inevitable destruction associated with the fabrication of works. It need not be directed at an individual victim, nor include any physical aggression. In this sense both the abstract and concrete violence discussed in the dialectics of violence could fit under objective violence. For example, the abstractions necessary for the capitalist mode of production, that inevitably result in the concrete violence of exploitation, does not *need* the subjective eruptions of violence that Žižek (2008) describes to be associated with it. Instead it can be argued to be purely a useful elaboration of objective violence, as both a theory (the abstractions) and a practice (the concrete forms). This re-thinking of objective violence would fit with Arendt's understanding of the activity of work. In *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC), Arendt argues that works require both a *conception* of the work - a blueprint and a plan - and a *practice* that makes the work a reality. If we are to see abstract violence as the conception of a work, and concrete violence as the practice of fabrication, then clearly we can put forward the idea that the dialectics of violence be considered as an elaboration of the process of work. Thus I would argue that we can call the dialectics of violence, the dialectics of *objective* violence.

As already argued, the systemic and symbolic forms of objective violence (developed by Žižek 2008) can help in re-thinking the praxis of public space as it can unveil the structural limits to individuals meeting their needs and stepping into appearance in the public realm. By acknowledging a dialectics of objective violence; the exploration of public space can be enhanced even further. The dialectic means that, in understanding the limits to public appearance, we can acknowledge both the *concrete forms* that restrict an individual from entering public space (such as financial difficulties or the weight of dominant discourses), as well as the *abstract forms* that premise this restriction (the logic of economic and political systems and the history of certain narratives). When one considers the praxis of public space therefore, it is important to acknowledge the dialectics of both systemic and symbolic violence restricting the appearances of certain individuals from entering the political realm through speech and action.

In contrast to the dialectics of objective violence, there can still be the distinct form of subjective violence, which I developed through reading Arendt. The intentional harm and physical aggression towards another, and its avoidance of plurality, made this form of

violence necessarily distinct for Arendt (Arendt, OV). As the antithesis of political action, Arendt saw subjective violence to be dependent on the natality of human agency; i.e. this violence is premised upon the conscious choice of any human who acts in this way. Therefore, while the structures associated with objective violence may lead to conditions where an individual makes this choice to act with subjective violence, it must necessarily be a choice. There must be *agency* to subjective violence.

We have already shown that subjective violence can, through force, restrict individuals and groups from appearing in public space. Such restriction is irrespective of the violence's origin, whether in bureaucrats of the state or in the actions of independent individuals. Emphasising agency therefore, provides one with another important additional avenue in understanding the restrictive practices which force their presence into public space through subjective violence. It has already been discussed, how explaining violence as biologically determined, is contrary to Arendt's notion of politics. Indeed, Arendt claimed; "Nothing...could be theoretically more dangerous than the tradition of organic thought in political matters by which power and violence are interpreted in biological terms" (Arendt, OV: 75). Without agency associated with subjective violence, as Arendt understands it, politics and the public realm would be in jeopardy. In any exploration of the praxis of public space therefore, we must see disruption through subjective violence as destroying the potential for appearance in the public realm. As such, drawing attention to any act of subjective violence will be essential in exploring, not only the restriction it places on others appearing in public, but also the restriction that such practices place on the agent of the violence themselves.

"The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world" (Arendt, OV: 80)

5(5). - Disruptive Non-Violence in Public

Despite my suggestion throughout this chapter, that Arendt's call to action must necessarily be a non-violent form of *disruption*, some theorists, such as Cascardi (1997), make the claim that "[t]here is...no disruption in Arendt's politics" (Dikeç, 2015: 109). Such a position, would appear to be entirely contrary to my reading of Arendt. Yet Dikeç (2015),

finds a useful compromise. He shows that Arendt's idea of politics is centred on communication and normalisation (similar to Habermas, 2001), and thus, in terms of disruption, she does not see *aesthetic* disruption as a necessary part of it. While disrupting aesthetics (or sense perception as he describes it) can open a way in to politics for Arendt, the functioning of a public realm is not premised upon it. In alignment with Rancière's notion of politics, Dikeç instead favours the idea that politics is *always* premised upon aesthetic disruption; on the appearance of the 'part which has no part' (Rancière, 2010) where "those who do not count...initiate a rupture in the order of things" (Swyngedouw, 2015: 170). "Politics implies a disruption of our habitual ways of sensing and making sense of the world" (Dikeç, 2015: 11). However, I would argue that this understanding of disruption and politics, is potentially equivalent to, and complimentary of, my own reading of Arendt, and her understanding of the complex relationship between violence and public action.

Turning to Marx's political project of emancipating the proletariat for example, Arendt showed how aesthetic disruption was necessary for the appearance of the proletariat in the public realm (Arendt, HC). Indeed, Arendt has claimed that action, the activity of politics, will necessarily "interrupt what otherwise would have proceeded automatically" (Arendt, OV: 30-31). As such, aesthetic disruption is *essential* to Arendt's politics. Nonetheless, a necessary caveat must be attached to this; for Arendt, aesthetic disruption *in itself* is *not* political. When considering political disruption, it is necessary to understand the 'implement' used for this disruption. Arendt (OV) explains that while moments of subjective violence "by definition, are occurrences that interrupt routine processes and routine procedures" (Arendt, OV: 7), they cannot bring something new in to the world; violence is destructive not creative. Therefore, if the implement or instrument of disruption is violence, then the disruption will be destructive and unfit for politics. Instead, Arendt offers that the activity of action, as an 'implement', will not only "interrupt what otherwise would have proceeded automatically" (Arendt, OV: 30-31) but will also "begin something new and...bring something new into the world" (Biesta, 2012: 687). In contrast to the implement of violence, which relies on force to re-form the world, the implement of action changes the world through the concert of other people appearing together and creating something new²¹. This is why Dikeç (2013) declared that "[h]uman natality and the miracle

²¹ The change of the world through action is necessarily 'new' because it is premised upon the agency and uniqueness of each and every individual that is involved.

of beginnings are central themes in Arendt's conceptualisation of action and politics" (Dikeç, 2013: 80). I would argue therefore, there must be aesthetic disruption for Arendt's politics, but only *creative* disruption.

"What makes man a political being is his faculty of action; it enables him to get together with his peers, to act in concert, and to reach out for goals and enterprises that would never enter his mind, let alone the desires of his heart, had he not been given this gift - to embark on something new" (Arendt, OV: 82)

The praxis of public space therefore can be considered to be not only ephemeral and disruptive, but also it must be creative; it must begin something new. While I have argued throughout this section that violence, in all of its forms, is useful for understanding the limits and restrictions placed on the praxis of public space, it is actually the antithesis of violence, in the form of creative speech and action, that must be the foundation of the public realm. Arendt is not alone in calling for creativity and a new beginning in politics. While I have shown that Lefebvre (PS) argued that "State-imposed normality makes permanent transgression inevitable" (Lefebvre, PS: 23), Loftus (2015) explains that "the violence of abstract space can be overcome for Lefebvre not through harking back to some earlier concreteness but through the creation of new differential concrete spaces." (Loftus, 2015: 378). Likewise, Marx (1867), despite claiming that "Beginnings are always difficult" (Marx, 1867: 89), also demanded that a new beginning was necessary for his political project. Indeed, new beginnings are the cornerstone of a philosophy of praxis; beginnings are also the cornerstone of the praxis of public space.

5(6). - Story-telling as Creative Disruption. Story-telling as Public Space.

Seeking evidence for non-violent creative and disruptive beginnings, can be an elusive task. Deliberately ambiguous, Arendt talks about political action as though it is ephemeral and fleeting; a substance that slips from existence like liquid through your hands. To combat this slippage and to direct a focused empirical enquiry into public space, we need to return to Arendt's idea of the activity of 'work'. Work, and its artefacts, its *fabrications*, exist to give public actions durability in the world, and thus prevent creative disruptions from

disappearing the moment they have occurred. Arendt explains that works are necessarily inscribed with both a beginning and an end (Arendt, HC). The material thing that is made as work does not occur in nature - it has to be fabricated - and eventually, despite its extended durability, will decay, erode, or face destruction (Arendt, HC). Nonetheless, the core feature of work is that it provides other actions, of labour and work, with some degree of durability greater than their moment of appearance. It is only through an artefact of work²² therefore, that we will be able to find creative disruption and the praxis of public space. The question however, is; what artefact of work should be chosen for this thesis, and for its empirical study?

The artefacts of work created to give durability to public action are wide-ranging. They can include artistic performances from theatre to dance, and can include physical objects from statues and sculptures to paintings and graffiti. Seemingly, so long as they capture the memory of public action, the form of the artefact is of secondary interest. However, if we are to engage Lefebvre's argument, and by consequence Marx's argument, that it is in everyday life where we find openings to disrupt the dominant homogenising structures of the modern world, then we need to identify an *everyday* artefact of work. An artefact that is made and re-made in everyday life. For such a task it would not be appropriate to select the one-off and irregular artefacts like sculptures or theatrical performances; the kinds of artefacts that are alien to most of our lives on a day-to-day basis. Instead, I have chosen to look at an artefact of work that most people employ, on-and-off, through their daily lives; the practice of creating and telling stories.

Story-telling, and the "ability to produce stories", according to Arendt, is the way that we can become "historical" (Arendt, HC: 324). Without a story being told about us, or without many tales, memories, and anecdotes being told about our lives, we may disappear. Telling stories about our actions gives us durability in the world beyond the moments that we appear. This durability is dependent upon two elements; the story and the telling. The story, the artefact of work, is the element that provides us with the potential to endure; it can last as a form long after we have gone. In contrast, anyone at any time can become the story-teller, so long as the story remains, and someone is willing to tell it. The act of story-

²² Only a work that has been created in the interest of giving public appearance durability, and not one giving the activity of labour durability, i.e. a work primarily for meaning and not just utility (as previously discussed)

telling therefore, can be considered as a momentary act of remembering. In this way, story-telling can also be considered to be a political act (Bryson and Lowe, 2002). This is most evident if we think of stories “form[ing] a key part of our interactions with others” (Leonard, 2006: 1117)²³.

Telling a story necessarily links the subjects of a story, and has the potential to impact upon those subjects. Such impact, like other forms of action, is necessarily unpredictable (Leonard, 2006). On top of this, the impact of a story can show story-telling to be an exercise of ‘strength’, asserting the discourse of the author over the agency of the subjects (Blum-Kulka, 1993). Beyond telling a narrative about ‘others’, story-telling can also be considered to reveal elements of the author as their ‘self’ (Schiffrin, 1996). Interpreting and hearing stories, an audience also becomes witness to the author, and to the disclosure of the author’s uniqueness, separate from the author’s intention. Furthermore, a story, produced or told, is always situated within cultural norms and social expectations (Britton, 2000). A story reveals, therefore, the symbolic and dominant abstractions (the violence) through which a society makes sense of the world (Tamboukou, 2016b). In all of these ways a story, and its ‘telling’, can therefore be, simultaneously, evidence of identity formation, the exercise of strength, political action, and the fabrication of action in the world; the key theoretical elements that have come out of the previous chapters, all in one form. This is why I have chosen to centralise ‘story-telling’ as *the* form through which I will reveal the praxis of public space, and the creative disruption at its heart, in the contemporary empirical setting of Luton.

²³ This is because the plurality of appearing with and to others is what defines politics for Arendt.

6. Method of Illustration

"My life amounts to no more than one drop in a limitless ocean. Yet what is any ocean, but a multitude of drops?"

(From '*Cloud Atlas*' by David Mitchell, 2004)

The theoretical expansion of a conversation between Arendt and Lefebvre, for the purpose of building a new appreciation of public space and its proximity to violence, is the central concern of this thesis. This concern, however, is greatly limited by the void that emerges between the theory developed and actual lived practice. To begin to address this void, I present the remainder of this thesis as an account of the empirical fieldwork I conducted for this research project. This empirical fieldwork is designed as an *illustrative case study*, as *my telling of a story*; designed to reveal the practical validity of my theoretical ideas. The originality of this thesis was designed, primarily, to emerge in the theoretical argument. The empirical research is used to illustrate the theoretical argument²⁴. In this sense, the empirical research was designed to provide one particular perspective on the messy and varied reality that could have been found in my research site. It was not designed to find some representativeness of reality or some objective truth.

Cronon (1992: 1371) talks about the memory of actual events forming an "endless sea of stories". Cronon's perspective aligns with Arendt's notion that the activities of the human condition – labour, work and action – in themselves leave no trace, except for work which is seen in its product (Arendt, HC), and there is an endless array of forms that any work can take. Stories told have endless possibilities as the products of a specific work. Cronon's idea also resonates with Lefebvre's claim that all spaces are produced through dominant conceptions and perceptions of a space (Lefebvre, PS). These mental abstractions of a space are found in the stories told about a space. There are endless stories that can be told, but the dominant stories will have the greatest voice. With this in mind, my empirical research has been designed to enable me to tell a *specific* story from within an endless 'sea of stories'. A story that would necessarily challenge the dominant story of space, and would illustrate the enactment of my theoretical claims in practice.

²⁴ This point is made due to my appreciation that many PhD theses are structured in the inverse way; fieldwork illustrated by theory.

Referring to my empirical research as ‘telling a story’ brings to the fore the necessary acknowledgment that I will be exercising an “interpretive mode of enquiry” (Barnes, 2001: 546), seeking meaning (Geertz, 1973:5), rather than an aspiration for ‘truth’ (England, 2006). This does not mean that I am succumbing to a “confessional urge” where my acknowledgement of partiality ignores a “crisis” I sense in trying to be representative (Watson, 2006: 368). Instead of attempting to be representative, I am holding the position that all accounts are partial, and the amplitude of the story told is independent of the story itself. I would subscribe to Watson’s (2006: 369) view of the “‘incompossibility’ of neutrality”. A story is a work of art, and therefore aesthetic and partial; it is not a work of science.

With the many possible stories that could be told of my empirical research (Mavrommatis, 2015), there are also many possible ways that my subsequent story could be interpreted (Hartman, 2015). A potential crisis emerges therefore in my story’s value or worth. If there are endless stories, how is it possible to get one story to stand out? Lefebvre suggests that mental abstractions of space stand out as a result of an existing dominant perspective (Lefebvre, PS), and Arendt suggests that the exercise of either power or violent strength is what gives a work durability (Arendt, HC). To rely on power, while contrasting the violent strength of dominant perspectives in my empirical location, will thus require that I narrate a story that is “believable and hence worthy of attention” (Baxter and Eyles, 1997: 506). Believability I contend, using Arendt’s notion of plurality, will come from the variety of perspectives heard, and the coherence of the story that results from these perspectives. While it is necessary to acknowledge that some perspectives are unreliable (Watson, 2006), an attempt to bring together a variety of voices into one story, will create a narrative with a ‘thicker’ description (Geertz, 1973). This is not to be under the illusion that *all* perspectives can be heard in my story, but bringing in plural voices should make the story worthy of attention (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). If this is the case, then it will be appropriate as an illustrative case study for the theoretical arguments of this thesis.

“I have always believed that, no matter how abstract our theories may sound or how consistent our arguments appear, there are incidents and stories behind them, which, at least for ourselves, contain as in a nutshell the full meaning of whatever we have to say” (Arendt, 1960: 1 quoted in Tamboukou, 2016a: 157)

6(1). An Appropriate Approach

Gómez (2016: 201) tells us that many of Hannah Arendt's core ideas "are used extensively by social scientists". Likewise, many of Lefebvre's central concepts are common in the social sciences lexicon (for examples see Mitchell, 2003; Low and Smith, 2006; and Harvey, 2013). As such, one would expect there to be a wealth of examples showing appropriate forms of, and methods used for, collecting empirical data and presenting empirically informed narratives. Turning to these studies, and to the published works of both Arendt and Lefebvre, it can be argued that only a qualitative study, which appreciates both the existence of broad social structures and the intimacy of political actions, is appropriate for empirical research using these two theorists.

According to Buckler (2011) Hannah Arendt, despite her interest in many of the domains typically associated with the social sciences, never saw herself as a social scientist. This was because "[t]he traditional appeal to empirical findings and explanatory hypotheses characteristic of social science amounts, as Arendt saw it, to a 'behaviourist' approach that falsely reduces political conduct to the measurable and the predictable." (Buckler 2011: 2). Using Arendt's report on the trial of Adolf Eichmann (Arendt, EIJ), Fine (2008) develops this understanding by explaining that Arendt was particularly critical of any attempt to *make sense* of the world (to *understand* it) without acknowledging that there is a necessary element of *judgement* exercised in doing so. Social sciences exhibited such attempts if they measured and predicted social activity, and published quantifiable and objective understandings of the social world, as though these were judgement free, impartial and immutable truths. As such, Arendt claimed, "nothing can remain immense if it can be measured...[it] establishes closeness where distance ruled before" (Arendt, 1999: 250). Judgement, like politics, Arendt claimed, requires separation. Mathematical studies and quantified research of the social world could not therefore, achieve a required distance to exercise judgement, and thus could not become political or make sense of the world. A different approach would be needed.

Similarly, a criticism of the contemporary world developed by Lefebvre (1996, 1968, 2003, 1995) was against a dominant view, found in urban planning and state structures, that space could be quantified. As already discussed, under the capitalist mode of production Lefebvre saw a tendency in the producers of spaces to strive to make all spaces appear as

commodities. Quantifying and commodifying the social world, Lefebvre argued, created a blindness to the necessarily qualitative elements that always exist in space; making the world appear ‘boring’ (Lefebvre, CE) and homogenous. Avoiding such pitfalls, empirical research into space, using Lefebvre’s theories, would need to show sensitivity to the qualities of a location being studied, and not be tempted to rely on quantified measures of this space. Having said this, Lefebvre’s critique of spatial quantification - highlighting the persistence and pervasiveness of this dominant abstraction – showed that it was also impossible, and false, to ignore the ‘concrete abstraction’ of quantified space (Lefebvre, 1991). An empirical study taking these things into account, must therefore appreciate, not just the heterogeneity of spaces, but also the ever-present legacy of a homogenising narrative. This approach is evident in Lefebvre’s own ‘analytical-regressive’ method (Frehse, 2017), and is the reason for the first empirical research question in this thesis.

While both Arendt and Lefebvre were critical of positivist social sciences, they were both writing predominantly prior to the ‘cultural turn’ in the social sciences (Barnes, 2001), which actually saw a decline in the use of quantitative research methods and quantifiable data analysis. Claims of ‘truth’ and impartiality were to fall away, unable to stand up to critical engagement, and in their place would arise an “interpretive mode of enquiry” (Barnes, 2001: 546); the rise of the qualitative method. It is thus a qualitative approach that is most appropriate for both the theories of Arendt and of Lefebvre, and for the intentions of this project.

6(2). Locating the Research

Having established the necessity of carrying out qualitative methods at a localised space of public encounters, the next consideration for telling an illustrative story, is to explain the appropriate location to carry out a period of empirical research. The reasons for my selection of Luton as this site has been discussed already, in my introductory chapter. A town of over 200,000 residents like Luton however, was still too big to study fully in 12 months (the time I had available for my empirical research). Thus, I made a decision to limit my research in Luton to a small segment of the town (see Figure 6(1)) where I would likely

traverse a prominent line of segregation²⁵, where I would find a range of social spaces and officially designated 'public spaces', and where I could walk across the whole area within half an hour. I also planned to be able to expand the segment to incorporate the location of any disruptive protests, should they occur during my research period. The extent and contributing elements for the chosen locations within Luton are shown in Figure 6(1).

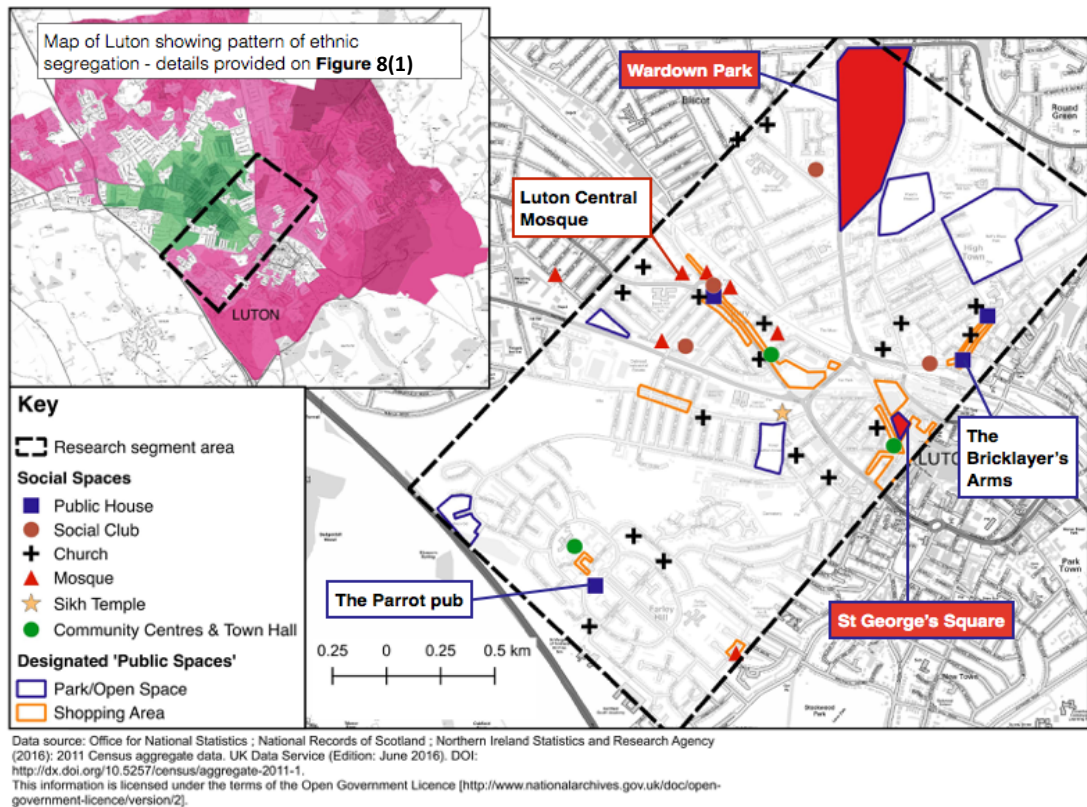


Figure 6(1) - Selected empirical study site in Luton. Social and public spaces shown, as well as pattern of residential segregation by ethnicity in the town. *Data from UK Census 2011 and OS Map data.*

As can be seen in Figure 6(1), there were a number of existing social and public spaces along the chosen segment that could have been selected as key sites for my illustrative story. Initially I sought to study all of the spaces identified, however it quickly became apparent that gaining access to each location, and the time available to study them, would only allow for superficial explorations of each space, and thus a shallow resulting

²⁵ Given the existing narratives of Luton, I chose to look across a boundary of ethnic residential segregation that could be seen in analysis of the 2011 UK Census data (See Figure 8(1))

description for my story. As a result, I decided to limit my enquiry to 3 of the social spaces – The Parrot Pub, Luton Central Mosque, and The Bricklayers Arms - and to the 2 most prominent ‘public spaces’ within the segment – St George’s Square and Wardown Park. The reasons for choosing each of these spaces came as the result of a number of factors; their prominence in the early stages of the research process – frequently spoken of by respondents and appearing regularly in secondary data collection – their distribution across the identified geographic pattern of ethnic segregation from the UK Census Data (2011) as seen in Figure 8(1), and the ease of access to each site that I found during my empirical research. I found that 12 months in Luton provided an ample time to develop a deep understanding and narration of each of these spaces for the purpose of this thesis²⁶.

Despite identifying geographic locations to explore in Luton, an Arendtian sense of public space must also think of public space as a metaphorical space between people; the ‘space’ that allows them to ‘appear’ as political subjects to each other. In the case of one person telling a story to another person about a third person, the three people become linked by the story (as narrator, narrated, and audience). The story becomes the space in between them. Using this line of thinking, everyday stories told by my respondents about their experience of local politics in the town, also became a key site to find public appearance in Luton. Stories told about Luton, about memories and events in the town, can create new spaces in-between people in the town. They become the everyday public spaces, and spaces of political subjectivity, that might have disappeared following the Town Centre Policy in 2013 that closed the town square. This is why story-telling is a fundamental site for the empirical research and analysis of this thesis.

Developing, understanding, and creating such a complex narrative of Luton’s spaces could only be achieved with the employment of a range of research *methods*; methods that had to align with the theoretical considerations already made, and provide adequate data to fulfil the intentions of my illustrative story.

²⁶ Despite this, the eventual word limitation placed on this thesis, has actually forced my final illustrative story to sideline the focused consideration of two of these sites – the Bricklayers Arms and Wardown Park.

6(3). Methods of Data Collection

From the research questions that emerged in the previous chapters, there was a demand that my illustrative case study of Luton needed to bear witness to a number of things. These included; the various ways that public space was produced by the dominant abstractions of the state, e.g., infrastructure; the different manifestations of ‘publicness’ emerging in a range of social spaces; and a range of moments in the town, witnessed and remembered, for both their violent qualities and their public appearances. To achieve this, I selected informal narrative interviews, online surveys, and participant observation for my primary data collection, and for my secondary data collection I used literature reviews and social media archives.

6(3)i. - Primary Data

Informal Narrative Interviews

Rapley (2001: 303-4) declares that “Interviewing is *the* central resource through which contemporary social science (and society) engages with issues that concern it”. There are a number of reasons for this which make the method, especially in the form of informal narrative interviews, ideal as the principal method of data collection for this research. Primarily, interviewing goes much deeper as a method of enquiry than most other methods (Valentine, 2005). In this way interviewing enables the researcher to collect unexpected and uninhibited opinions and thoughts from a respondent, and can even collect more than simply their audible responses. Indeed, in an interview I held with a Bedfordshire Police Officer, an important moment proved to be when the respondent didn’t answer a question, but raised his eyebrows at me and nodded vigorously. Interviewing also gives a researcher direct access to, and personalised interaction with, its research subjects (Blaxter *et al.*, 1997). This kind of “[b]odily presence” is a great benefit according to Seymour (2001: 155) as it improves the likelihood of respondents to be open to the research aims, and willing to provide more ‘authentic’ thoughts and answers to lines of enquiry. On top of this, the interview is not prescriptive on the kinds of responses that its respondents can give. In this sense the method sits firmly within the hermeneutic tradition, associated with the ‘cultural turn’ to qualitative methods; it provides data which needs interpreting, not just

presenting. Rapley (2001: 308) rightly describes it as a form of “*artful social interaction*”. It is thus an ideal method for building my illustrative story.

I chose to carry out *informal* interviews in particular, because they would provide the loosest structure to the data collection process. Keeping interview questions and enquiries open, and allowing a fluid line of enquiry, would mean that, beyond generally steering the interviews around the core ideas of my thesis, respondents would be shaping the discussion themselves. This would make the method open to the unexpected and thicker descriptions that respondents could provide, and would limit the disruptive interruptions that any preconceived ideas I held could have. These informal interviews were also *narrative*. I describe them in this way because throughout each interview I invited my respondents to narrate stories and memories that they had from their experiences in Luton. These would be narratives of moments of action and violence in the town, as well as narratives about their uses of social and public spaces that I had identified. Conducting informal narrative interviews, would therefore allow respondents to tell of “critical moments” (Thomson *et al.*, 2002: 339) in their lives which were relevant to my illustrative story, and indicated how they make sense of life and their experiences in the research location (Hartman, 2015). They would provide “deeper understanding of the social resources...that they draw on” (Hartman, 2015: 23) - such as dominant existing abstractions of the space – as well as the unique private, social, and public experiences that they have had. The method therefore aligns with my broader intention to tell an illustrative story of the research site.

When a respondent is asked to narrate a memory or experience in an interview, it was my understanding that they did so with full awareness of my presence and intentions. The process of narrating therefore became a form of co-construction between the interviewee and the interviewer (Rapley, 2001); it was a relational experience (Tamboukou, 2008). As a result, the stories told by the respondent are not merely a ‘transparent window’ on reality (Rapley, 2001), but instead are a construction, the creation of an artefact (Rapley, 2001; Watson, 2006). This is the same idea as I have argued for my illustrative story being seen as an artefact of my data collection. Presenting narrative interviews in this way helps to see how this method aligns with Arendt’s notions of work and action in *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC). Telling stories in interviews, respondents are fabricating previous speech and action that they have been a part of. This gives their actions a degree of durability (Gómez,

2016). By narrating in the interview context, the interview itself also becomes a specific type of interaction (Rapley, 2001); an artefact of worldliness (Gómez, 2016)²⁷. The interview, like action, can be regarded as a moment of performance and appearance (Conway, 2008). This method, I feel, therefore gives an aesthetic and theoretical continuity to this research, and to the creation of my illustrative story in the following chapters.

Having settled on informal narrative interviews, the next consideration was on how to select, and who to select, as my interview respondents. I approached individuals who I perceived to be part of the dominant state structure, and thus producers of public space; this included employees and representatives of both Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police. I also approached individuals who I saw as being key stakeholders and users of 'community' and social spaces; such as local religious leaders, mosque committee members, charity sector workers, and publicans. In total I conducted 35 extended narrative interviews with respondents in Luton. Each interview happened face-to-face, and lasted for anything in the region of 30 minutes to 2 hours, dependent on the time available from the respondent, and their willingness to talk. I managed to interview the Police and Crime Commissioner (Bedfordshire), the Mayor of Luton, a Bedfordshire Police Officer, 4 local Councilors, 7 religious leaders, and more than a dozen third sector workers.

I had decided not to approach randomly selected members of the public in Luton for my interviews. This was because, while the breadth of participation for my illustrative story was key, I thought that the method of interviewing was inappropriate to hear such voices. Interviews are very demanding on the time, and thus I decided it was more appropriate to spend my time looking to hear the voices and stories of individuals whose local status – as state, religious, or community representatives – could justify their inclusion, and encourage them to take part. It also limited the potential pool of possible respondents. This does not mean however, that I neglected everyday public voices in Luton for my story. The method of online surveys and the collection of archived social media posts, discussed below, allowed me to be receptive to such voices.

There were some important limitations that I was aware of in using narrative interviews for my empirical research. Approaching dominant producers of public space, would likely be

²⁷ A similar conclusion was reached by Mavrommatis (2015) in a study of political narratives in Athens.

difficult due to respondents' status (Harvey, 2010), requiring negotiating interviews with PAs (as I had to do to secure an interview with the Police and Crime Commissioner), and traversing the 'power relations' before, during, and after an interview (Watson and Till, 2010). There would also be difficulties associated with interviewing local stakeholders. Individuals chosen might falsely present themselves as important figures. Equally, the status of some of these individuals – such as a religious leader or a councilor – might actually mean that they were detached from the everyday lives in the space, meaning the narrative they present would not be a perspective familiar to many users of the spaces. These limitations would not, however, negate the worth of hearing from them; all voices would add to the plurality, the publicness, and the worth of the illustrative story that I told.

There are also a set of broader considerations that had to be made with the use of narrative interviews. In order for the method to gain the richest data possible, I had to think about my approach to respondents, my appearance, and my conduct during the interviews. To invite respondents to interview I used a professional looking letter/email which included brief and clear details about my research, adopted a professional and informal tone, and provided opportunity for the respondent to dictate the form of their participation (see Appendix 1.). I also allowed interview respondents to select an interview location themselves; looking to make sure that respondents were at ease in the interview. As a result, I ended up conducting interviews in churches, mosques, pubs, Luton Police station, Luton town hall, and even the House of Lords. On top of this, interviewees were given the opportunity at the start of every interview to read through a prepared information sheet (see Appendix 2.), and were asked to fill-in and sign a respondent consent form (see Appendix 3.); this met the ethical guidelines of the research, and also reinforced the sense of professionalism in the interview process.

Despite these safeguards, I still faced a series of challenges that limited the quality of the data collected in my narrative interviews. In some cases, the locations selected by respondents for our interview – such as a busy restaurant in Bury Park with a respondent – were inappropriately noisy, meaning that my recording of the interview was very hard to interpret. This took nuance out of some of my transcriptions. Different locations on the other hand – like the town hall, the police station, or the House of Lords – were particularly intimidating, and made it harder for me, as the interviewer, to feel at ease during the interview. This undoubtedly influenced how well I facilitated the respondents' narratives

during our interviews. Another challenge came from the way that a rapport developed during interviews. In what Conway (2008) refers to as 'bonding ploys', some respondents would frequently ask questions of me like 'you know what I mean?', as a way of verifying and seeking agreement with their opinions²⁸. When respondents were expressing opinions that I did not hold however, or even disagreed with, it was important that I did not show that I disagreed with them. This was an attempt to encourage the respondent to continue expressing their thoughts and opinions, despite our diverging positions. Despite these specific challenges, I still was able to collect a great range of stories, opinions and thoughts from my narrative interviews. These all helped to create the illustrative story in the following chapters.

Online Surveys

The temporal cost of narrative interviews meant that everyday voices from the lived spaces in Luton were not found and heard using that method. In an attempt to be receptive to this wider range of voices, the second most prominent method adopted for my empirical research was the use of online surveys. These were a range of short surveys that I created for the purpose of mass dissemination amongst people in Luton. The surveys were accessed by potential respondents as an online resource linked to a website that provided background information about the research project. I even designed a logo for the research and linked the survey to the research website, which was also linked to social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook (see Figure 6(2)). The purpose of the online surveys was to establish a greater plurality for the illustrative story that I looked to create, which had offered respondents a chance to narrate their experiences of political action and protest in the town, their opinions on the social and public spaces in the town, and their proximity to the dominant abstractions of public space. In this way, the data from the online surveys would engage with all of the proposed research questions.

²⁸ Although in contrast to Conway (2008), who states that these bonding ploys were often carried out by male respondents with male interviewers, I found this to be such 'bonding ploys' to be the case with both male and female respondents, showing it to be less of a 'gendered' performance in my experience.



Figure 6(2) - Logo of Luton Space. Designed for surveys and online presence of empirical research

There are a number of benefits of using online surveys for this research. They can access a large number of people remotely, meaning that respondents are able to participate in the research in non-confined spaces and times; they can participate in the research when it suits them (Seymour, 2001). This greatly increased the likelihood of someone choosing to participate, and thus improved the likely plurality of any resulting story. Participating in this way also removes a sense for the participant that the research is being 'done on them', instead the research is presented as an opportunity for the respondent to voice their opinion. Respondents can then be self-volunteering, avoiding the risk of participants feeling coerced (Seymour, 2001), and as such will likely be willing to offer their thoughts and opinions openly and honestly.

The aim of the surveys was to find the widest breadth of voices as well as the most detailed, qualitative data that participants were willing to provide. To recruit a large number of participants it was important that the surveys were easy to complete (Seymour, 2001). With this in mind I used an online survey design platform (see Survey Monkey, 2017) which enabled me to create aesthetically pleasing surveys that looked and felt professional (See Appendix 4.). This would encourage participants to take the survey seriously and be willing to provide considered responses to the questions. I also considered that the online surveys should encourage the participation of both those respondents who had little time to offer for the research, and those who were willing to spend a long time answering questions and offering their thoughts. To this objective, I created web-links between the surveys I designed, which offered respondents the chance to offer detailed written

responses to questions if they felt compelled, or to simply 'tick a box' in answer to questions.

With the basic profile of the anonymous respondents I was able to appreciate a certain breadth to the voices that my surveys were reaching, and indicate the plurality of voices I was hearing. However, in line with Arendt's thoughts on identity, I did not look to establish some kind of proportional representation from these different participating identities, nor did I look to analyse any patterns or trends in the responses of certain identity groups'. Such approaches would have contravened my reading of Arendt. Each individual participant was heard for their own unique and political subjectivity. Also, the survey was limited to residents of Luton.

In total I employed the use of three online surveys. These surveys included a 15-question quantitative 'LutonSpace Quick Questionnaire' – which received 582 responses – a 12-question 'Opinions of Luton' survey – which received 382 responses – and a 12-question 'Luton Protest' survey – which received 61 responses (the format and design of each survey can be seen in Appendix 4.). Each of the surveys used a variety of recruitment methods to seek the widest range of participants. They included paying for routine Facebook adverts for the surveys²⁹ - limited to users who identified their profile location to be 'Luton' - advertising the surveys on a popular public Facebook group called 'Spotted: Luton', 'tweeting' a link to the surveys and getting the same link 're-tweeted' by participants (even re-tweeted by Luton Borough Council), and handing out recruitment flyers to participants I met when carrying out my other research methods (see Appendix 5.). A vast array of respondents took part in the empirical research using this method, and their contributions formed an important part in establishing my illustrative story.

There were however, a set of limitations to the online surveys that must be acknowledged. Hosting surveys online automatically isolates certain voices from being heard, favouring IT-literate participants (Seymour, 2001) – generally acknowledged as predominantly being younger participants – and individuals with lifestyles that mean they have more time or motivation to respond. Specific to online surveys, there is also the risk, where a participant

²⁹ Indeed, I advertised the surveys in 4 languages; English, Urdu, Bangladeshi, and Polish – see Appendix 6.

is unseen, that a participant could try to respond multiple times to a survey, skewing the data received. There appeared to be one respondent that attempted this for my Luton Space Quick Questionnaire. However, the ability to order responses to surveys by the IP address of the participants, meant that any duplicated addresses could be considered alongside one another and, if they seemed too similar, could be combined as the response of one individual. Finally, and probably the most significant limitation of an online survey that I considered, was the risk of respondents attempting to complete a survey finding that they didn't understand a question, or that they wanted further elaboration on an idea, but there was no researcher present to offer assistance;

Q: Where in Luton are you most likely to go to talk about local issues or local politics?

A: I'm not sure what you mean by this... I only really discuss local issues with friends and family.

18-25 White-English Female [Opinions of Luton Survey]

Q: In your opinion, where should political protests be allowed to happen in Luton?

A: The question is too general. In principle people should be able to protest anywhere but clearly where protests are likely to cause offense or cause harm then this should be reviewed by both the police and local authority in consultation with the community.

26-40 White British Female [Luton Protest Survey]

While not a perfect solution, I attempted to overcome this difficulty by providing a FAQ page on the linked website to each survey (see Appendix 7.), and by providing contact details for myself if a respondent was willing to get in touch. The fact that there were only two examples that I found relating to this difficulty, implied that it was not a problem felt by the majority of the respondents.

On the whole, the use of online surveys proved to be a valuable resource in narrating my illustrative story about Luton. With hundreds of individuals participating in them, the range of opinions and ideas, as well as the frequency of some repeated ideas, meant I could offer a 'thick description' of the lived spaces I was studying, and claim a greater plurality to the judgements I necessarily made in making sense of the town.

Participant Observations

While informal narrative interviews and online surveys were my main forms of primary data collection, I was continually aware of the “importan[ce] to maintain flexibility” (McCormack *et al.*, 2012: 228) in my approach. No methods are perfect for the task of research, and thus a variety of approaches is always going to provide a richer data set. Of particular concern with my use of the above methods, was that both methods required collecting data in a form that disrupted participants’ daily routines – either to attend an interview, or to complete a survey – meaning that their everyday lives in the lived spaces of Luton were absent from the process. With this in mind, the final method of primary data collection that I employed was *participant observation*.

Focusing on everyday life is a trend that has permeated across critical social studies, especially Geography, in recent years (Williams, 2013). This focus on everyday life has primarily used the method of participant observation, providing researchers the opportunity to witness both the actions and the routines happening in a space to get a richer ‘sense of place’ for their research (O’Toole and Were, 2008: 616). The method of participant observation is generally understood to involve a researcher “*participating in a community*” in some way for a period of time, and to also involve the researcher “*observing [the same] community*” at other times (Cook, 2005: 127). It is an immersive method where the ‘data’ collected comes in the form of witnessed recollections of the researcher.

Diepeveen (2016: 276) states that, in any everyday moment, “people are able to imagine [their] gathering differently”. In this way, an observed everyday moment can become a moment where something new is created and started; it can be public moment. Participant observation is a method which can be present for such “a rupture in the temporal register of the existing order” (Hyvönen, 2016: 548);

“For a moment, the moment of beginning, it is as though the beginner had abolished the sequence of temporality itself, or as though the actors were thrown out of the temporal order and its continuity’ (Arendt, OR: 198)

In order to create an illustrative story of Luton using participant observations, I thus had to select times and places in which I would carry out the method. However, moments of public action and appearance, that I would be seeking, would be unpredictable, and thus my use of participant observations would need to be receptive to witnessing such moments without knowing when/if they might occur. The decisions I made for my participant observations therefore, was to carry out 3 central lines of investigation within the segment of Luton that I had prioritised for my empirical research; a set of observational exercises in designated public spaces, some participant observations in selected social spaces, and a range of participant observations at planned public 'events' in Luton.

The observational exercises in designated public spaces that I did include observing everyday life on the high street in Bury Park, observing everyday life on the Farley Hill estate, and observing a 'Full Council' public meeting at Luton Town Hall (see the locations of these on Figure 6(3)). I had selected each space based upon the prominence of each area in early conversations with interview respondents, and their locations across the segment of Luton I was interested in. In each case I spent between 1 and 2 hours in the location primarily watching the activities and interactions in the space, as well as noting the structures and flows I perceived. I also, if an opportunity presented itself, spoke about my



Figure 6(3) - Observational exercise locations in Luton. Sites across research segment that were used for participant observation method.

research to people that I came across. My observations and conversations were immediately written down during/after each experience.

The participant observations that I carried out in social spaces on the other hand, included; attending Friday prayers at two mosques in Bury Park (Luton Central Mosque and Oak Road Masjid), attending Sunday services at All Saint's church in Bury Park, spending an evening with the Labour group at St. Margaret's Social Club in Farley, and spending a number of evenings at The Bricklayers Arms in High Town (see these locations on Figure 6(3)). Again, these locations were selected as a result of early conversations that I had with interview participants, but also as a result of finding ease of access to each space. In each of these cases my priority was participating in the space, talking to users of the social space about my research, and hearing their recollections and memories of action and violence. Again, all conversations were noted, and used as data to form my illustrative story.

The most varied form of my participant observations however, came in the range of planned public 'events' that I witnessed. Each of these events was selected based upon a level of chance and coincidence. Many were selected as a coincidence of being invited to them by research participants in interviews, and others were the result of learning about the event in other observation exercises that I had carried out. While this is clearly a very unstructured process, I deemed that it was appropriate for the public actions I was hoping to witness. I also considered the level of chance and coincidence to be as equally valuable as the more frequently used, and similar, technique of 'snowballing' in selecting interview participants. I therefore ended up carrying out these participant observations at; a demonstration by the far-right group Britain First (alongside a counter-demonstration), a night vigil and plaque laying event by a protest movement called Luton4Justice, a meeting of a social action group called StandUp Luton, a lunch gathering by the Luton branch of the Rotary Club, a Community Cohesion conference hosted by Luton Borough Council, a meeting of the Luton Council of Faiths, and a meeting by a social action group called Friends of High Town. There were endless different moments and events that I could have selected to create my illustrative story, and these just happened to be the events that I selected and had time to observe during my 12-months in Luton.

There were, of course, a number of limitations that I was aware of, and considerations which I made, to ensure that my use of participant observations were most successful in

developing my illustrative story. I had to be aware that, using participant observations I would be an outsider in the space (Cook, 2005), and my presence would impact the everyday rhythms of the space (Bengtsson, 2014). Indeed, I noted in my observation exercises at mosques for Friday prayers, that I was alienated and disruptive to the normal activity in the space when, each time, I was given a seat at the back of the mosque for the ceremony I was observing. I stood out from rest of people in the space, and had to sit in silence for around an hour (with many people looking at me the whole time). I could not even understand the ceremonies that I was observing because they were not in English. My participant observations were also limited because I could only conduct them during the day time. This of course meant that certain routines and moments occurring late at night or early in the morning were missed. My observations were also limited by the length of time that I gave to each exercise. Given the range of spaces and events that I chose to observe, I didn't spend much time at any of the locations mentioned above (the longest period of observation at one event was the Britain First march on 27th June 2015, which I observed throughout the morning and afternoon that day). Nonetheless, the result of using this method, was that many observation notes ended up being included in my resulting illustrative story, and usefully informed many lines of enquiry in my interviews with participants. In this sense, the method was very successful.

6(3)ii. - Secondary Data

Publications and Social Media Archives

I turned to secondary data sources, to look for retrospective appreciation of the interruptive moments of action, rupture and violence. An obvious location to begin such an enquiry was in national and local newspaper archives. To this end, I spent time trawling through online newspaper archives (including The Guardian newspaper archive (Guardian Archive, 2009) and the Luton Today news website search (Luton Today, 2017)), as well as taking notes from the collected newspaper cuttings held at Luton Central Library (see Appendix 8.). At the central library I also found an array of non-fiction publications about life and events in the town, which I again spent time reading and taking notes. I also made an attempt to find archived TV-documentaries online that bore witness to life and events in Luton (for list of documentaries, see Appendix 9.) and again, made extensive notes on my findings. I was then able to bring all of these secondary resources together and use them in the narrative about the town that I was forming. However, because all of these sources

were retrospective, I also turned to another secondary resource - online social media archives.

The benefits of using social media archives for social research are wide-ranging. Social media archives, unlike much data collected in social research, allows researchers to witness a 'natural' use of a virtual space (Mare, 2017), the researcher's use of the resource does not interrupt the everydayness of the space, and, given the temporal breadth of many social media archives (with many public archives covering use for over a decade), the depth of interpretation and the span of moments witnessed is much greater than would be possible to obtain with primary data collection; especially given the 12-month limitation for a project like this. Another benefit is, given the necessary intentionality of appearing on social media, that the archive in many ways highlights 'critical moments' (Thomson *et al.*, 2002: 339) of contributors, from both their virtual lives and their lived offline lives (for a consideration of the link between offline and online spaces see Bengtsson, 2014). Individuals on public social media platforms, while they may use the virtual space to make banal everyday contributions, appear in the space most actively to report and respond to the most significant of life events that they have experienced (this can be appreciated in 'spikes' of social media activity related to news-worthy events). In this way a social media archive can often offer focused access to important moments of public action and violence in a lived space. This makes the method ideal for this project.

I limited my searches to two key online platforms - Facebook and Twitter – and to the period of 7 years from 2009 (the year when protests in Luton gained national attention – see *Introduction* chapter) to 2016 (when the final data collection for this project took place). I also limited the archival search to the following selections; 2 public Facebook pages hosted on behalf of the social spaces I was exploring – the Luton Central Mosque page, and The Parrot pub page – 3 publicly accessible Twitter feeds – Luton Borough Council's and Bedfordshire Police's twitter feeds representing the dominant producers of space, and The Parrot pub's twitter feed to highlight the publicness of the space - and a series of 4 specific archival searches on Twitter related to protests in Luton (for details of these searches see Appendix 10.). On top of this, I also considered the need to select only *public* posts from the social media archives. Not all social media posts appear on public platforms – some platforms offer privatising limitations on who and where online contributions can appear - but as a combination of ethical consideration (publicly

accessible posts are known to be public by contributors) and the intention to witness public action, I made the decision that only publicly accessible social media archives would be used for this research.

There were also some limitations to the collection of social media archives that I had to consider. I had to acknowledge that the users of social media are not representative of an entire population, that users of certain virtual spaces – like the Facebook pages of the social spaces that I looked at – are likely to represent only a very small online community. Another limitation is the limited types of moments that are reported and memorialised in these virtual spaces. While some critical public moments are told, others can be ignored completely in the archives. An example of this can be seen in the archives of The Parrot pub Facebook and Twitter feeds. This pub, according to many of my interviewees, had hosted numerous meetings of the far-right group the English Defense League in recent years. There was, however, no mention at all of these events in the social media archive. Social media archives are also limited by the design of the social media platforms themselves. In terms of the actions that contributors can make, such limitations include a 140-character limit for posts on Twitter, as well as the user terms and conditions established by both the Facebook and Twitter platform hosts.

Despite these limitations, using the range of social media archives that I did proved to offer a great wealth of relevant data for this research. As already established, I was not looking to provide some kind of representative study of voices in an around Luton with my methods. My aim was to hear the greatest plurality of voices that I could, and witness the widest ranges of public moments in the time I had available. With such data I could then build the illustrative story that I planned. The social media archive data that I ended up collecting contributed throughout the following empirical chapters, and emerged as a key element of the illustrative story of Luton that I created. It was therefore a highly successful method for this project.

6(4). Enhancing the Research Questions

3 key empirical research questions directed the research carried out in Luton for this project. These were stated in the introductory chapter, and are evidently drawn from the

discussion in the conceptual chapters of this project (Chapters 2-5). These questions are restated in the section that follows, and are developed with some subsidiary questions, to show how the empirical research was directed in Luton.

Empirical Research Question 1

In the context of ethnic segregation and recent demonstrations, how does the state infrastructure in Luton facilitate the production of public space?

Lefebvre's claim that spaces are always conceived and perceived by those in positions of power, means that it is necessary to explore how the state infrastructure in Luton (in the various arms of Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police) understands and develops a narrative on public space in the town. This includes exploring how the notion of public space is manifest by these groups and the resulting priority that it holds in their broader bureaucratic agendas. The local context of marked ethnic segregation and the recent history of disruptive marches and demonstrations, are important complicating factors in the development of this narrative. In order to focus empirical data gathering for this question therefore, the following additional questions were also considered in line with the central research question:

- How and where do different state institutions form (perceive) an understanding of public space?
- How and where do different state institutions express (conceive) their understanding of public space?
- How does the state infrastructure interact with private business and third sector bodies in the pursuit of fabricating public space?

Empirical Research Question 2

In the context of ethnic segregation, how can various everyday gatherings in Luton reveal the current conditions of public praxis as it emerges across social spaces in the town?

To answer this second research question I turn to everyday lives in Luton, and the potential that 'lived space' had for individuals to disrupt their routines of labour and work, and instead engage in public appearance; emerging for *who* they are. In particular, I turn to social spaces - spaces such as Mosques, Social Clubs, Pubs and Parks - to seek these

appearances. Within these spaces I looked for evidence of past moments of speech and action - stories, recollections, images, and other artefacts. This is because, as I have argued, the praxis of public space is not fixed, but only a potential that is manifest in ephemeral moments. As such it is in its fabrication that we might find evidence for public praxis. Furthermore, given that I have argued it is in segregated social spaces today that can indicate the status of the public realm and the publicness of praxis across segregated communities, I have specifically turned to social spaces that typically segregate large social groups in Luton. In each of these spaces I explored the 'publicness' of the interactions possible and occurring in these spaces. I also explored how they exhibited privacy and exclusiveness. Supporting questions in this exercise were;

- What fabrications are found in the social space which memorialise past speech and action, and indicate a publicness of praxis in the space?
- What elements of the social space indicate the dominance of the social realm (including moves away from politics, turning to needs, changing privacy and the emergence of 'identity politics')?
- How and where in the social space is there an openness to encounter and public appearance?
- How and where in the social space is exclusiveness and privacy evident?

Empirical Research Question 3

How do the various forms of violence continually or momentarily disrupt and destroy the public realm in Luton?

Across the empirical fieldwork, this study turns to a number of places offering suitable context for the appearance of an ephemeral public space. Within and around these places it is also possible to turn to a series of events, both witnessed and recollected, that present evidence of the ongoing clash between the praxis of public space and the various manifestations of violence. In order to focus this plethora of primary and secondary data collection, the following additional questions were considered in line with the central research question:

- Where can we see moments of subjective violence disrupting the public realm in each of the events considered?

- Where can we find abstract and concrete forms of objective violence disrupting the public realm in each of the events considered?
- Where can we witness the coercion of individuals into subjective violence in these places and events?
- Are there any moments where, despite objective and subjective coercion, violence has been rejected in these places in favour of an ephemeral space of appearance - the emergence of a public space?

To illustrate the theoretical arguments of this thesis a period of empirical research was planned and carried out. This research was not designed to be representative, definitive, or authoritative in presenting the realm of human affairs it witnessed. It was designed to provide an array of data that could populate a *story* about the research location; a story that simultaneously gave clarity to the abstract theories of this thesis, and manifests as a durable artefact of action in itself. This story would therefore represent part of the *process* of the thesis becoming an actual entity. In this chapter I have explored the parts in this process of story-making. It is to the telling of the story that I now turn.

7. The Strength of Talking-For, and Fixing Public Space

Before opening this narrative of Luton, it is necessary to first outline how the following three empirical chapters relate to the questions posed in the thesis, providing a brief overview of how they are structured. Broadly, although by no means exclusively, this first empirical chapter will address the first research question on how the state infrastructure in Luton facilitates the production of public space. It will also reveal the everyday and persistent forms of objective violence that restrict the potential for public action in the town – addressing a large part of the third research question. In contrast, the second empirical chapter – *Social Publicness and Violence* - will consider two everyday social spaces in Luton, a pub and a mosque; engaging with the second research question. This chapter will also build on the narrative of violence in Luton’s public realm from the present chapter, providing some wider considerations for the third research question. The third chapter - *The Genesis of a Story: A Fine Line Between Public and Violence* – then focusses on two key moments of public appearance. First, a far-right demonstration in Luton in 2015 that I witnessed during my empirical fieldwork. Second, the re-telling of a story about Sikh-Muslim tensions in Luton from 2012. These moments speak primarily to the third empirical research question, and consider the apparent proximity of publicness to violence.

Luton, the physical urban place, and the potential space for the public and political appearance of countless people, can be narrated as a town continually being produced by the perceptions and conceptions of strong individuals, strong bureaucratic infrastructures, and the pervasive opinion of a conforming, consuming and speechless mass society. The experience of disruption, the dominance of business interests, and the construction of a fixed account of urban living in the town can punctuate this contemporary story. The following chapter will tell such a story of Luton.

I first offer a vignette on St. George’s Square in the centre of Luton. Presenting the recent history of this square - including the protest and action it has hosted - as well as by discussing recent attempts to close, restrict, and control it, I will provide the context for a

discourse of non-disruption in Luton's public realm. From this, I will train my focus upon the state and the formal political infrastructure in Luton. This will reveal the ways in which planning and order are central to these institutions, and how the interests of free-flowing capital, and the performances of culture, nostalgia, and silence are sanctioned in place of potentially disruptive politics. I will then turn my consideration on to the voices revealing a singular mass narrative of 'one Luton'; a 'Luton in Harmony', where life in the town form is recalled as a fixed story of ethnic, national, religious, and economic segregation. This is expressed by an array of prominent, strong, and vocal individuals, alongside an apparently silent, and apathetic mass society in the town.

7(1). Closing the Town Square

The town centre in Luton, like most town centres around the UK, has been host to protests, demonstrations, and other political appearances throughout the last century. Likewise, the town centre is also the space where one can find and witness the dominant producers of space. Central to the area, and routinely the focus of political action in Luton, is the Town Hall. Originally constructed in 1847, the "plain but substantial building in the Italian style", was built to "serve[] for all important public meetings and dramatic and other entertainments" in the town (Kelly's Directory, 1890: 83), and to be the home of local government for the town. Importantly for this study, this original town hall was also central to one of the most defining moments of political action in Luton; a moment that occurred in 1919.

The end of the First World War in 1918, brought home many citizens from Luton to resume their civilian lives. However, a poor economic situation across the country and an unsatisfactory allowance from Luton town council, led to growing social unrest among the returning soldiers. This unrest reached its disruptive climax on Saturday 19th July 1919; the day an event was being hosted by the Mayor of Luton to celebrate peace after the war.

The Mayor's Peace Day event had been planned to include a celebratory procession through the town centre, a proclamation of peace read aloud outside the town hall, and a 'Mayor's banquet' inside the town hall – to which ex-servicemen were not invited. On the same day, a memorial service in nearby Wardown Park had been planned by local ex-

soldiers to honour the fallen soldiers from the war. However, Luton town council had refused to allow this event; causing resentment from the contingent of ex-soldiers in the town – the contingent which already held a grievance over its post-war allowance. As such, the Peace Day event drew thousands of people into the town centre, with many intending to protest and disrupt it.

On the day of the peace procession a banner was erected across the route saying “Don’t Pity us – Give Us Work” (Burnham, 2014: 43), referring to the desperate situation of the ex-soldiers in the town. By the time the procession had reached the town hall, the crowds who had turned up to disrupt the event started to riot. At the steps of the town hall, instead of hosting a peaceful declaration, violent unrest from the crowd actually forced the Mayor of Luton to flee the town. The fervour in the crowd – despite the best efforts of community leaders to pacify them – resulted in the raiding of the town hall and ultimately it being burnt to the ground by the end of the day.

This day of protest, destruction, and violence, has had a lasting legacy in Luton; much like Arendt describes of the potential durability of action. The action of the crowds that day has been etched deep into the history of the town, giving it a certain level of permanence. Almost all the books about the town’s history include a narration of the event, and the local museum dedicates space to tell a version of what happened. Even a rather warped version of the events was narrated to me during one of my interviews with a local community worker:

“...because [of] the history of Luton, the Town Hall, was blown up. But blown up by its own Lutonians. Not by...Because of...a political thing. And then it was rebuilt. But it's fascinating here. And um. It was a terrorist group, an anti-government group, and the pub just up here, the Gardener, is where they used to meet”

Interview with White British Female, 40+ Years

It is questionable whether the political action of 19th July 1919 would have had the same durability had it not been for the destructive violence that was enacted. Had there not been the destruction of the town hall, it seems unlikely that the event would have had any legacy at all. Indeed, the narration by the respondent above shows that the destruction of the town hall is the only element of the event that resembles what actually happened. The

reason and circumstance of its destruction are rather confused in the account. Other large protests have happened in the town centre since the events of 1919, occurring in the same location (but without the destructive legacy), yet they have had only very limited echoes in the story of the town. Examples include a protest by 2,000 people in 1942 against the proposal to transfer the hat industry out of Luton (see Appendix 8.a), another is a 48-hour vigil against the Gulf War (according to a White British Female respondent, 60+ Years) in 1990, and also a march by 8,000 Vauxhall workers to protest the closing of the factory in 2000 (Bedford Today, 2001). With each of these examples it is difficult to find evidence of their occurrence; their durability is limited to the distant memories of a few individuals that I spoke to, or the online archives of local and national newspapers.

It seems therefore, that it was the destruction of a physical place, the town hall – a place that represented the dominant producers of Luton’s space – that gave the action some kind of permanence. This destruction meant that the space of the town centre had changed, at least for a period of time. Indeed, the burning down of the town hall might be seen as the kind of transgression of space that Lefebvre talked about (Lefebvre, PS). But, if it were to have a political legacy, this transgression would require the void that was left – a physical void in the centre of the town in this case – be filled with something new. A new everyday life, if it were to meet the revolutionary status of Lefebvre (Lefebvre, UR), or the natality of a new political organisation, if it were to meet Arendt’s idea of the immortality of action. Instead however, the legacy of the event was the reinforcement of law and control by the state. In Luton, 87 people were charged in relation to the rioting and destruction (see Appendix 8.b) in the immediate aftermath, and by 1936 a completely new town hall had been constructed on the exact same site. The dominant producers of the space had reasserted their position, and attempted the resumption of conforming everyday life in the town. In fact, not only was order forcibly restored through the police and the law, but the architecture of new town hall exuded power and strength through a significant new feature; a 141-foot tower that loomed over the town centre, and still stands today (see Figure 7(1) – bottom right image). The status quo of the dominant production of space was being reinforced.

The legacy of action – the political grievance of the crowd in 1919 – has mostly been lost in the re-telling of the event. Instead it is the legacy of violence and destruction that has established a level of durability. The destruction of the town hall, and the violent

reassertion of power and control by the state is the story that is most frequently told. Everyday life supposedly returned to normal in Luton and the state's position of strength grew, as did the town hall. This example helps to begin a narrative of control, order, destruction and violence at the centre of Luton, where the disruption of political action has been drowned out by the memory and legacy of violence.

In the town centre of Luton today, another space has become a frequent site for political appearances and simultaneously a site where the strength of the dominant producers of space has been, and is being, flexed and tested. St George's square borders the eastern edges of the town hall, whose tower can be seen clearly from the square. Like much of Luton town centre, this space has undergone radical and disruptive physical changes in the last century (see Figure 7(1)). When the Peace Day riot happened in 1919, St George's Square did not exist. In its location were three busy thoroughfares; Bridge Street, Manchester Street and Williamson street. In years following, the buildings on these streets were systematically demolished, and by 1962 a cleared space existed – used as bus station and as a car park at different times – and a library was built at the eastern end of this space on Bridge Street. This library still stands today, and makes the eastern border of St George's Square.

The most dramatic change to Luton town centre in the last century however, directly borders the southern edge of today's square. The construction of a vast indoor shopping centre, the Arndale Shopping Centre, was completed in 1972 to become the largest covered shopping centre in Europe. Its construction, was highly contested at the time, with concerns over loss of local business and loss of public and social space;

“We thought it was going to be grand...we've ended up with an enormous shopping centre all under-cover...all the other things we were promised; the entertainment facilities, the cultural facilities...they just haven't materialized”
... “a town centre is more than shops...what we are ending up with is not a town centre but a shopping centre”

Ivor Clemitson, Labour MP (quoted in Anglia Television, 1976)

Today the shopping centre, now called The Mall, hosts a variety of well-known brands, and is open to the public for around 9 hours every day (most days it is open from 9am – 6pm). A

feature of the town centre for over 40 years now, its presence is no longer contested, and instead it has become part of everyday life in the town centre. The space on which it is located is privatised; the former public streets have gone. Thus, to some extent, the space has become incontestable. The 70,000 m² area of The Mall that exists today, is primarily in the form of commercial space, and The Mall Company is able to, and frequently does, sanction the forms of appearance within it (much like the discussion in Goss, 1993).

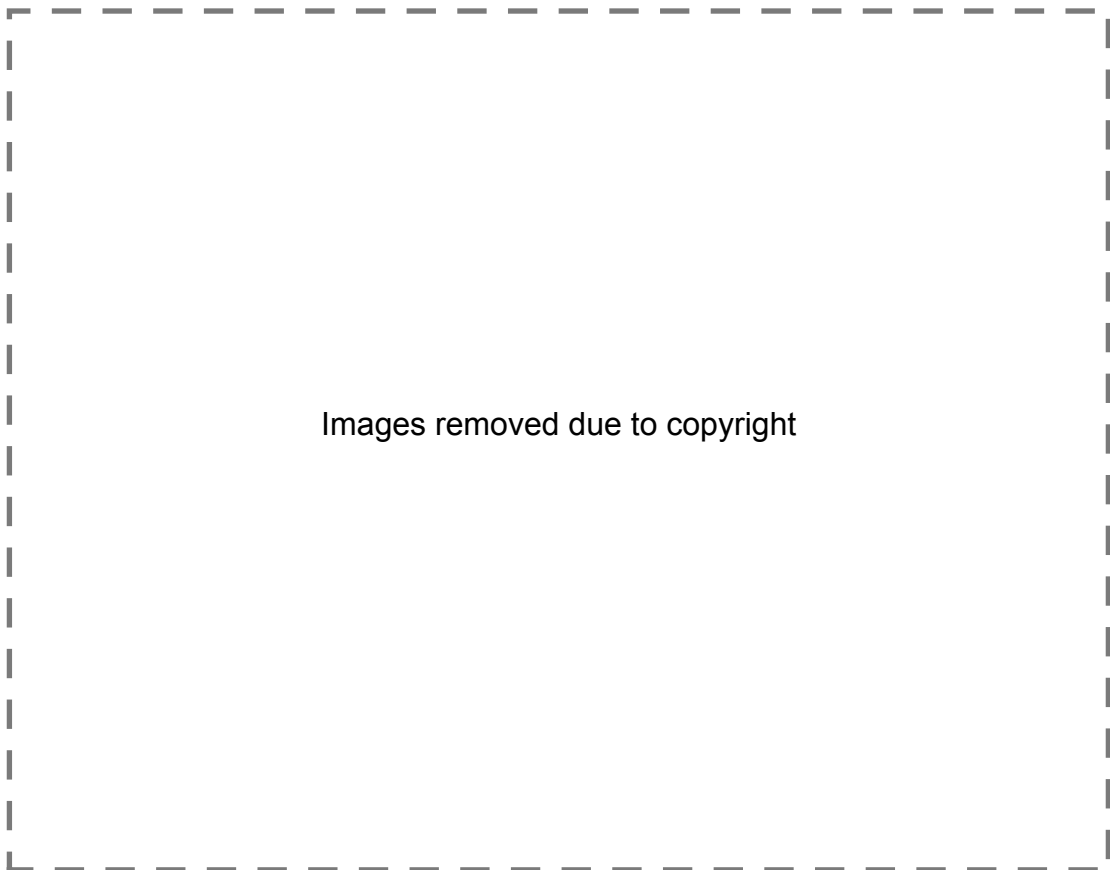


Figure 7(1) - St George's Square changes in last century
(All images accessed 10th July 2017)

Despite this loss of public streets and social spaces, soon after the completion of the shopping centre, the public square was created. This public open space was originally called the 'Civic Square', and consisted of grassed areas lined by trees with paths intersecting them (see bottom left image on Figure 7(1)). It was in this setting that the space emerged as a site of politics and protest. According to one respondent (South Asian Male, Late 50s), it was in this created square outside the library where, in the 1980s, they were part of "regular demonstrations" as part of the Luton Anti-Nazi League against the National Front. Another respondent (White British Female, 60+ Years) told me that around the same time

they used to use the square for Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) demonstrations; on one occasion constructing nuclear fall-out shelters to draw attention to their cause.

In 1998 another physical change on the border of the square occurred with the building of The Galaxy leisure and entertainment complex to the north of the square. This vast complex today hosts “many eateries, a 9 screen Cineworld Cinema, bowling alley, a state of the art Gym and much more” (The Galaxy website, 2017). Thus, by the turn of the century, the public square had become bordered to the north and south by large commercial buildings, and to the east and west by large council owned buildings. Arguably the square was enclosed by the most prominent producers of local public space.

The final changes to St George’s Square, establishing it to its current form, came in 2006 when the grass and trees dominating the space were removed by the council, replacing them with a vast paved square (see bottom two images on Figure 7(1)). Supposedly the space was being “revamped to create a “place to be””, with the designers promising to turn the square into “the world class heart of Luton” (see Appendix 8.c). However, from 2009-2012 a series of incidents occurred in St George’s Square, that showed how the square, the ‘place to be’, became the place to be disruptive.

On a rainy Tuesday, 10th March 2009, the Second Royal Anglian Regiment, returning from fighting in Iraq, staged a ‘homecoming’ parade through Luton town centre. In and around St George’s Square on this day, a counter-demonstration also appeared who subsequently made national headlines. A group of around 30 individuals held up banners that read “Anglian Soldiers Are War Criminals” and placards stating “British Government Terrorist Government”, or “Butchers of Basra”, and shouted and chanted at the passing parade. The result of this demonstration was that 5 men were “convicted of using threatening, abusive or insulting words and behaviour likely to cause harassment and distress” around St George’s Square (BBC, 2010).

Witnessing the homecoming parade that day, a group of people referred to as “union flag-waving locals” (The Guardian, 2009) were also present. Some individuals from within this group, because of their reactions to what they saw in the counter-demonstration, became part of the appearance in and around St George’s Square. In confrontations with the counter-demonstration, it was reported that these individuals shouted at members of the

counter-demonstration calling them "'scum" and "no surrender to the Taliban"' (*ibid.*). In fact, their interaction became so threatening that the police had to come in to protect the counter-demonstration members. The result of this was that two people ended up being arrested for public order offences.

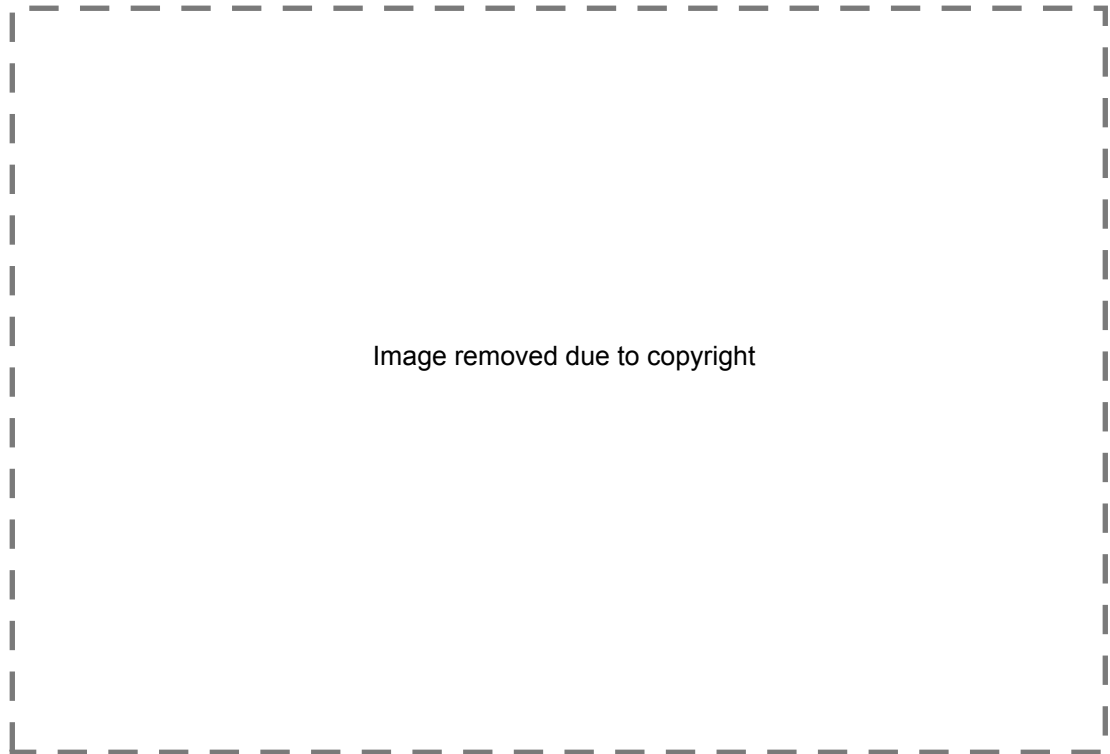


Figure 7(2) - Image of United People of Luton protest outside Luton Town Hall (2009)

In the months that followed this event, a protest group emerged called 'United People of Luton' (UPL), and they started to host demonstrations and protests in and around St George's Square. From the outset, they frequently used intimidation and the threat of violence in these appearances, showing their intention to gain prominence through show of strength rather than the engagement of plural voices in public. After saying they would 'burn' the town, some of the organisers of the group were even banned by the local council from entering the town centre for 3 months (Huffington Post, 2016). A subsequent protest by the UPL, on 1st June 2009, saw over 500 protestors take to the streets around St George's Square in Luton; many waving St George's flags and wearing black balaclavas – it is suggested that these were donned by the banned organisers (*ibid.*). The result was violent clashes with the police that lead to 9 arrests (see Figure 7(2)).

By the autumn, the UPL became the far-right group, the English Defence League (EDL), led by a local man from Luton, Tommy Robinson. The EDL grew rapidly to become a national

movement with thousands of members, recruiting primarily from football terraces - including Luton Town FC – and holding protest marches in towns and cities across the UK. In its early years, the EDL frequently targeted Luton, and particularly St George’s Square, for its demonstrations and protests. In one example, in July 2010, there were clashes between EDL members and counter demonstrators in St George’s Square requiring mounted police officers to control violent outbursts. Then, after 18 months in existence, the EDL held the biggest demonstration of its existence in Luton, with up to 3,000 protestors congregating in St George’s Square on Saturday 5th February 2011.

On the same day a counter-protest group, Unite Against Fascism (UAF), also held a demonstration in the town, adding to the disruption that the town was to witness. Due to the reputation of violence and intimidation from the EDL, over 2,000 police officers were present to escort and control both of these marches. On top of this, because of the fear that alcohol could fuel violent outbursts, pubs in Luton were requested by the licensing authority to remain closed throughout the day, and there was a “ban on the sale of alcohol across the town. In total, the cost of policing the marches was reported to be £800,000, millions of pounds were also reported in lost revenue by local businesses (according to the Chair of Luton in Harmony), there were 7 arrests– for weapons offences and assaults – and 19 people were treated for minor injuries that occurred during the protests (BBC, 2011b).

St George’s Square that day was the space, allocated by the local authorities, where the EDL and its leaders – including Tommy Robinson – hosted speeches to gathered protestors in the town. The UAF protestors, on the other hand, were allocated a space to host their speeches around half a mile away from St George’s Square (BBC, 2011b); intentionally keeping the different groups physically separated. Instead of facilitating any kind of political dialogue or interaction, the policing and control of the protest in 2011 established a situation where two large groups of people who, within their groups, held similar views to one another, were being encouraged into separate public spaces where they would only hear the words of ‘strong’ – to use Arendt’s meaning of the word – individuals talking at them with views to which they already subscribed. The plurality of different views, and the need for a concert of individuals in the public realm, necessary for action, was absent in the events. Instead of dialogue, with its likelihood of being agonistic or even antagonistic, between very different voices – which might have made for a public moment - the dominant producers of space (the council and the police) facilitated an essentially ‘social’

gathering. Segregated gatherings of like-minded people reinforcing their identities without the presence of others.

By keeping contrasting views apart and preventing dialogue, one can argue that there was no space for a new condition, a new understanding, the natality of public action, to emerge from the protests on 5th February 2011. Instead, the reinforcement of entrenched positions - with the protests manifesting as separate social gatherings – and the controlled policing of two separate protests through to their conclusion, meant it was likely that the consequence of the day would be the reestablishment of the same ‘everyday life’ that preceded it. In fact, like the response to the Peace Day riot in 1919, the disruptions in 2011 were used by the state apparatus to build upon its strength in producing public space in the town, making everyday life less likely to face disruption in the future. Also, like 1919, the events of 5th February 2011 has an established legacy in Luton, not for any public action or political moment, but instead for the violence and displays of strength that were witnessed.

As a direct result of the violence on 5th February 2011, and similar events around this date, Luton Borough Council began to develop a policy on the “use of Town Centre Public Space”. In 2012 the council held consultations with a number of interest groups, including, among others, The Mall businesses, Luton Council of Faiths, Luton Town Football Club, and the Bedfordshire Police Independent Advisory Group. The intent was to gauge opinions related to the use of public spaces in the town centre. The consultation found that “only 12% of those questioned had wanted St. George’s Square to be used for a purpose that could be detrimental to commerce, the reputation of the town and cohesion (i.e. large scale protests), whereas 88% would be opposed to such a use” (LBC, 2013). Following this, a second public consultation on the issue was included in a Neighbourhood Governance survey that the council was hosting called ‘Your Say Your Way’; conducted later in 2012. A similar finding was made where “an average of 80% of residents agreed with the principle that any future large gatherings were held not within the town centre and other key shopping and business areas” (LBC, 2013).

Luton Borough Council used their quantified and homogenised data to put forward the suggestion that protests and disruption to the town centre – including St George’s Square – should be curtailed. Indeed, they went as far as to say “[t]he Council holds St. George’s

square for the use and recreation of the people of Luton and will normally allow its use for funfairs, concerts, festivals and public information stands” and therefore “the Council will not support any events which may cause or lead to a breach of the peace, disrupt local commerce, effect community cohesion or have a detrimental impact on the reputation of the town” (LBC, 2013). The council went on to claim that they would “do everything in [their] power to minimize the impact and disruption on the community... [which] may include facilitating [a] procession or event away from key town centre spaces” (*ibid.*).

Reducing the population of Luton to consultation statistics, through which it was assumed a coherent mass voice could be heard, Luton Borough Council looked to implement their conceptions of public space from a dominant position as producers of space in the town centre. Their mental abstractions of public space perceived that the space should be controlled from the outside, with legal restriction and policing, and not left to those whose lives were lived out in the space. Indeed, in an interview that I held with the town mayor at the time, he reinforced this perspective;

“[Respondent] describes [St George’s Square] as being owned by the council that is fundamentally a “public events venue” – a space to put on events, and registered charities get reduced rates. He says that under no circumstances are there to be any protests in St. George’s Square. He tells of how in 2011, the EDL congregated in the square ... After that the council said no to any protest or political movement in the square.”

Interview with Mayor of Luton (White British Male, 60+ Years)

A Luton Borough Council policy on town centre public space use was approved by the Council’s Executive on 4th February 2013 (LGA, 2014: 52). In the final policy there was a “statement of activities that [would] be permitted in town centre public spaces... based on the fundamental, and reasonable, notion that a town’s public spaces should be available for all communities to utilise and enjoy at all times” (*ibid.*: p.53). In other words, the *usefulness*, and not the *meaningfulness*, of the space was to take priority in the Council’s view. The functionality of St George’s Square, where non-disruptive everyday life took place, was core to the Council’s production of the space. The sameness of many different people, using and enjoying a space, would take priority over the expressions of uniqueness

that could disrupt the space. Therefore, the town centre policy, it could be argued, implemented a non-public realm in St George's Square³⁰.

7(1)1. Business as Usual

The Town Centre policy from 2013 also reveals another narrative in the production of public space in Luton, and a dominant abstraction of St George's Square; namely the dominant interests of business and financial profit. Throughout the planning and implementing of the town centre policy, Luton Borough Council repeatedly expressed that they were "ensuring continued commercial access" to St George's Square, and were pledging to prevent any events that would "disrupt local commerce" in the future. The intention of the policy was to make sure that any protests or demonstrations would not have a "disproportionate[] effect on local commerce" (LBC, 2013).

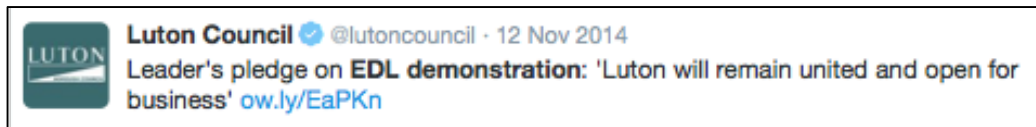
Rather than using the town centre policy to facilitate public political debate, the policy was seen as an opportunity to provide a "positive outcome for...the commercial sector" (LBC, 2013) by ending disruption around the shops and businesses that border St George's Square. At the same time, the Council suggested that a 'barrier' and 'difficulty' for the implementation of this policy came in the form of "ensur[ing] that the policy did not breach existing legislation, in particular the Human Rights Act 1998, Article 11" (LGA, 2014: 54). The human right to free assembly and association – rights that are central to Arendt's notion of politics and action – are depicted as an obstacle and an inconvenience, not an opportunity, for the safeguarding of public space in the town centre.

"[Respondent] says that the main reason for no protest in the square is; "can't have to close down the town centre all day on a Saturday. Most business is done on a Saturday"."

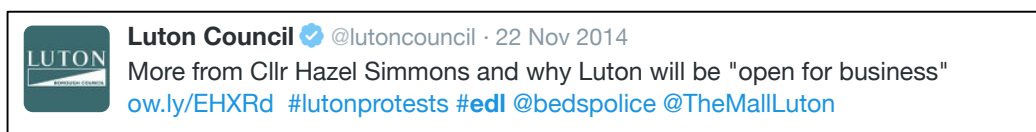
Interview with Mayor of Luton (White British Male, 60+ Years)

³⁰ Interestingly, the United People of Luton (UPL) and the English Defence League (EDL) had as a priority, during their protests in Luton, to get the protests of certain groups in Luton banned from the Town Centre (see Channel 4 (2012) documentary *Proud and Prejudiced*). Luton Borough Council's town centre policy was therefore making this priority a legal reality.

The centrality of business and business interests in the council's production of St George's Square since the development of the town centre policy (2013) can also be seen in some of the social media posts made by the council around protests that have happened in the town at other locations since;



Tweet from Luton Borough Council SM(g)



Tweet from Luton Borough Council SM(h)

You can also see the financial interest in the 'public' space of St George's Square in the promotion for private hire that Luton Borough Council host for the square on their website (LBC, 2017a). Here the square is described as "an excellent venue for open-air concerts, festivals and arts events and creative promotional activities", and commercial contact details are provided for potential clients (*ibid.*). It is hardly surprising that an event in St George's Square in 2015 which made use of 'loud speakers' and 'campaign flags', and featured in local news outlets, was not a disruptive political protest but was instead a promotional event for Anchor Cheese (see Appendix 8.d).

However, it is not just the Council that emphasise the importance of 'businesses' and making money – non-political activities for Arendt – in St George's Square. A number of community workers expressed similar views in interviews I held with them, and the local Police and Crime Commissioner echoed this in a public statement he posted on Twitter;

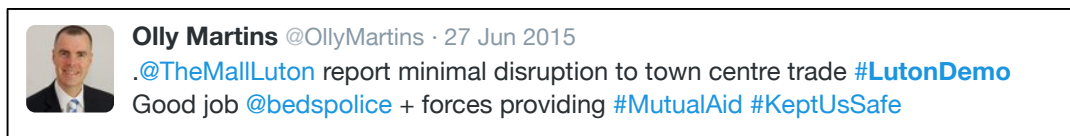
"...and one of the things was, how much money is this costing? The people that are here, you know, if they're paying their taxes, they're paying for this, because [the EDL march] costs millions, in staff time, police...it's hideous. ...That's when they say 'you know what lads, I completely agree with what you are doing, but do what everyone else does, and do it on social media, or write a letter, don't turn up in your thousands and cost us all money, because, that, it cost the town millions

because the town centre, the Arndale, lost something like 2 million in revenue in one day. And they lose millions. And that is just in revenue.”

Interview with White British Female, 30+ Years

“...the EDL had so many flash mobs in the town. That the Mall had to take a stand, because that was affecting business. So there were very tactical and strategic. Imagine the business are being affected. Now, Luton is competing against Milton Keynes ...And this whole game is being played around Luton.”

Interview with South Asian Male, 40+ Years



Tweet from Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire on day of far-right march in 2015 SM(i)

The view, that business and financial interests are central to public space in the town centre, appears to also be fairly pervasive in its reach beyond these prominent community voices. A kind of mass-voice, or consensus - like that which Arendt depicts as ‘public opinion’ in her discussions of totalitarian society – might even be apparent. Below are some extracts from my online surveys, and a graphical depiction of the answers that I received (Figure 7(3));

“Personally I think our biggest problem are the racist idiots who like to riot once or twice a year. It means all shops/restaurants etc have to close down in fear for the day.”

White English Female, 18-25 years. Lives, works, socialises, shops and was brought up in Luton. [Opinions of Luton Survey]

“I watched the first Edl march arrive and saw the impact it had on the town centre on a Saturday with shops closed and hardly any shoppers in the town.”

White British Female, 55+ years. Christian. FT Employed. Lives, works, worships, socialises and shops in Luton. [Luton Protest Survey]

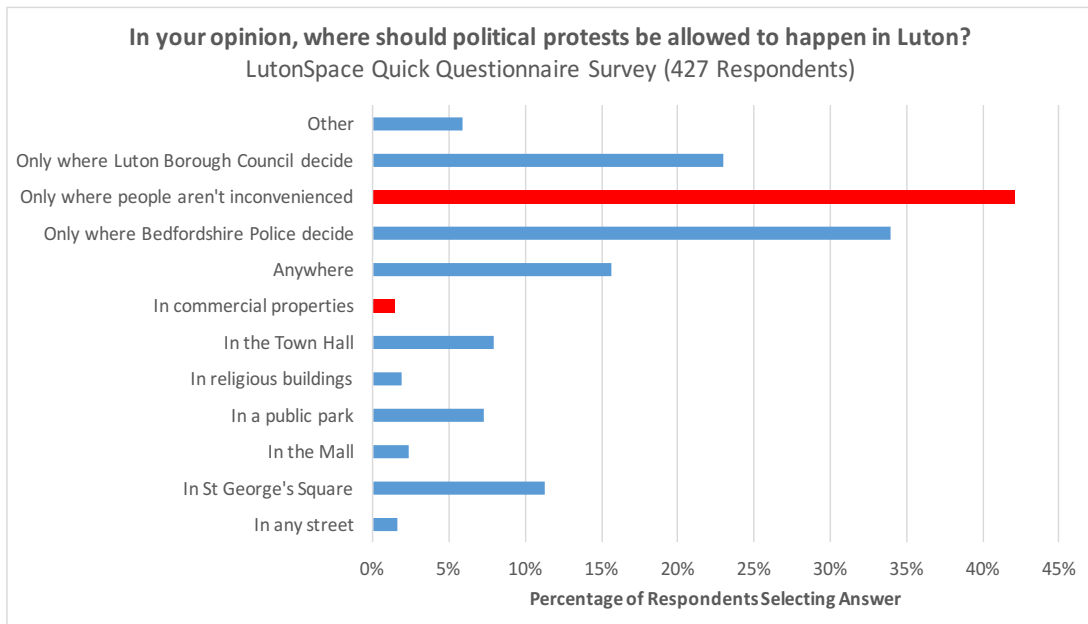


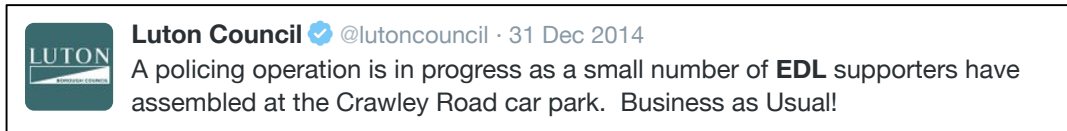
Figure 7(3) – Bar graph showing respondent answers that indicate business and financial interests are central concerns regarding public space in the town
[Note: Respondents could select more than 1 answer. Thus each value on Y-axis must be considered as a separate % out of possible 100%]

On top of these examples, even the EDL made apologies during the protest in February 2011 for the disruption that they caused to local business and people. Announcing to the crowd in St George's square on a megaphone that day, Tommy Robinson said;

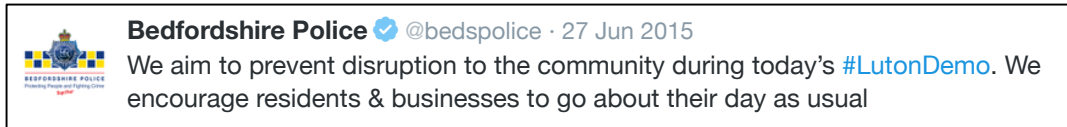
“We apologise to the residents of Luton for the costs of this demonstration... No shops need to board themselves up from the English Defence League”

[Tommy Robinson speaking at Luton demonstration, see Channel 4, 2012]

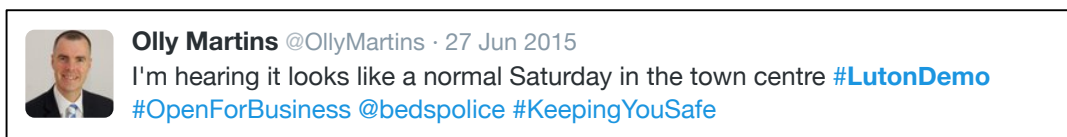
It would seem that even those involved in the disruption that led to the creation of the town centre policy (2013) did not see disruption to businesses and everyday life in the town as essential parts of public appearance. On top of this homogenised voice of the necessary interaction between business and public space in the town centre, there is an interesting phrase that has emerged, and has been repeated, in the public statements and discourse of both Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police; that of ‘business as usual’;



Luton Borough Council Tweet SM(j)



Bedfordshire Police Tweet SM(k)



Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire Tweet SM(l)



Luton Borough Council Tweet SM(m)

‘Business as usual’ is a particularly interesting phrase because it brings together key elements derived from the theoretical grounding of this project. First of all, as discussed, there is the focus on function – in the form of business and money – which is centralised in the playing out of public space. Public space is perceived as a space for use and consumption by the public in the interest of profit-making activities. Secondly, there is the emphasis of non-disruptive everydayness and routine in public; in the form of business as ‘usual’. What seems key to keeping things ‘usual’, is to enforce a sense of order and control, a sense that protest and disruption are aberrations to everyday life in the public sphere, and are therefore not necessary components – in contrast to what Arendt and Lefebvre would argue. Revealing the narrative of ‘business as usual’, in fact goes some way to confirming Arendt’s concerns with mass conforming society and its misunderstanding of the public realm, as well as Lefebvre’s critique of everyday life in the modern age.

The result of ‘business as usual’ in St George’s Square is for Luton Borough Council, supported by other strong producers of space – Bedfordshire Police, local businesses, and

self-declared community ‘leaders’ – to fabricate a non-disruptive space. A space that serves segregated interests, like the performances of religious and cultural events, and the interests of the activities of work – commerce, leisure, entertainment, consumption. In many ways the space has been silenced, and a homogenous everydayness has been encouraged. Through the application of the town centre policy on the use of public space, a demonstration by a far-right group in Luton in June 2015 was forced to occur on a designated route outside the town centre. The narrative of non-disruption, everydayness, and an attempt to reify silence in St George’s square, are all witnessed in this post on social media by Luton Borough Council on the morning of this planned demonstration;



Luton Borough Council Tweet SM(n)

Instead of enabling moments of public dialogue between a plurality of actors in St George’s square, the dominant producers of the space prefer to celebrate and reinforce established identities and the exclusive groupings of the space’s users;

“certain members of the Muslim community actually do something called the Big Iftar, which is the breaking of the fast, in St George’s Square, and they invite passers by.”

Interview with South Asian Male, Late 50s

“We had a summer event, and we called it This is Luton... ..So we had all sorts. We had the Polish community, the Romani community, as well as all the existing ones; Jewish, African-Caribbean, Irish, all the performers, took over St. George’s Square, just in front of the town hall, all day.”

Interview with Caribbean Christian Male, 60+ Years

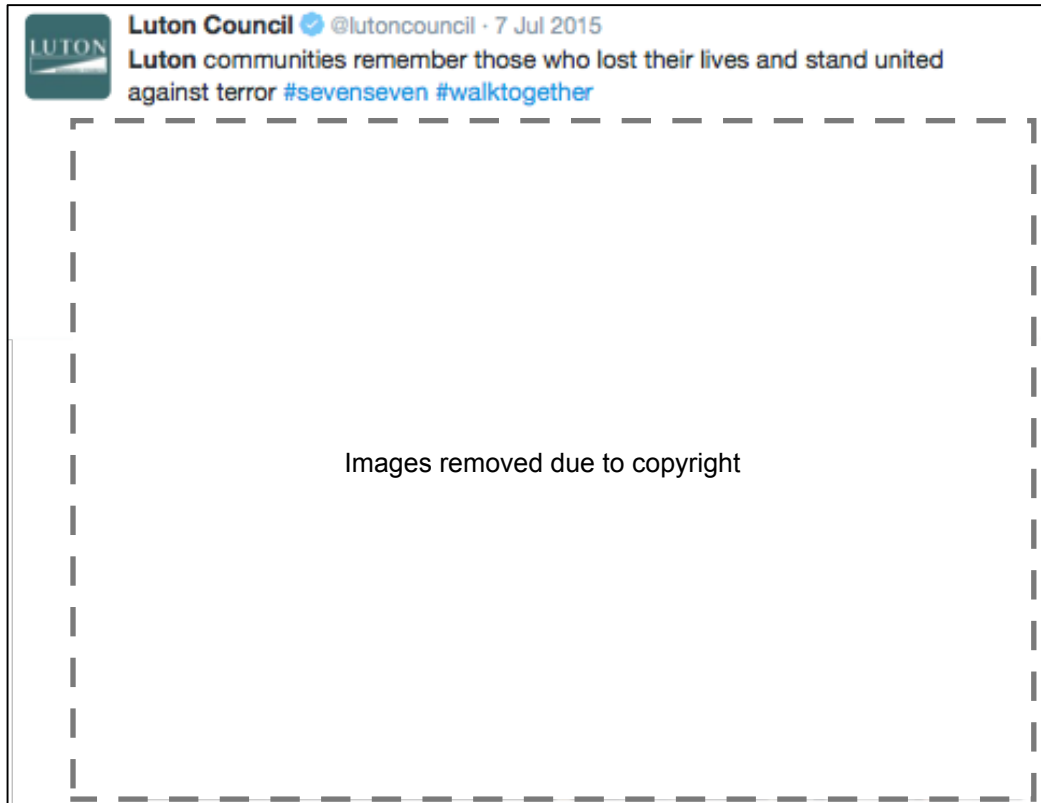
“Luton is joining towns and cities across the country to celebrate Her Majesty’s 90th Birthday on Thursday April 21 from 6.30-8.30pm”

Luton Today article from 12 April 2016 (see Appendix 8.e)



Luton Borough Council Tweet (with images) from St. George's Day celebration in town square SM(o)

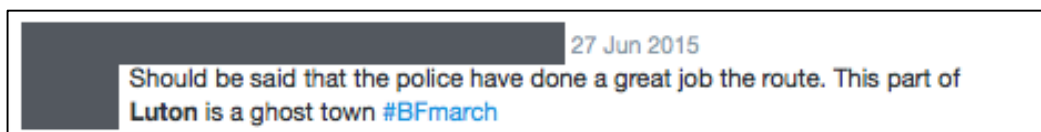
Each of these events encourages users of St George's square to consume the performances they witness, but not to challenge theirs or others' performances and have the potential of creating something new, something political. While many of the performances are noisy, they are not loud in the sense of being publicly amplified by the plurality of voices. From the discussion of the difference between speech and idle talk in Arendt, the performances that are sanctioned in St George's square, given their unchallenged appearance, can be considered violent and subsequently silencing of the public realm. As such, it is in line with this realisation, that we can draw attention to some occasions of sanctioned silence in St George's square which can also be witnessed;



Luton Borough Council Tweet from 10th anniversary of London Bombings SM(p)



Bedfordshire Police Tweet before far-right march in Luton SM(q)



Anonymised Tweet from day of far-right march in Luton SM(r)



Anonymised Tweet from day of far-right march in Luton SM(s)

In an interview with a respondent from the group *Luton in Harmony*, the clarity of a silenced, homogenous, and non-disruptive abstraction of the public realm emerged when

he asked the rhetorical question; “What can we do to create the best environment, [where] none of us, feel afraid, or nervous, [or] suspicious, [and] all that business...”? (Chair of Luton in Harmony). The public realm is depicted as a safe sanctuary. A space that is more reminiscent of Arendt’s notion of the private realm; the realm protected from the challenges and disruption of plural actors and activities. Such elements encouraged in open communal space, reflect a rise in the social realm and as a result the dissolving of a truly public realm. However, despite these dominant abstractions of the ideal form of public space – from the state and some related third sector organisations³¹ - there are other voices that can be heard which unsettle these convictions;

“...they shut half the town down when they want to have [marches] ...If they want to march, people have got the right, pay for it, pay your way. You know what I mean. I don't like all that stuff... ...We literally built a barricade around the town centre so they couldn't destroy everything. But they probably weren't ever going to destroy anything. So we kind of created something, and then we kind of built it up into a great big hype.”

Interview with White British Female, 40+ Years

“...I think people have the right to speak. And if [the far-right] was in St. George's Square, or the Mall or something like that, I think I have to accept it.”

Interview with White British Female, 60+ Years

“...In principle people should be able to protest anywhere but clearly where protests are likely to cause offense or cause harm then this should be reviewed by both the police and local authority in consu[l]tation with the community.”

White British Female, 26-40 years. FT Public Sector worker. Lives, works, socialises, shops, and grew up in Luton. [Luton Protest Survey]

“I think [that locally] they over-police now, because [at] the first couple of EDL marches you had thousands of people in the town, thousands and thousands. And [I] think it was the second EDL march... [there was a] police cordon across the

³¹ The charity ‘Luton in Harmony’ has many links to the agendas, resources, and objectives of Luton Borough Council. The nature of this third sector body, and others, are discussed later in this chapter.

whole street, so people coming from the train station in their thousands [walked] down to St. George's Square, did their presentation, and that's kind of it.”

Interview with White British Female, 30+ Years

These voices question the policing and restrictions placed upon the appearances in St George's square, suggesting that there is not consensus of a non-thinking mass society to stop public disruption at all costs – financial and political. In addition to expressed opinions, there are also moments and events that have occurred since 2013 in the square that show how the restrictive town centre policy has not been, and is unable to be, enforced entirely. Reflecting Lefebvre's core premise that space is always more than a mental abstraction, it is also lived, thus “permanent transgression” is inevitable (Lefebvre, PS: 23). Transgressions of the protest-free, silent, homogenous, and controlled St George's square reveal how the necessarily heterogeneous urban lived space and the potential for action wherever and whenever people gather (Arendt, HC) are evident in Luton.

On 18th July 2014 a 'Pro-Gaza' protest drew hundreds of people to St George's square and to the steps of the town hall – where the Peace Day riot of 1919 occurred - to protest against the continuing conflict in Gaza. At the event there were speeches held on megaphones, and scenes much like those at the EDL protest in February 2011 (see below). Such an event clearly contravened the town centre policy of 2013; the protest could likely cause disruption to local commerce around the square, certain members of the wider community might disagree with the protest, harming cohesion, and there was no guarantee that the reputation of the town would not be impacted. Thus, it is necessary to consider why this event was able to occur.

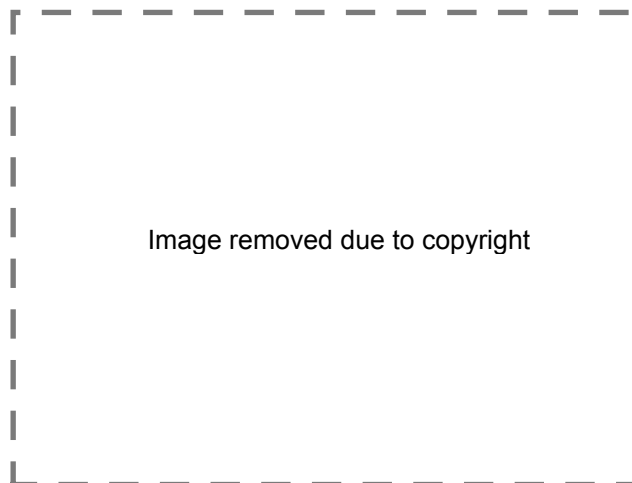


Image tweeted of protest in St. George's Square at Gaza protest, July 2014 SM(t)

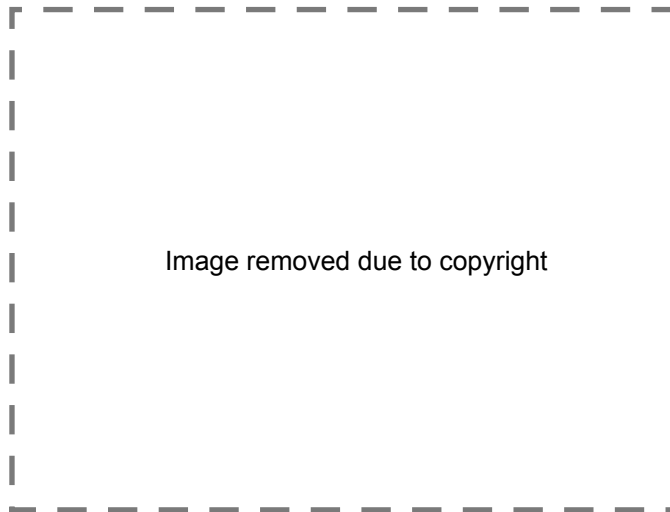


Image tweeted about Gaza protest organised in Luton town centre in July 2014

SM(u)

From an interview I held with Bedfordshire Police (White British Male, 30+ Years) I was informed that this demonstration was organised by some teenagers in Luton who had revealed their intentions to host the event via social media, and had received an overwhelming response by thousands of people within a day of their original post; most of these people promising to attend the event that Friday (see above). The rapidity of this response made it difficult for the Council to enforce their town centre policy. There was less than a week between the first online post and the proposed event. In addition, there was also a necessary consideration by the council and the police, that stepping in to stop the protest, with thousands planning on attending, might actually cause further disruption. The use of social media, I was informed, had fabricated the event that was going to occur, and despite any attempts to control and restrict the town centre, the permanence of the social media post – the ‘action’ that had had an unexpected and uncontrollable impact - meant the event could not be revoked;

“[The organisers] wanted to pull out, because they said... we can't control this now, but it was too late for them to pull out, because they couldn't retract it because it had gone out on social media...”

Interview with Sergeant, Bedfordshire Police (White British Male, 30+ Years)

As Arendt explained, action can occur wherever and whenever people gather together (Arendt, HC). This, it can be seen, happens in both physical spaces and online spaces. Once

an action has occurred its impact is unknown and unknowable, both to the actor and the audience. Controlling appearance in the town centre and St George's square therefore, would always require strength and violence by the state enforcers to stop action. The town centre policy is an attempt to fabricate this strength and deter the appearance of certain actions and actors in the space. However, actions can still occur in St George's square – activities that unsettle the homogenous everydayness of the space – based purely on the presence of others in any present moment. The necessity of violence, silencing, and strength involved in the town centre policy, therefore becomes most evident only when the dominant producers of space actually step in to stop a planned action after it has been initiated. As seen in the case of the Pro-Gaza protest in 2014, the local council and police are often reluctant to use this strength given its transparency;

“Interviewer: I've looked a little bit into demonstrations...there are certain things that have to be done now, if you are going to demonstrate you have to alert the police, I don't know how it works...

Respondent: They're supposed to... yeah, you're supposed to alert the Police, but say for example, this is a very difficult situation. If a demonstration was to just spontaneously occur in the town centre, um, then obviously they have got a democratic right...”

Interview with Sergeant, Bedfordshire Police (White British Male, 30+ Years)

The fragility of the town centre policy in actually closing the square to political appearance and action is evident in the occurrence of numerous protests and demonstrations using St George's square since it was passed by the council in 2013;

“Everybody knows that industrial action is a last resort but to say that workers should never go on strike because they might upset someone is denying a basic freedom”

Kelvin Hopkins, MP quoted at Public Sector protest in St. George's Square on 10th July 2014 (see Appendix 8.f)

“There was an NHS march that came through Luton last year... It was a national one, and it came through Luton. It was nice. I just felt we had a load of people come.... ...I was just so impressed that there was a hundred people turn out in front

of Luton Town Hall, because I just feel that it is so difficult to get anyone to do anything, so you know...”

Interview with White British Female, 60+ Years

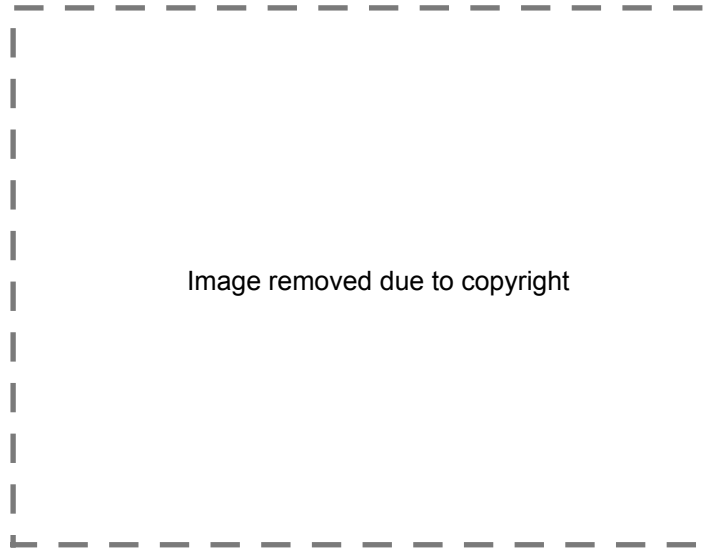


Image tweeted about a march to Luton Town Hall on 23rd March 2016 SM(v)

Thus, while closing St George’s square to political protest through the town centre policy is a clear way that the state infrastructure in Luton tries to facilitate the production of public space (as per empirical research question 1), it is quite evident that the dominant producers of public space - in the forms of Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police – are reluctant to overtly use their strength here to enforce their abstract perceptions and conceptions of such a space. They will try and promote certain sanctioned performances and silences in St George’s square, and will attempt to deter and restrict planned disruptions if they get early notice. They will also repeatedly vocalise their intention to support and maintain ‘business as usual’, but when direct intervention – silencing and restricting existing actions - is required, such overt objective violence is infrequent. This does not however, exhaust an exploration into the ways that public space is abstracted by dominant producers of space in Luton.

7(2). The Show Goes On: Bureaucracy, Nostalgia and Wealth

Turning to the dominant abstractions of the state infrastructure in Luton, and the creation of a singular consistent narrative, it is possible to be miss-led into ascribing blame on individuals working within this infrastructure, or assuming that those individuals represent some kind of homogenous entity in themselves. To do this, could make the error that Marx warned of in his critique of capitalist economies – blaming individuals for systemic failings outside of their control (see Marx, 1973). It is also possible – erroneously - to completely dehumanise the state, in this case Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police, and develop a narrative that depicts a machine-like structure with a coherent and intentional aim to restrict political appearance in the town. Choosing to absolve state functionaries of responsibility in this way, risks justifying the bureaucratic claim of being ‘just a cog in the machine’; one of the prerequisites to the ‘banality of evil’ revealed by *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Arendt, EIJ). The challenge therefore, in the following section, is to acknowledge both the inconsistency and uniqueness of individual state actors with their individual voices and opinions, and the emerging coalescence around a singular narrative of Luton, which implies the existence of a non-thinking and non-judging bureaucracy. In this section I draw attention to the main plot lines of the narrative prevalent amongst the powerful producers of public space in Luton. These plot lines, as I will demonstrate, go beyond the market logic and sanctimony of the right to make money, discussed in the previous section, providing openings for dissent.

To begin the narrative, I show how dominant producers within and around the state try to plan and order the spaces of the town through their abstractions of lived reality into quantifiable entities, defined by exchange value and functionality. These abstractions, I show, go hand-in-hand with a perceived separation between the state and the people living in the town – a parent-child like separation. The narrative is then reinforced and developed through both a contrived nostalgia about the town, and by an apparently unproblematic tale of geographically, economically, and physically fixed segregation in the town. Such a consistent narrative I will show is foundational to the production of public

space as homogenous, silent, and non-disruptive – as discussed in the previous section – without the need for overt objective violence

7(2)1. Ordering the space of Luton

Abstracting the reality of space entirely through perceptions of, and conceptions of, a space is an error that Lefebvre saw in urban planners and modernist thinking. Ignorance to the complexity of a necessarily heterogeneous lived space, allowed for the fragmenting of such mental abstractions into discreet parts and thus deprived a sense and an understanding of spaces and the lives that create it. Turning to representatives of the state infrastructure in Luton, and its associated organisations, it is possible to witness these kinds of abstractions in their perceptions and conceptions of the town. The specific abstractions that stand out are the attempts to quantify the spaces and the people in the town, the tendency to prioritise the exchange value of spaces, and the turn to the functions of an abstract space providing for people's needs.

“Luton has got so much going for it. It's got airport, it's got motorway, railway, it's close to the capital, you know it's in the most prosperous part of the country. And yet it's got all these problems and challenges which make it look like its, particularly in my world, you know, 4th highest level of gun crime per head, 5th highest burglary, robbery and vehicle fire, 7th highest knife crime, organised crime, you know why is all that crime so prominent in the town? And then you've got, and ok the numbers are very small, but we've still got a real problem with extremism in the town.”

Interview with Police and Crime Commissioner (White British Male, 40+ Years)

Talking with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire, an elected representative for the county in which Luton is situated, I was offered the above narration of Luton. Rather than acknowledging that the town, in which over 200,000 people live, is infinitely complex, and consequently that specific moments, interactions, narratives, and memories have formed the perspective and the judgement that he has about the area, instead he offers quantified assertions and generalisations with an air of impartiality. Reeling off crime rankings and physical assets simplifies Luton into data points, and implies a kind of stability to the space. Luton is abstracted by statistics, and the variety of lives that

occur within it, and create it, are silent. Similar reliance on quantified data about a place was also evident when I spoke to councilors and third sector workers in the ward of Farley, in the south west of the town;

“...we have a very serious deprivation [in Farley], we have very high unemployment, above the national average. We also have serious health problems, which is similar to, not the rest of Luton, the life expectancy is lower in Farley than say, some of the other, um, middle class parts of Luton. So, those are. We do have a lot of inequalities in terms of health and deprivation...”

Interview with South Asian Male, 50+ Years

“So when it comes to additional funding coming to Farley for things like parks, because the way the funding works for, um, national funding, a lot of the time they look at an area and say 'well how many facilities have they got?' - so Farley I think, has got about 6 or 7 parks - but they don't look at the quality of them. So money has never been given to Farley for that reason...which is why we now need some money to update the parks...”

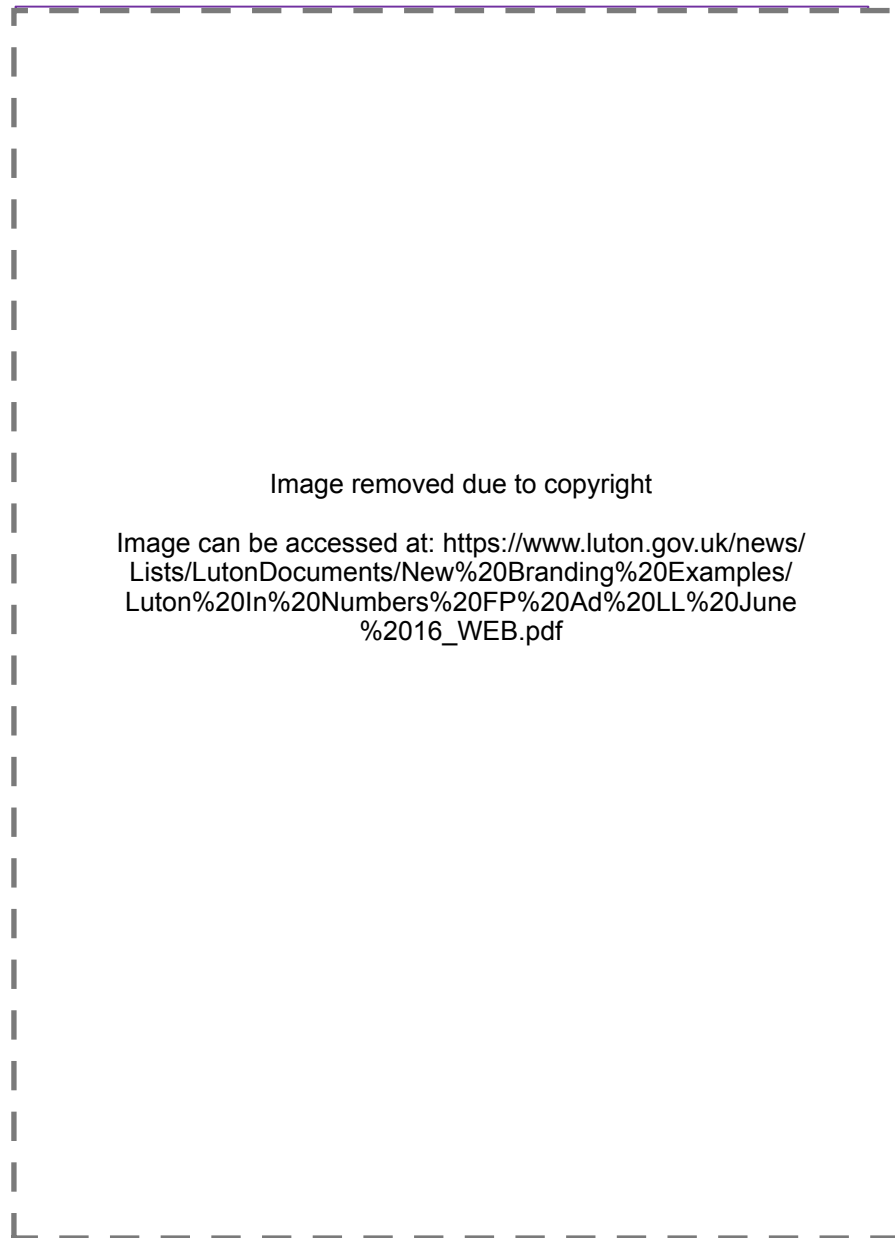
Interview with White British Female, 30+ Years

The respondent above (White British Female, 30+ Years) perceives a relationship which has developed in the dominant production of spaces in the town; a relationship between a space as a set of quantities and the way it is subsequently understood. A place cannot have any issues with open spaces and parkland if it has a certain number of registered parks; irrespective of the quality of these spaces. In contrast, the respondent (South Asian Male, 50+ Years) exemplifies the way that quantification of a space stands in for knowing, experiencing, and recounting interactions in the place. Whether or not he has encountered an issue with life expectancy, it seems, is irrelevant if the data says there is an issue. This is quite in contrast to this statement from another respondent;

“...in Farley, I don't know if you would find clear data to show it, but certainly in terms of talking to people, you sense it...there is, in Farley you get poverty that is multi-generational”

Interview with White British Male, 50+ Years

While the respondent still implies that 'clear data' is important, he also makes it clear that from interactions with people and witnessing the lived space, that there is a 'sense' of poverty in the space. This is quite different from the dominant narrative that I have witnessed, which suggests that quantification, numbers, and 'data', are the best and only way to make sense of the spaces in the town. Indeed, this dominant narrative is very evident in the following social media post from Luton Borough Council;



*Image from Luton Borough Council Tweet **SM(w)***

Alongside, and dependent upon, the narration of Luton as a quantified space it is possible to also see how the town is simultaneously understood and ordered through its exchange

value. This is in line with Lefebvre's understanding of spatial abstraction under the capitalist mode of production.

It is not unusual for a local council in the UK to depict the space it represents in economic terms. The local level of state infrastructure in the UK has been responsible for multiple functions in its space – from waste collection to local governance – for over 100 years (since the Local Government Act 1888), and most of these functions have been dependent upon finances provided by central government. While the functions related to public space and action, like hosting local political debates, are mostly independent of finances, the primary discourse that has developed around local government tends to focus upon finances and the costs of state provisions. Recent 'austerity' measures following the 2008 financial crisis have added to the dominance of this discourse, with the budgets provided for local council functions decreasing dramatically. In Luton a central government grant of £110 million in 2010 had been reduced to £29 million by 2016/17, and was projected to be £8 million by 2020 (LBC, 2017b). The result of these austerity cuts to the Luton Borough Council has meant that it "is now much more reliant on its own resources, such as generating more business rates through promoting economic growth, and making the best use of its assets such as the airport. There is nowhere else that the money needed for essential services will come from. Luton must take control of its own future." (LBC, 2017b). In other words, the council now views itself like a private business; needing economic growth to succeed. Its role as a facilitator of local politics and appearances, on the other hand, is greatly diminished in the discourse. This is why in an interview with a local councilor (White British Female, 50+ Years), she told me that the prime objective of Luton Borough Council is "saving money".

The consequence of the money saving objective in the council, beyond creating Luton as an economic entity, is also to focus upon the provision of functions that enable individuals to fulfil their activities of labour and work, not their potential for action;

"Anything we can get our hands on, we try to develop in to housing..."

Interview with Councilor (South Asian Male, 50+ Years)

"...in an ideal world you could love to have a building where community [could congregate], but if community is not prepared to use it, you can't possibly keep a

place open. Because at one time, [pubs] don't even get 5 clientele through the door. You know, you couldn't even pay the retail costs...”

Interview with Councilor (South Asian Male, 50+ Years)

Luton’s mayor echoed similar sentiments declaring provision of gathering spaces a ‘nicety’ when people really see the council in a functional role; collecting rubbish, cleaning pavements, etc. The privileging of labour and then work as a distant second priority in the production of space, could not be more stark. How could any politics, in its Arendtian or even emancipatory sense, beyond social needs, be imagined in this context? A narrative has emerged that puts survival needs and economic growth above the activities of action and a space for appearance. The rise of a social realm, where the public world is consumed by private necessities, appears to be being enacted in Luton.

7(2)2. The Parental State and a Household Luton

The private realm that Arendt makes frequent reference to in her work is the Greek word *oikos*, or the household. This realm is built upon inequality, where a head of the household dominates with strength and violence over the other members. The primary function of this realm is for the needs – provided by the activities of labour – to be met for all members of the household. With the rise of the social realm in Luton, and the appearance of private needs in public, it is possible to witness how a sense of the town as ‘a household’ has emerged in the singular narrative of Luton presented by the dominant producers of the space. In this sense, the state infrastructure perceives its role, like a parent or head of the household, ruling over the passive members of the family – the people who live in and use the spaces of the town.

“Young people in Luton are being advised to keep their emotions in check on Saturday as the English Defence League stage a march in the town”

Luton Today article from 20th November 2014 (see Appendix 8.g)

“...community development really takes places through our community centres” ...
“And each community centre comes with area community development workers. So we have officers that are assisting communities to help themselves, through our centres.” **Interview with Arts & Community Engagement Manager, Luton Culture**

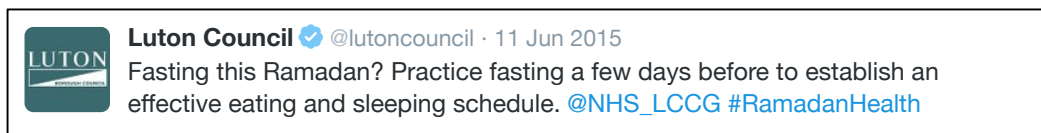
“: ...the difficulty for community [] is that communities [do not have] the capacity to deliver projects themselves” ... “They can think of the small projects they've done. But to think of the bigger project, you need to have some sort of infrastructure to be able to.”

Interview with Councilor (South Asian Male, 50+ Years)

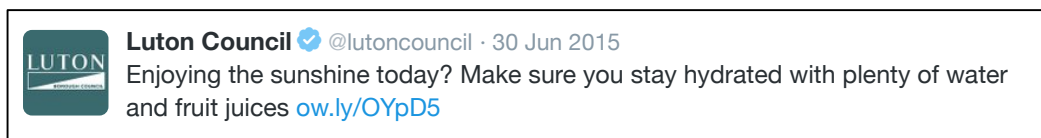
Regarding Luton Borough Council Parks and Green Spaces – “it is as if the community is to be looked after and told what they need by the council”

Meeting with White British Female, 40+ Years

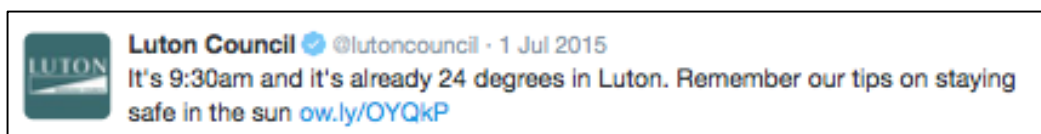
Similarly, the state also embodies the position of the head of the household who perceives its role to be one of warning and protecting its household members from danger;



Luton Borough Council Tweet SM(x)



Luton Borough Council Tweet SM(y)



Luton Borough Council Tweet SM(z)

By developing this narrative Luton’s state infrastructure is revealing its perception that it is entitled to speak on behalf of, and in the interests of, the people using and living in the town. This discourse is a display of strength – in the sense of one voice made over many people – and shows that the town centre policy, developed to enable legal restriction over appearance in public, is in line with the dominant state narrative of control and parental protection of its ‘household’ Luton. In addition, the narrative is further revealing of the

homogenising notion of the people in the town, simplified to terms like ‘the community’ or ‘young people’. Reducing the complexity of urban lives to one-dimensional nodes like this is part of the modernist discourse that Lefebvre saw behind the abstractions of space already explored – quantification, exchange, and functionality. Homogenising the complex reality asserts a control over the space and implies that there exists a kind of receptive mass to the narrative being told. Should there be this receptive mass, consuming and accepting the narrative of the state, then this would hint at the decline of a public realm and a dangerous threat to political subjectivity.

7(2)3. Dominant Imaginations in Time and Space

Simplifying the complex space of Luton through a singular homogenous narrative can also be witnessed in the spatial and temporal imaginations of the dominant producers of space. It is possible to see how the trajectory of time has been incorporated into the singular narrative of Luton through a nostalgia about the past, and in particular the supposed trust and closeness of communities that used to exist. This linear history, blind to the complexity of the past, ignores previous disruptive appearances in the town and suggests that stability and homogeneity have been persistent aspects of life in the town; reinforcing the contemporary narrative. On the other hand, it is also possible to see how discreet physical spaces in Luton are narrated as embodying economic, ethnic, religious and national segregations in the town, and that these forms of identity are, in themselves, perceived to be discreet and simple. I can then show how this particular narrative on identity is reinforced when stable discreet ‘communities’ in Luton are shown to perform at, but not with, one another in public spaces in the town. Public space is imagined as space for the performance of fixed identity, and not to challenge them or to enable the appearance of uniqueness. In the section that follows, I will consider each of these elements in turn.

“I think we've gone away from leaving our back door [open], and our neighbours coming in and out of our doors... Because that was the way it was when we were young... ..now, we've just evolved into doing something different... ..we've lost that community thing haven't we, and... and they always say, you can't always trust people, and to be fair, I'm quite trusting anyway...” ... “...I think we had a lot more community then. I think we knew our neighbours better...”

Interview with White British Female, 40+ Years

“...people live differently now as well, going back to those kind of ages when I was growing up, people relied on their neighbours, helped each other out with child care, and people are more wary about doing that now.”

Interview with Councillor (White British Female, 50+ Years)

“[Where] I grew up, it was mainly white British, and everyone knew each other, we all knew each other... whereas now, not many people do know their neighbours”

Interview with White British Female, 30+ Years

“the last long-standing members of the community in Farley are “dying off”. These are the people who moved to Farley when the estate was built in 1955 – at that time everyone knew each other” ... a “50s lifestyle”

Interview with Mayor of Luton (White British Male, 60+ Years)

In almost all of my conversations with third sector workers, council employees and elected members, I heard a persistent nostalgia for a Luton from the past. The narrative that seems to have been cemented is that previously Luton was a space where people were trusting of one another, where they were familiar with their neighbours, and that they shared more of their lives together. This is told as a contrast to current life in the town; as though local trust, familiarity, and interaction has gone. In addition, given the positive light that the past is presented under, it is implied that the former condition is a desirable alternative to the present one. The result, in the dominant abstractions of public space today, is that the nostalgic drive for a previous lived space outweighs the openings for contemporary lived space to appear.

This nostalgia presents a very simple notion of previously lived space. It is as though there were no disruptions to everyday life and instead that a stable and settled idyll of community existed. This is in contrast to events like the Peace Day riot in 1919 and the history of protest and disruption in Luton that I have already presented. I would therefore suggest that this nostalgia, as a fabrication of the past – in a sense, a piece of work – is part of the process of erasing disruption and complexity that urban life and political action establish. Indeed, such erasures can also be witnessed in the context of *industrial* nostalgia evident in the town.

Luton Culture, a third sector organisation which is Luton Borough Council's former cultural services department (and still has continuing links to the council), prides itself on being an "arts and cultural charity for the people of Luton and beyond" that "safeguard[s] heritage" in the town (Luton Culture, 2017). Its nostalgic narrative of Luton however, appears to focus primarily on only one former industry in the town; hat-making. The main combined arts venue that Luton Culture operate in the centre of the town is a former hat-making location, called The Hat Factory. Wardown House – the town's museum that Luton Culture operates - hosts a hat industry and headwear selection with over 700 hats. And, in an area that Luton Culture has designated as the 'Luton Cultural Quarter' (LCQ), it is revealed that they "plan[] to build on the town's hat making and manufacturing heritage [engaging] more creative practitioners, artists, media companies, makers, producers and designers to cluster in the LCQ" (Luton Culture, 2017b).

It is not in question that the hat industry was a significant industry in Luton's past. Indeed, the Kelly's Directory of Bedfordshire (1890) claimed that "'Luton is celebrated for the manufacture of straw hats and bonnets" (p.83), and even the local football club, Luton Town FC, which was established in 1885 has the nickname the 'Hatters'. However, already by 1914 the hat industry was significantly declining in Luton – in size and prominence - and was only "carried on to a small extent in the villages in the district" (see Appendix 8.h). In the following century it was to continue its decline as another, much larger, industry was to dominate and impact the town;

"Luton for hats, for the Luton Girls Choir, for Flowers keg bitter (if you can smell the brewery it will rain before nightfall so the locals tell you), for Electrolux refrigerators, and above all for Vauxhall cars"

The Guardian, article from 31st October 1963 (see Appendix 8.i)

The manufacture of motor cars emerged and thrived in Luton in the 20th century. Vauxhall Motors located their car production plant in the town in 1905 and still has presence today. At one point Vauxhall employed 30,000 people, and was indirectly responsible both for a huge number of related industries in the town and for the exponential population growth in the middle of the 20th century. However, like the hat industry, car production also faced decline, and in 2002 Vauxhall's car production closed in Luton. Unlike the hat-industry

though, there is relative silence about this industry in the dominant nostalgia emerging from the state infrastructure in Luton today. Yet, the car industry is within living memory of most adults in Luton, and many families that have resided in the town for more than one generation have worked at Vauxhall or one of its related industries. This is not the case with the hat industry. On top of this, many thousands of the inhabitants of Luton today have families who migrated to the town due to the employment opportunities in the car industry in the second half of the 20th century (see extract from South Asian Male, Late 50s below). These families see their history in the town beginning with car manufacturing. This industry therefore, would seem to better represent the current population of the town than the hat industry.

The problem is, car manufacturing in Luton, like many manufacturing industries in the UK during the 20th century, was strongly associated with trade unionism. The vast majority of those working on the production line at Vauxhall in Luton were members of a trade union. As a result of this membership, when changes to working conditions and job cuts hit the industry later in the 20th century, this led to numerous large strikes and disruptive public action by workers. One of the more prominent of these actions in Luton occurred with the announcement that the Vauxhall plant was going to close in 2002. Around 8,000 Vauxhall employees and supporters took part in a march against this decision, described as “one of the biggest and most emotional protests Luton has ever known” (Bedford Today, 2001). Thus, with this legacy associated with the car industry, it is hardly surprising that in creating a narrative of stability, order, and consensus in the public spaces of the town, the nostalgic turn does not focus on Vauxhall. Neither is it surprising that the silence surrounding the car industry is not only met with its own silence and apathy;

“Interviewer: ...there's a lot of nostalgia about Luton the hat making town. ...does that have any impact?

Respondent: It does, it pisses me off really, because my connection with Luton is the car industry. My Dad moved here because of Vauxhall motors. A lot of people moved here because of Vauxhall and associated factories...”

...

“That is the modern history of Luton... but there needs to be recognition of our life in the area, our heritage. And I don't think there is enough recognition.”

Interview with South Asian Male, Late 50s

Another area of imagination that emerges in the singular narrative of Luton, aside from the simplistic nostalgia about the town, can be found in the depictions of spatial segregation that exists. In what follows, I will draw on wide-ranging examples to show how discreet physical spaces in Luton are used to narrate simplistic ideas of economic, ethnic, religious, and nationalised segregation in the town. This establishes a narrative which naturalises segregation, naturalises different forms of identity, and subsequently promotes the enlargement of the social realm and social activities at the expense of public action and appearance.

First of all, it is possible to bear witness to the established narratives on economic segregation in the town. It is important to emphasise at this point, I am not seeking to prove or assert that economic segregation does exist in Luton, or that it exists in the forms that are described by respondents. Indeed, one can simply look for example, at economic segregation by occupation of residents in the 2011 UK census data (as seen in Figure 8(1)) to get a reductionist spatial representation of wealth in the town. The purpose of showing these examples however, is to reveal how a stable idea of economic segregation is apparent in the narrative held by dominant producers of space in Luton. This stability, in turn, may impact the production of public space and the opportunity for political appearance.

The most striking thing about responses to my enquiries about wealth and an economic segregation in Luton, was that two roads were mentioned repeatedly by respondents. I did not ask respondents for a level of accuracy such as 'roads', yet this is how the most economically privileged parts of the town were routinely depicted;

"I think business people are quite wealthy, and most of them are not living in Bury Park itself... more in New Bedford Road or Old Bedford Road..."

Meeting with South Asian Muslim Male, Late 50s

"Um, you've got like New Bedford Road and Old Bedford road. They're like 5/6 bedroom houses... ..that's where the posh people live, yeh. Big wigs."

Interview with White British Female, 20+ Years

“Wardown Park is separated by two roads, one is Old Bedford and one is New Bedford. Old Bedford...is the border of High Town... ..Old Bedford is known for its big wealthy houses. Ok, so, and it borders the park. And you can imagine what it was like at the turn of the century. Because you've got all these lovely old, beautiful big park to look over.”

Interview with White British Female, 40+ Years

Old Bedford Road and New Bedford Road, running parallel to one another either side of Wardown Park, just outside the centre of Luton (see Figure 7(4)), clearly have a settled position in the dominant narrative of economic prominence in the town. This shows that, in terms of wealth, it is perceived that there is stability in the segregation of the town. This is reinforced with this often told story of social mobility in the town;

“...people will move in to areas where their population is, where people of their type is, and then as they establish themselves, they build some wealth, they will move out, and there they will still be spread out...”

Interview with White British Male, 30+ Years

“...So when a new group comes in [to Luton]... ..they, um, with a generation or two, probably one generation, they got more education, and they moved out into the nicer areas...”

Interview with White British Christian Male, 40+ Years

Narrating a spatial story in Luton, respondents describe economic movement originating in the Bury Park area, described to me as the economically poorer area, leading to a gradual move away from here to richer areas as people gain personal wealth; Old Bedford Road and New Bedford Road being the ultimate destination (within Luton at least). Perceiving of the town in this way, I anticipate, could have an impact on the way that resources are allocated by the state infrastructure and, with the persistence of the narrative in dominant discourse, it could actually serve to impact broader investment in the areas. In addition to this, with the state infrastructure prioritising saving money (see above), it is likely that the state could turn to people in the perceived ‘wealthy areas’ of the town to provide their own public spaces. This has become reality in the case of building a bandstand in Wardown Park by the Rotary Club in Luton. Wardown park occupies the space in between Old and

New Bedford Roads (see Figure 7(4)), and the Rotary Club – bringing together many medium and large business owners in the town – locates itself just off Old Bedford Road.



Figure 7(4) – Map showing location of Old Bedford Road, New Bedford Road, and Wardown Park within Luton

Similar clarity and simplification is also evident among representatives of the state infrastructure in their narration of ethnic, religious and national segregation within Luton. What these conversations with my respondents show, is that similar simplistic spatial narratives are pervasive in the way that dominant structures make sense of the lived segregation of the town. By describing areas as Muslim, White British, or Black, respondents obscure the complex reality of life and lives in these actual places. This can potentially limit the opportunity for appearance and public action for some people that use those spaces;

“...so you understand about the different zones. Zones, well it’s not zones...”

“...say you start out over the east of Luton, which is by the airport, right that is predominantly white British, um, population, and there is a place called Tin Town over there...” ... “Farley Hill for example is quite British...but actually it’s got a mixed population, it’s not white, but that’s how it’s perceived... ..Dallow is um, very much transient, it’s got er, it’s Eastern European... Romanian, lot of Polish, lot of Lithuanian, but in the heart of it there’s a Gurdwara; a massive Gurdwara. So the

Sikh community. But..." ...“Then you go across to Bury Park” ... “I think it's fair to say, if you go on a Friday into Bury Park, it doesn't look like England...um, it doesn't..."

...“Lewsey Farm, Marsh Farm... ...people would say they are black areas”

Interview with White British Male, 30+ Years

“...the Asian population, rely on each other... ...The Asian community live in that way. So, quite obviously they are going to live in close proximity to each other. And so, areas have grown. And areas like Bury Park, predominantly, um, Asian Muslim community”

Interview with Councilor (White British Female, 50+ Years)

“Definite sense of us and them in Luton Bury Park area. Ethnicity and religion matter most in Luton”

Interview notes with Church Clergy member (White British Male, Late 50s)

“But there are some areas that are still known as White areas; mainly like Stopsley and Wigmore, are still deemed as sort of white. ...But other areas are becoming more. I mean Farley Hill which was deemed as white, is becoming more diverse... ...Dunstable is very white. There is a big divide.”

Interview with South Asian Male, Late 50s

“...most of the Pakistani's in Luton have traditionally been with Labour, that the Sikhs and Indians have “more or less been Tory”, but that this is because many of them are in Bushmead - the wealthier area of town”

Interview with Town Mayor (White British Male, 60+ Years)

Despite the reductionism of these extracts, I do not mean to imply that the respondents quoted are unaware of the complexity that exists in each location, and that the segregation that they describe is only a partial story. Indeed, many of these respondents made this point to me. However, by holding these simple narratives at the core of their perceptions of Luton, dominant producers of space rely upon these mental abstractions in order to establish their conceptions of these spaces, rather than acknowledging the actual complexity of the place.

“We were doing a faith map of places of faith, just to try and unpack the mystery of churches and mosques, and places of faith; where they were. And it was part funded by the council, and they would do it. Part of the deal they would do the graphics for it. So we put forward what places we wanted to represent. Just google map... ..sent it to the council. First draft comes back, they were using you know, certainly they were defining the Mosques in green. Bury Park is green. I looked for the churches there, not a single church. And then the churches that were in Bury Park, were placed around Bury Park, so they had a conceptual model rather than a geographical model. We corrected, sent it back. It came back exactly the same. And I realised that actually multiculturalism, it was being expressed in the way that they drew it, what Luton looked like.”

...“they were trying to say, you know, this is the Muslim area, and this is the Christian area. But it isn't like that.”

Interview with White British Male, 50+ Years

In another example, when Bedfordshire Police are looking to engage with Muslims in Luton, the police officer that I interviewed implied that they will likely turn to Bury Park and they ‘key people’ they have identified in the area. What this means, is that the simplistic narrative of homogenous segregated ‘zones’ is reinforced, while the heterogeneity of lived space in Luton is ignored. In order to control and stabilise space, such zones, as part of a simple narrative Luton, are going to be used. For example, when, at a meeting of the Luton Council of Faiths, attending community leaders were informed that an anti-Islamic protest was due to happen in the town, I observed the following;

“Police then made statement of reassurance that the march would use public order powers to restrict the march. They can prohibit location and duration of the march - and someone suggested that ‘I assume you will be keeping them well away from Bury Park’ (general agreement with this notion)”

Notes from Luton Council of Faiths meeting (see Appendix 11.a)

Evidently there are Muslims living all around the town, and so keeping an anti-Islamic protest away from Bury Park does not mean that it will avoid proximity with Muslims in Luton. What this moment revealed then, is that, when the dominant producers of space

are pushed into decisions to conceive public space – a conception that tries to avoid disruption or any form of dialogue - they will fall back upon simplistic abstractions. The heterogeneity of lived space continues to be absent.

Compounding the abstraction of spatial segregation, it is possible to bear witness to related simplifications of discreet identities existing within Luton. It is also necessary to consider that generalised narratives of identity are a way of asserting the 'body' as a site in which the dominant producers of public space can exercise their control in Luton. Tropes of identity like ethnicity, and in some cases nationality or religion, are distinguished and recognised by the physical appearance of certain bodies in Luton. Making generalisations about these appearing bodies first of all makes the private realm of one's body a public matter, and secondly, it is a display of strength on behalf of those making the generalisations to perceive of such bodies in this way. Strength displayed by representatives of the state infrastructure in Luton, further reinforces the claim made at the start of this section, that the establishment of a simple singular narrative by the dominant producers of public space, can serve to restrict public appearance without needing to resort to more overt objective violence like closing the town square.

"He then explains that there were so many Pakistani Kashmiri men in politics in Luton that they "have to tell them in or they will be in everything"... ..However he then tells me that "they don't see it like this" and if they could they would have everyone in council from Kashmir. However, [Respondent] suggests that there is a degree of resentment of the Kashmiris amongst the Bengali and Sikh communities"

Interview with Town Mayor (White British Male, 60+ Years)

"...when there are problems they do mobilise, as in they support each other in the Asian community" ... "If there was an incident in Bury Park, say, say, if there was an incident in Bury Park literally everyone would know about it within an hour"

...

"the Muslim community in Bury Park, they follow international events and affairs closer than we do, they still consider it their home. And it's not just events in their country, it's events in that region"

Interview with White British Male, 30+ Years

“I think, particularly within the Asian community, being a councillor or civic leader, um, is held in high regard.”

...

“So I think it, for our Asian, Muslim background councillors, that there, they have got a lot of prestige within community, but, added to that, they get a lot of pressure from their community, you know, about what they are doing, so they are kind of lobbied quite a lot.”

Interview with Councillor (White British Female, 50+ Years)

Not only did I find these simplifications about different identities in respondents associated with the state infrastructure in the town, I also found generalisations confidently told to me from third sector representatives, religious leaders, and residents who have regular and extensive contact and influence with state;

“Especially if you look at Asian culture. If I was to get married in [location removed], I needed to have a house, a car, a good job, then I get married. Otherwise forget about getting married. Asian are driven by that. That's the mindset. We in the Asian community. So it's that pursuit of materialism and happiness, and that's how happiness is all about.”

Interview with South Asian Male, 40+ Years

“some of these non-white cultures are not in to meetings. Meetings don't excite them. Whereas for the white people, meetings is everything. That is where things happen, you talk, you discuss, you know”

Interview with South Asian Male, 50+ Years

“I can sort of flit between my white colleagues, you know white society, and indigenous society. To kind of like being right in the Muslim community. Some of the guys with the beards and the women with the full face, I can flit between the two very very easily.”

Interview with South Asian Male, Late 50s

“the “Asian, sub-continent” and African. He informs me that these communities are chatty, friendly and like to discuss politics, cinema etc. However, the English

white middle class are “cold” and not friendly - they don’t make the effort to be friendly he tells me. An allusion is made to the coffee shop where British people sit in silence. In contrast the respondent tells me that Asians talk and talk.”

Interview with South Asian Muslim Male, 60+ Years

“I think there is also that link with parents, and I think that bond in the Muslim community is quite strong... we don't tend to send out our own people old people's homes...”

Interview with South Asian Muslim Male, Late 50s

“[Respondent] tells me it is difficult but they are trying to engage with the Asian community – difficult because there is a “strong hierarchy, like the council really”...”

Meeting notes with White British Male, 50+ Years

The confidence to generalise one’s own perceived identity group, or even to generalise another identity, relies upon the strength to talk-for a wider population who are to remain silent. It also relies upon a homogenising sense of the people who are being referred to. In many of the above cases, respondents are attempting to depict identified groups in a positive light – a kind of positive discrimination. Nevertheless, the lack of nuance and the ease with which narratives are told, suggests that they have established a segregatory logic which Arendt regards to be part of the social realm. Seeing each of the ‘communities’ and ‘bodies’ mentioned as discreet entities, without permanent transgressions and merging in and between them, makes for a stable idea of separate and segregated lives occurring in the space. It makes it possible to establish the kind of narration on spatial segregation that I revealed above. Even when nuance was apparent, it could still be the case that limiting the generalisation to the spatial scale of Luton, a simplistic narrative could still settle;

“So it is very much seen that ok, well we [the Muslim community] come [to public meetings] when we want to come, and when it benefits us. Um, otherwise we are not bothered. I have a slightly different view of that. Um, I mean I very much stick with that because as a worker there sometimes I get frustrated and I lead with that kind of rhetoric. But I also sometime, when you reflect and contemplate on it. Then you want to be a little bit more gracious, and saying that, there is a leadership crisis

in the Muslim community, the kind of Muslim community you see in Luton, very few people who can articulate and can talk, and can feel comfortable sitting in the presence of others who can speak in the same language”

Interview with South Asian Male, 50+ Years

These variously fixed identities – national, religious, ethnic, economic – associated with a fixed spatial narrative in Luton, enable dominant producers of public space in Luton to reflect this narrative as the ideal for public space in the town. Instead of public space being creative – under the sense of natality that Arendt describes – or disruptive – in the sense that Lefebvre describes - it is instead perceived, conceived, and controlled as the space for performance and segregation. Discreet identity groups and bodies are encouraged to perform their identities, within specific ordered parameters, in front of consuming others. Identities are not challenged or changed, but are instead reinforced. This cements and builds the social realm over any public realm, and develops a sense that public space is the space where discreet identities who are spatially segregated around the edges of Luton, come in to public spaces in the centre to perform. Once they have performed, they are to return back to their segregated locations, and everyday life in the town is to return to normal. There is to be no interruptions to ‘business as usual’ in this social town;



Luton Borough Council Tweet SM(aa.)

“Cllr Jacqui Burnett, Portfolio Holder for social inclusion and community cohesion, said: “It was a pleasure to attend such a positive community event in St George’s

Square. The event brought together people from different backgrounds and cultures to share good food and learn from each other.” ... ““Events such as this are a great opportunity for us all to pledge our support to respect each other’s differences and continue to ensure that Luton is a place where we can live and work in harmony””

Luton Today article from 13th July 2015 (see Appendix 8.j)

I have already made reference to some of the sanctioned performances in St George’s Square. In addition to these events, like the Big Iftar and the ‘This is Luton’ celebrations, Luton Borough Council also sanctions an annual ‘Luton International Carnival’ in the town – a procession of over 40 parading bands, food and craft stalls, and local performers on stages in and around Wardown Park (LBC, 2017c) – and the Luton Mela – “the biggest South Asian Festival in the South East of England bringing...[m]usic, dance, food and traditional arts and crafts and spicy aromas of South Asia to Wardown Park” (Luton Mela, 2017). When speaking to many of the respondents for this research, these two events were routinely mentioned as the key public appearances in Luton; undoubtedly the key public appearances supported by the council. Yet they are the kinds of public appearance where dialogue, disruption, and natality are entirely absent. Instead these performances, of fixed and segregated identities, take centre stage;

“...they assemble here in [Wardown] park in the morning... ...all the main roads are closed... ...they go up round the town, and up into the, in front of the town hall. They have the judging in front of St. George's Square, and then it goes back up there. So it's a whole day, and all the open spaces there are sound stages and different activities attached to it.”

...

“...it's like a lot of little separate bubbles... ...you'll find little family groups, you'll find you know people, I've several times [tried] to strike up conversations, it's very difficult, because people are always in their own little groups you see. No, breaking into those groups, those barriers, is extremely difficult, it really is...”

Interview with White British Female, 60+ Years

By establishing a simple narrative of quantified homogenous spaces, an eventless nostalgia, and the existence of fixed identities and stable segregation, the dominant producers of

public space in Luton are able to sanction the idea that public space is for performance, stability, order, and non-disruption. Everyday life is *inter*-rupted, not *dis*-rupted, for these moments and the lived space is expected to return to 'business as usual' as soon as the performers have finished. Political appearance does not fit into this rubric, and thus the town square can't be for political protest (Mayor of Luton). Public space becomes a kind of socialising space, and the 'public' using the space become passive consumers, not active participants in the dominant abstraction that results;

Interviewer: ...in terms of engaging communities, who are the communities...?

Respondent: "Well, you know, we sort of divide, we serve our audiences, our current audiences, people who currently use us."

...

"now audiences are a term that you are probably hearing in the cultural sector, whereas in the wider, kind of, community sectors they don't talk about audiences they talk about communities, it's the same, it's probably the same thing really... customers, communities, audiences, you know, they are all the... yeah?"

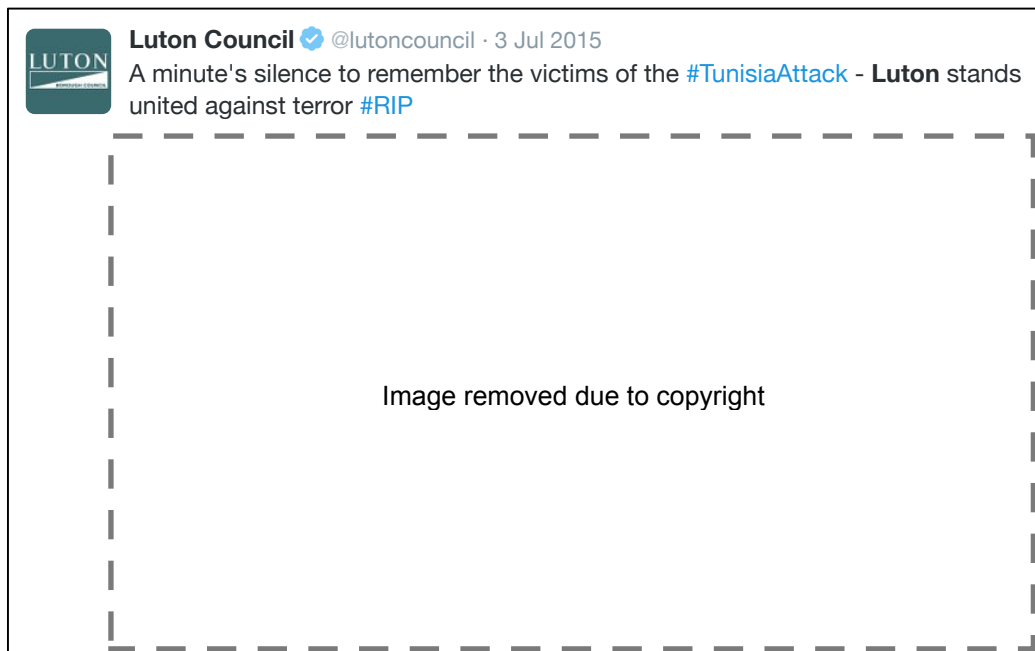
Interview with South Asian Male, Late 50s

7(3). One Luton: A Luton in Harmony

Establishing the simple narrative of passive "customers, communities, audiences" (from interview with South Asian Male, Late 50s) may, as I have shown, reflect the mental abstractions of the state infrastructure in contradiction to the lived spaces and moments of disruption occurring in Luton. On the other hand, the notion of passivity in the political subjects of Luton may actually reflect a real sense of pervasive everydayness in the lived spaces of the town; an everydayness that conforms to the generalisations of the state infrastructure, desires 'business as usual', and in many ways reflects Arendt's notion of mass non-political society. In the section that follows I will consider the existence of mass society in Luton through a consideration of non-state voices, and through the ability of the state discourse to persist. This can be done by looking at data which suggests support and adherence to silence and silencing in public spaces, as well as evidence of political apathy in the town. Ultimately this will lead to the final consideration in this chapter; a

consideration of a simplistic and vacuous narrative of the town that is gaining both prominence and support in the contemporary production of space. This is the narration of a non-political space for the 'mass' of 'One Luton'; a 'Luton in Harmony'.

According to Arendt, silence, or the absence of speaking and acting, was the error of the western philosophic tradition from Plato onwards, and it was the danger, inherent to the public realm from totalitarianism. Silence signifies a lack of dialogue, a lack of sharing ideas and creating new ones, such that the condition before it is the same as after it; silence does not 'speak volumes', but instead *talks* volumes. Just like idle talk, silence cannot challenge or contradict, it merely reinforces a position. This is why it can be seen as a display of strength, a display of violence. Silence in this sense, does not mean inaudibility; there can be 'inaudible' speech – dialogue can happen in sign language or in virtual online spaces. However, the notion, as it is used here, requires one to think of silence in the sense of 'lacking dialogue'. It is interesting in Luton that, alongside a town centre policy that seeks to control any political appearances happening in the town, there is the emergence of silence, and silent vigils, which are being actively promoted and celebrated by the dominant producers of public space;



Luton Borough Council Tweet **SM(cc.)**



Bedfordshire Police Tweet SM(bb.)

Like the noise at a carnival performance in the town, silent vigils do not afford participants the opportunity to challenge one another and start something new. When a vigil starts it is assumed that silence will remain. Even more than a loud performance, it relies upon obedience by participants – an individual could disrupt audible silence very simply by speaking aloud, they could not achieve this at a loud performance. Given the non-disrupted occurrences of the silent vigils mentioned above, this potentially indicates the existence of a conforming silent public in Luton; a silent mass. Indeed, reference to silent and conforming behaviour in public was made in a number of conversations that I held with respondents;

“...technology has completely changed, people don't even want to go out anymore, that sort of stuff. That's kind of taken over a bit. People sort of lose the community spirit by all the change. And I suppose it's going to get bloody worse as it carries on, if you know what I mean?”

Interview with White British Female, 20+ Years

“Many people walking along looking at their phones”... “People sat on central island, no one talking, all sitting and staring – mostly men” ... “The bored silence of the people sitting in the central island is overwhelming”

Observations from The Mall (see Appendix 11.b)

“...people like where they are, they go because of a safe zone, safe space. And to challenge them... ...people don't like that, it's a human nature thing. So it's not an integration thing, it's a human nature thing... so to move out of your comfort zone.

So if you asked me for example, what is my priority? I want to be with my family, spend time....”

Interview with South Asian Male, 40+ Years

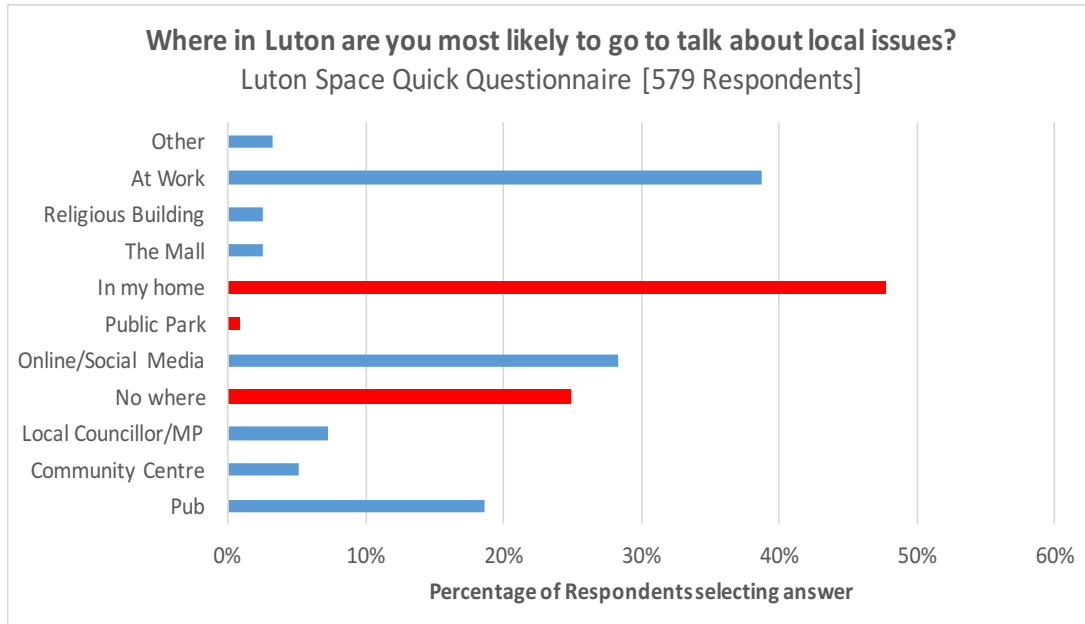
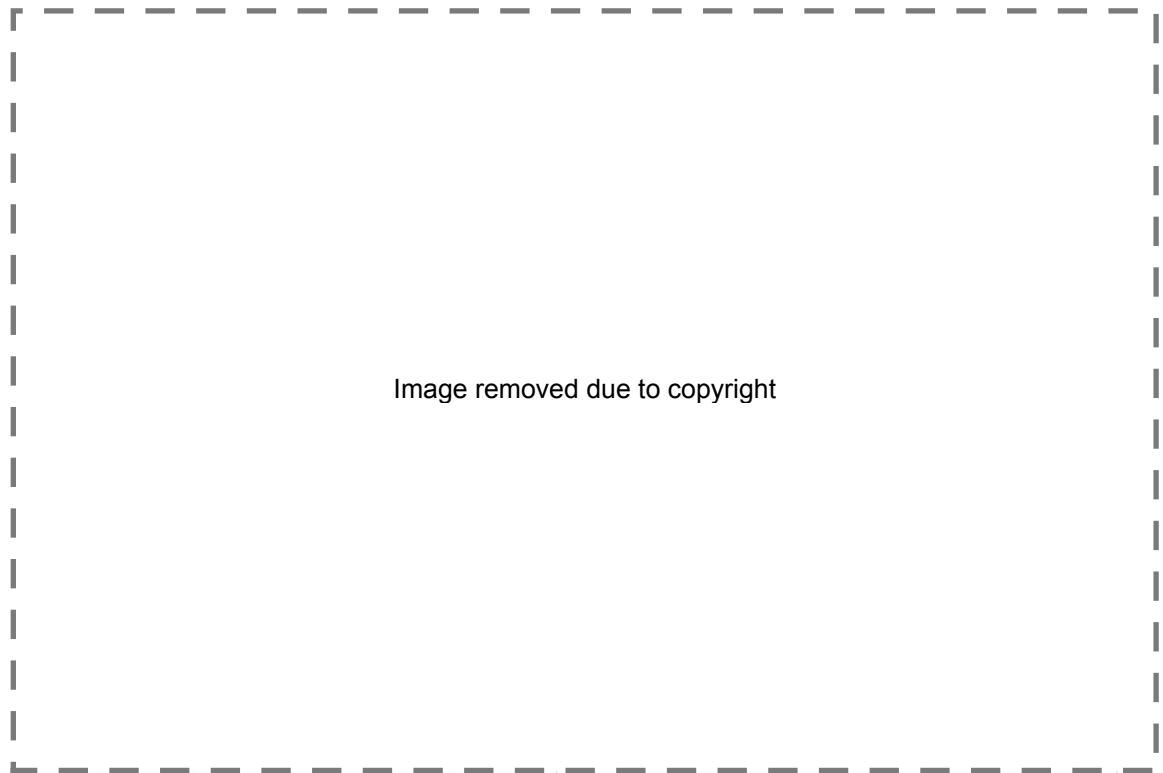


Figure 7(5) – Bar graph using data from online survey, indicating respondents’ preferences not to engage in public actions
[Note: Respondents could select more than 1 answer. Thus each value on Y-axis must be considered as a separate % out of possible 100%]

On top of these examples, I also saw the publication and promotion of a poster in Luton that had been put together by a number of prominent groups in the town (see Figure 7(6)). This poster was designed to empower people in Luton to tackle the frequent emergence of the far-right and extremist protests in the town. However, in line with the narrative on silence, one can see that it is encouraged for people not to engage in dialogue with such individuals and groups in the town. Instead silence is being promoted; non-political, stable and non-disruptive silence.

Adherence to silence, as inaudibility, in public space does not mean that a lack of dialogue need necessarily exist in Luton. An inaudible act can encourage political appearance - a witness to an act can re-act, or act-back. However, such action and reaction can only be public and political if it is creative of something new (Arendt), and if the condition before the act does not persist (Lefebvre). A destructive or violent action/reaction, a display of strength, would not be public, and would not embody Arendt’s space of appearance. An



Tips for Dealing with Far Right & Extremist Groups, Poster supported by Luton Faith Groups and displayed around Luton (2015), Accessed at: grassrootsluton.org.uk/s/Tips-for-Dealing-Extremism.pdf (Accessed on 10th July 2017)

Figure 7(6) – Poster that appeared in Luton during 2016, encouraging people to ‘Keep Calm and Carry On’ and ‘Don’t engage in discussion’

interesting silent act in Luton was mentioned by a number of respondents when I asked them about the biggest changes they had seen in the town in their lifetimes;

“The most striking thing is in the change in the Asian women's dress. When I started, um, I mean there, we had school uniform, but there was no uniform issues with girls dress and certainly nothing to do with head scarves or anything like that. Even though there were a lot of Asian background pupils there. But gradually over the years the, it, you know, we have, if you are in the Arndale Centre you'll see many many women with head scarves but you will also, [] see some completely covered in the Burkha, I mean from head to toe with just the eyes showing. That, is, um, the most striking change.”

Interview with White British Female, 60+ Years

“For me Luton has changed a lot in that time [since respondent arrived in Luton] because, I am talking about in 2006, 2007, Luton was different. You had less people wearing Niqab for example. Compared to today. I have seen that change. Being a Muslim myself it was like suddenly, woah... what's going on here...”

Interview with South Asian Male, 40+ Years

The decision of a number of women in Luton to alter the appearance of their private body, as a public site of appearance, through the wearing of certain dress with religious overtones, in public spaces is a silent act. In and of itself it does not register as a public political action – according to the way I have defined this in the conceptual framework. However, if this act were to bring about dialogue amidst the plurality of public space, then it could indeed establish this. What appears to have been the result of these kinds of silent acts in Luton’s public realm though, in most cases, is for silent acceptance, tolerance, or apathy to this change. The opportunity for a space of appearance being missed in favour of more-than-inaudible silence. A similar example, showing the silence of bodily acts, is apparent in the following conversation that I had in one of Luton’s pubs;

“[Respondent] talks about the change in Asian men in Luton – he mimes a shy walking style, and then a confident shoulders back walking” ... “[Respondent] tells me about walking down the pavement in Luton, apparently Asians don’t get out of the way, even for pregnant women – there is a ‘lack of respect”

Observations from The Bricklayer’s Arms (see Appendix 11.c)

The respondent that I was speaking to in this example actually used his own body to mime the bodily performance of the individual that he was talking about. Instead of using the silent bodily act that he witnessed in public to open a dialogue with the actor, the respondent chose silence in that moment, and waited to use his own body to mimic the act in a segregated social space, reinforcing a division that he already perceived. The actual silence in the public realm, and the subsequent idle talk in the social realm, shows how non-disruption in public can reinforce a simplistic and segregated narration of the town; conforming with the dominant production of public space by the state infrastructure.

The reinforcement of the non-disruptive, homogenising, and segregated production of public space in Luton is similarly strengthened by the apparent political apathy on the part

of the people living in and using the spaces of the town. Political apathy, as shown in the conceptual framework, is central to Arendt's concern with mass society. While spending all of one's time in the public realm, according to Arendt, would be shallow, its opposite – spending no time in the public realm – would be a futile existence. Apathy to public appearance and political subjectivity, is a condition that Arendt saw as being inevitable with the rise of the social realm. It is possible to show in a number of examples from my experiences and conversations in Luton, that there was a pattern of limited and apathetic public engagement with state facilitated public forums in the town, and that the state infrastructure itself was at a loss when it came to challenging such mass apathy. I will consider each of these elements in turn;

“...we have regular Area Forums, in which we have, every three months, where people from Farley come in, and it's again, sometimes well attended, depending what issues they feel strongly about. And sometimes it's the same people that were there at the last forum. And the same issues coming up.”

Interview with Councilor (South Asian Male, 50+ Years)

“There are certain people in the community who don't actually want you to engage with them, and that's their right as well. Um, so have to respect that. They want to mind their own business, and they want you to let them mind it. So you have to. But that doesn't mean that you don't try to break down the barrier by trying to providing, by enticing or doing things they want. But there are some people you will never engage. Um, and I don't always know. I mean, I find the Asian community engage quite well... ...Whereas, um, and Turkish seem to be a bit like that too. So, um, you've got to keep on trying... ...there's a lot of me thinks that some people don't want to be engaged.”

Interview with White British Female, 40+ Years

“...there are area forums, run by the council for each of the wards. But they're so, sort of, I don't know, soul destroying really”

Interview with White British Female, 60+ Years

Q: Where in Luton are you most likely to go to talk about local issues or local politics?

A: “There isn’t really a place to go if you want an issue resolved. Council meetings but our opinion is never really taken into consideration”

White & Asian female, 26-40 years. Lives, works, socialises, worships, shops and was brought up in Luton. [Opinions of Luton Survey]

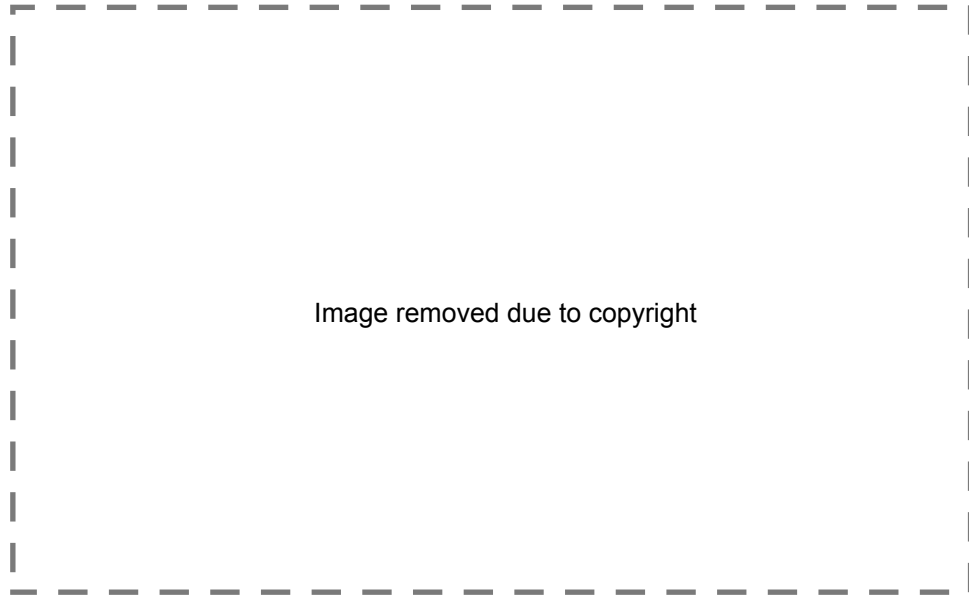
Luton Borough Council, and a number of associated community groups and third sector organisations, frequently host events and forums designed to encourage public dialogue and political appearance. Given the closing of the town square to disruptive appearance, it might seem that such spaces would provide an ideal opportunity for silenced individuals to appear. However, as the examples above show, the turn-out and engagement with these openings is generally low. The implication is that many people are apathetic to politics and public appearance, as described above. However, rather than apathy, there may be an issue with the nature of these openings. When I asked one councilor to explain to me how an ‘Area Board Meeting’ – one of the council’s flagship public engagement forums - plays out, I was told;

“The police will...give some information to residents about well, there's been lot of burglaries in such and such road, just to warn people. Give them advice and that kind of stuff. And the Councillors; we kind of lead those sessions. And we take um, we have a running sort of table, where we've got current issues, and we take them off once they've been resolved.” ... “But the main meeting is kind of more formal. The agenda is led by our officers who will put stuff on there that is information giving, if you like, to, rather than a discussion...”

Interview with Councilor (White British Female, 50+ Years)

Like the parental role that I discussed in the previous section, the opportunity for appearance in these local forums facilitated by the council seems to be hampered by the dominant and parental role that the council perceives of itself, and subsequently performs in these forums. It is hardly surprising that one respondent (White British Female, 60+ Years) refers to council ward meetings as “soul destroying”, and a respondent in the *Opinions of Luton* survey said that their opinion is never really taken into consideration at such meetings. It is potentially, not apathy but restriction – strength, and therefore violence – that sees poor attendance at public forums. When the council advertise that their area board meetings offer people in Luton a ‘voice’ (see below), one might consider

that they are offering an idle-talking voice, and not a speaking voice. People are encouraged to attend meetings and talk, but when it comes to ‘speech’ – the political activity that begins something new in the public realm – the opportunity seems to disappear;



*Image from Luton Borough Council Tweet **SM(dd.)***

While my reading of Arendt and Lefebvre leads me to this conclusion, it is evident that the dominant producers of public space in Luton find the disengagement in their public forums a challenging and unsolvable conundrum;

“Trying to get people involved is one of the hardest things we have come across. Seriously, and we are still struggling now” ... “But we still fighting a losing battle here trying to get more people involved you know. Um, and that's, you know, all different people from the estate, all different ages, all different sizes and so on. That is a real struggle, it really is a struggle. Just working with different people.”

Interview with White British Female, 20+ Years

“It's keeping their enthusiasm. People do turn up, but they lose the enthusiasm. We've tried that through the local authority, and we've failed miserably. We can attract them a few times, but we can't attract them constantly...”

Interview with South Asian Male, 50+ Years

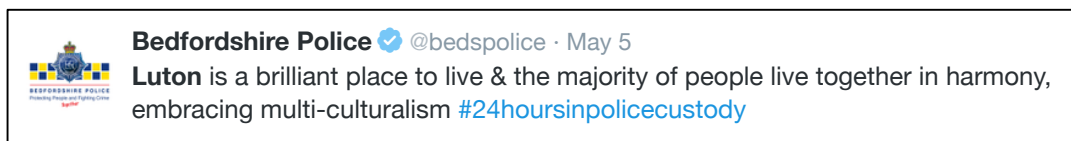
The solution that the dominant producers of public space find to the low levels of public engagement however, rather than to pay more attention to the lived space, to the moments of public appearance, and the opportunities for political disruption, is to instead put a layer of ‘Luton in Harmony’ onto the narrative that is created about the town. This layer is the most vacuous layer in the narrative possible. It adds weight to Lefebvre’s criticism of the homogenising nature of dominant contemporary discourse, and reinforces Arendt’s warning that the rise in the social realm will witness a simultaneous erasure of the nuance, individuality, and plurality of the public realm.

“Then we talk about the nature of the many communities in Luton. [Respondent] refers to Luton in Harmony, and how there is “1 town, 1 community, 1 voice”

Interview with Mayor of Luton (White British Male, 60+ Years)

“...Luton is a harmonious town, we just have to tell everyone. Or we have to make sure that the harmony remains”

Interview with Chair of Luton in Harmony



Bedfordshire Police Tweet SM(ee.)

“Luton is a diverse and vibrant town, with many people from all over the world coming together and living in harmony”

Statement from Luton Borough Council quoted in *Luton Today*, 23rd July 2010 (see Appendix 8.k)

Using the idea of ‘harmony’, where a number of elements combine to make a complementary whole, there is the suggestion that, in Luton, there should be no discordant elements. Instead of acknowledging that contradictory voices and disruption should occur in public, due to the heterogeneity of urban life, the dominant producers of space are talking, not just about fixed segregated communities performing in public – as already discussed – but about the existence of one singular cohesive voice. A cohesive voice that erases the differences making it in order to fabricate the result; the harmony.

There becomes no need to talk about the many voices in the town, instead one can claim there is “1 town, 1 community, 1 voice” (White British Male, 60+ Years). This is a convenient solution for the dominant producers of space to their conundrum about poor turnout to local events. If there is a single harmonious voice, then either everyone will turn up to a meeting, or nobody will turn up. Apparent apathy for public forums can be explained;

“If there are burning issues, people will come. If everything is going nice and smooth, nobody will come...”

Interview with Councillor (South Asian Male, 50+ Years)

‘Luton in Harmony’ becomes more than simply phrase in the dominant narration of the town in 2010. On 15th January 2010 it was the title of a campaign to “celebrate the diversity and unity of [Luton’s] communities, and to build a positive reputation for [the] town” that was launched in the Town Hall (Luton in Harmony, 2017). According to a cohesion officer at Luton Borough Council;

“Luton in Harmony is not a political campaign. It is a media, if you like, a branding campaign, and a concept... [O]ur intention is to...promote the unity that we know there is in our town”

Cohesion Officer at Luton Borough Council (Quote from Channel 4, 2012)

The campaign had been launched to directly challenge the emergence of the groups that had been campaigning in St George’s square and the town centre from 2009 – the Home-coming parade demonstration, the United People of Luton, and the English Defence League. It was supported by both Luton Borough Council and The Mall, two dominant producers of the town centre space, and its main activity was to encourage people to sign a pledge – a pledge to “celebrate...diversity and secure Luton a positive reputation on the national and international stage” – and to wear a badge with the Luton in Harmony logo on it (Luton in Harmony, 2017). The intention was to brand all local activities under the single banner of Luton in Harmony. Instead of opening the public forum to a greater variety of voices and developing the plurality and dialogue necessary for the space of appearance, Luton in Harmony become *the voice* to be heard in each and every public forum.

In addition to this, Luton in Harmony also became part of the production of a public space which is built upon the performance of segregated and fixed identities. In 2015 Luton in Harmony hosted a festival in St George's square that they called 'This is Luton'. It was described as a "free cultural awareness event...[that] featured exhibitions promoting different community cultures and traditions" (LBC, 2015). Included in the festival was performances from "Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK and Suffa Tal Islam [who] highlighted Asian culture", "Winners Chapel [who] promoted African traditions and dress", as well as the Irish Forum, Luton Pride, a Polish Theatre company, and Bedfordshire Police who "showcase[ed] their community services" (LBC, 2015). The event promoted a non-political, non-disruptive public space, and clearly established a link between the simplistic narrative of a Luton in harmony with the narrative on public space emerging from the dominant state infrastructure in the town.

The central position of Luton in Harmony in public forums giving it a *strong* voice, its alignment with dominant narratives on the town, and its role - by hosting 'This is Luton' festival - in creating the noisy-silence of performance in public space, makes it a useful example to show *The Strength of Talking-For, and Fixing Public Space* in Luton. However, its apparent omni-presence in the production of public space is met with some discontent;

"we keep saying Luton in harmony, Luton in harmony. People don't agree with that. You are, For years now they are still sticking to one stats; 80% and 20%. 80% say yes, 20% say no. Now this was, when Luton in Harmony started was 5 years ago. Things have moved on. Do you still believe in that stat. And yet, when stat was published in our news, no no no. So it's not, it's playing games. It's all lies at the end of the day. Get the true feel in the town, how people are feeling at the moment..."

Interview with South Asian Male, 40+ Years

This extract is from an interview I held with the respondent. The statistical reference he is referring to is "The Neighbourhood Governance Programme's Residents' Survey, undertaken by 1,234 residents from June to August 2014...[where] 82% of residents agree[d] that people from difference backgrounds got on well together in their local area" (see Appendix 8.I). Referring to Luton in Harmony and this statistic together, the respondent shows how the campaign fits comfortably with the anonymous quantification

of lives in the town – a link that was cemented in the opening letter for a Community Cohesion conference in Luton that I attended in 2015 (see Appendix 8.I). This link, and the subsequent frustration voiced by the respondent emphasises the emptiness of the ‘Luton in Harmony’ narrative as a way of silencing public debate. Instead the respondent calls for a turn to the heterogeneous and messy lived spaces on the town where one can “Get the true feel in the town, how people are feeling at the moment” (South Asian Male, 40+ Years). Luton in Harmony is portrayed as another way of creating a Luton in silence. I would argue, it is the surface layer of a well-established narrative which emerges from the state infrastructure in Luton. It is the culmination of the narrative that quantifies and homogenises the spaces of the town, that sees segregation and identities as fixed, and sees public space as a place for performance and silence, and not public appearance, disruption, and protest.

7(4). Conclusion

In this chapter it has been possible to explore how the state infrastructure facilitates the production of public space in Luton. Using the example of St George’s Square, in the town centre, one could see the circumstances and consequences of a town centre policy that was approved in 2013. This policy was aligned to a narrative about ‘business as usual’ in a commercially protected ‘public’ space, and was controlled by a strong state infrastructure at the expense of public appearance and action. It was also shown that the policy was reminiscent of the assertion of strength and control by the state that followed a riot in the town in 1919. After revealing the limits to the policy, in the disruptive protests that have contravened it, a reluctance by the state was revealed, in their decision not to apply heavy-handed restrictions on St George’s square. Instead, the persistence of control and order in public, was shown to rely extensively on a pervasive narrative of politics and appearance in the town embedded in the discourses of representatives of the state infrastructure, and supported by a conforming mass society. This narrative, it was shown, depends upon a simplification of the lived space of Luton; perceiving a quantified, homogenised, and monetised abstract space. The lives and the relations that create the town, are required to disappear in this narrative. Life in the town is regularised to a singular nostalgic story of the past, and a spatially regulated story of the present. Generalised identity tropes have been interwoven into the narrative, pacifying individual uniqueness, and public space has been

morphed into a social realm where fixed identities are permitted to perform as a spectacle to a consuming mass. Finally, silence, apathy, and poor turnout at public forums, has opened the space to embed the ultimately politically vacuous idea of a 'Luton in harmony' into the dominant narrative.

Despite the breadth and pervasiveness of the narrative revealed in this chapter, both Lefebvre and Arendt saw the unending potential for a public realm to emerge in the urban space. While the dominant mental abstractions of the state infrastructure have attempted to control and order public space, "permanent transgression" is inevitable (Lefebvre, PS: 23), and when the social realm tries to consume the space for politics, there is always the potential for a space of appearance "[w]herever people gather together" (Arendt, HC: 199). It is therefore necessary to turn now, to recent appearances in Luton, and reveal the persistence of publicness in the spaces of the town. Alongside this, it will also be necessary to explore how close such appearances sit next to, and in contradiction to, moments of violence in the town.

8. Social Publicness and Violence

Urban life in Luton, traversing private, social, and public realms, can be narrated as a perpetual balancing act of appearance. A balancing act across a fine line between public political appearance and the appearance of violence. This is the narrative that I am presenting for this chapter. Such a narrative witnesses the varied publicness of social spaces in the town, the messiness involved in telling and re-telling public moments, and the silencing and self-censoring legacy of past violence in the town. As a result, this chapter will engage with my second research question on the condition of public praxis in Luton, and will also build extensively on the narrative of violence in Luton's public realm from the last chapter; providing deeper considerations for the third research question. On the whole this chapter will continue to build my depiction of the public realm in Luton, as an illustration of the conceptual framework that founds the core of this thesis.

In this chapter, I look at two unique sites in very distinct locations of the town; The Parrot pub (now closed) in Farley Hill to the south west of Luton, and Luton Central Mosque in Bury Park at the centre of the town. Exploring first-hand accounts of these sites, fleeting participant observations, and the legacies of online social media entries, I am able to construct a narrative of the fine line between public and violence at each site. These narratives will emphasise the publicness the sites offer/realise, as well as their discriminatory social manifestations, their exclusionary private manifestations, and the legacy of violence that each contains.

8(1). Pints and Prayer Mats: Everyday Publicness

Inscribed

In order to explore the idea presented in the conceptual framework, that social spaces contain a scale of 'publicness' regarding Arendt's 'space of appearance', I have turned to two social spaces in Luton. Given the existing and persistent residential segregation by ethnicity in the town (see Figure 8(1)), I have selected social spaces that sit firmly within

segregated ethnic enclaves, yet are also close to the boundaries of the two. The sites selected also claim to be ‘public’ spaces of some form.

I chose to look, first of all, at The Parrot Pub in Farley ward, a former public house (closed in 2015) that claimed to be a “Local community pub” (according to its Facebook page, see Appendix 10.), open for public use and appearance. Farley Ward, in the south west of the town (see Figure 8(2)), is an area with a high density of white ethnic inhabitants³², and is proximate to the distinct ethnic residency boundary highlighted in Figure 8(1). The second site that I chose to consider is Luton Central Mosque, the first purpose built mosque in Luton in the heart of Bury Park (see Figure 8(1)). Bury Park covers the central area around the boundary of Dallow ward and Biscot ward (see Figure 8(2)). It is a part of town that has

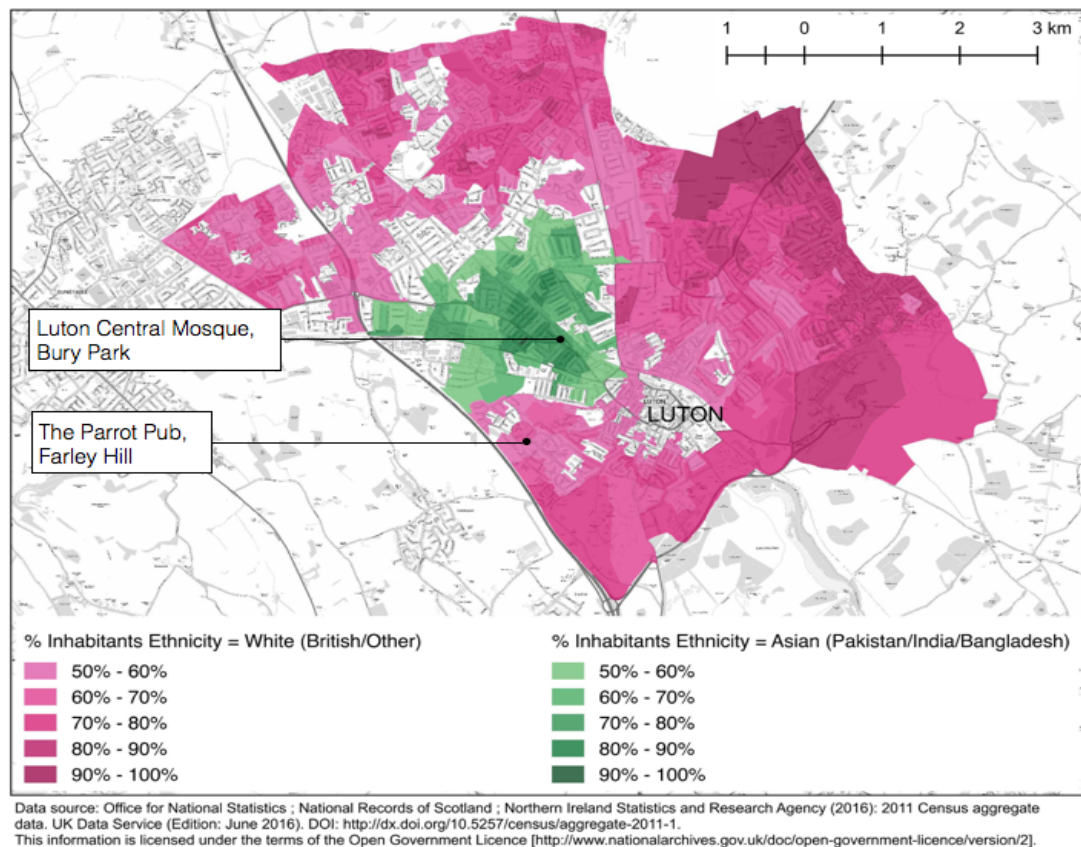
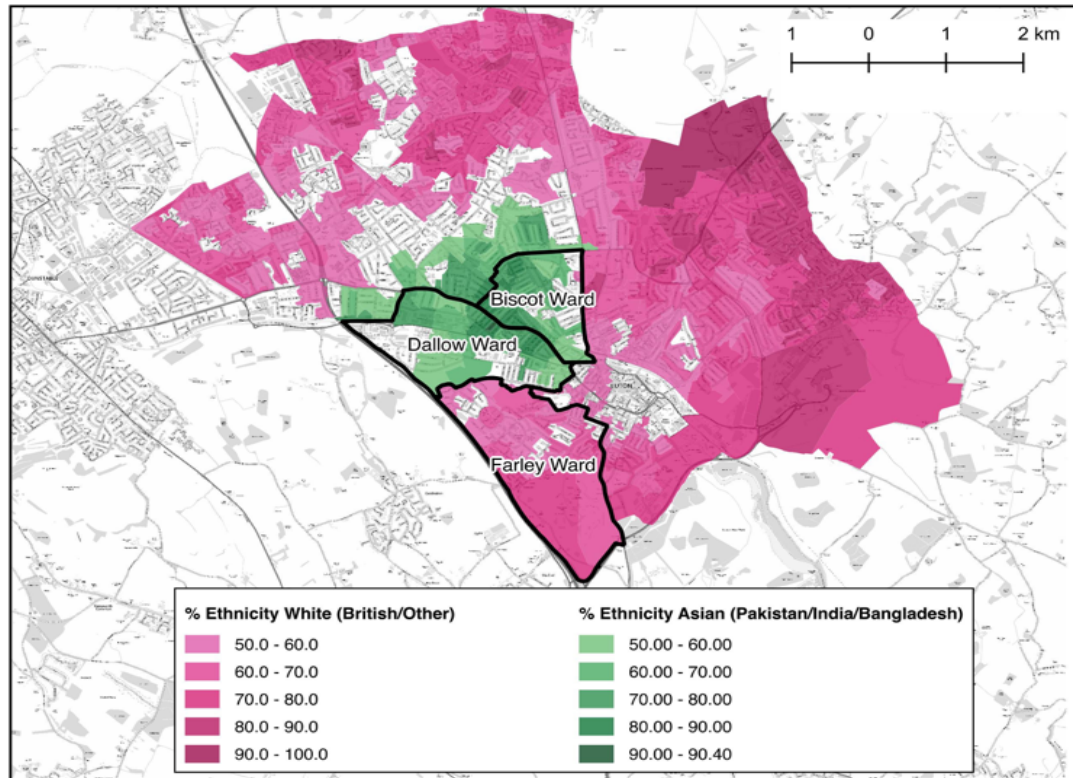


Figure 8(1) - Residential segregation in Luton by ethnicity (UK Census Data 2011)

³² White selected as one of the descriptors under Ethnic national identity in the 2011 census in England and Wales. Ethnic national identity described as the classification of a person “according to the combination of the responses given to the questions asking them about their own perceived ethnic group or cultural background, and their national identity” (ONS, 2017)

the highest density of Asian³³ inhabitants, and is proximate to the distinct ethnic boundary highlighted in Figure 8(1). Indeed, the two sites selected, despite their contrasting residential setting, are only about 1 mile apart.



Data source: Office for National Statistics ; National Records of Scotland ; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2016): 2011 Census aggregate data. UK Data Service (Edition: June 2016). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5257/census/aggregate-2011-1>. This information is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence [<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/21>].

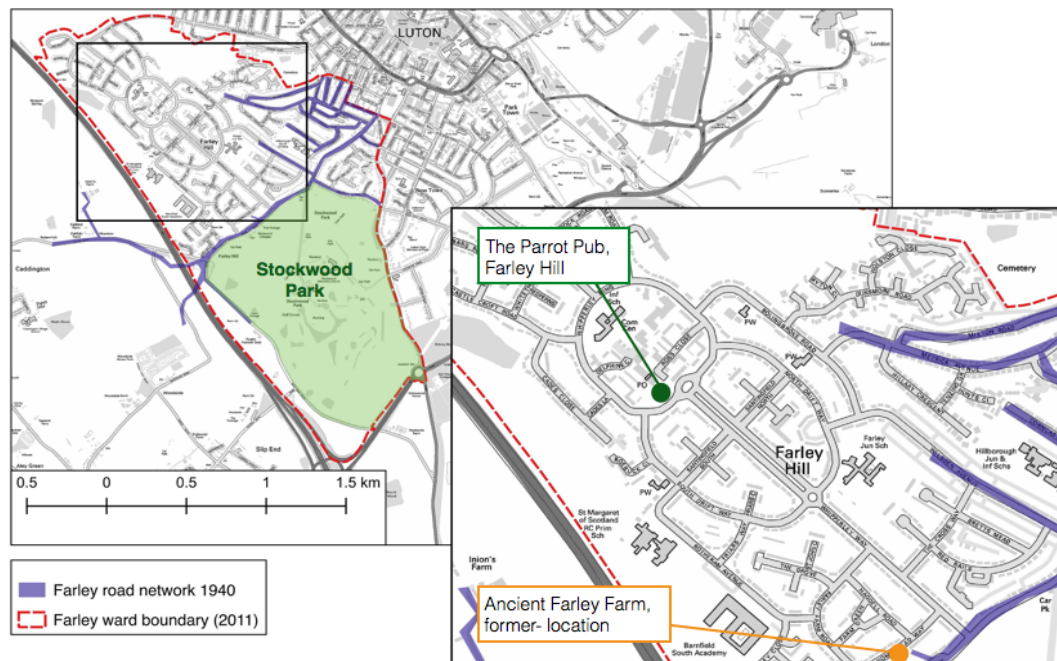
Figure 8(2) – Empirical Research Wards – Farley, Dallow and Biscot Wards (UK Census Data 2011)

After exploring the private, social and public aspects of each site, I will be considering a history of violence associated with each of them, and the struggle they have against a fixed narrative about the area that they are situated within. These narratives will be shown to impact the way that the publicness of a social spaces is inscribed and fabricated in Luton. The stories and anecdotes told by participants will reveal a mix of different openings and closings to public dialogue in the social spaces of the town, and how the obstacles they face have or have not been overcome.

³³ Asian selected as one of the descriptors under Ethnic national identity in the 2011 census in England and Wales. Ethnic national identity described as the classification of a person “according to the combination of the responses given to the questions asking them about their own perceived ethnic group or cultural background, and their national identity” (ONS, 2017)

8(1)1. The Parrot Pub, Farley Hill

Until the late 1940s, the area of Luton that is today called Farley Ward, was a space of open farm land on top of a hill to the south west of the town, belonging to the ancient Farley Farm; a site that was historically given to the abbey of St. Albans in 795 (see Figure 8(3)). Following the Second World War, a housing shortage in the UK, and the need to rehouse inhabitants from London, led to the building of the Farley Hill estate on this farm land, with the destruction of the ancient farm buildings in 1948. In the time since the building of this original estate, further development of housing has happened around the area dissolving, geographically at least, any clear separation between the centre of Luton and the area of Farley. The current ward boundary for Farley reaches down to Dumfries Street and the cemetery near to the centre of Luton (see Figure 8(3)), and incorporates the houses of around 12,000 inhabitants (UK Census 2011). It also stretches out to the south to include the vast open parkland of Stockwood Park – including the museum, the Stockwood Discovery centre, and the golf course.



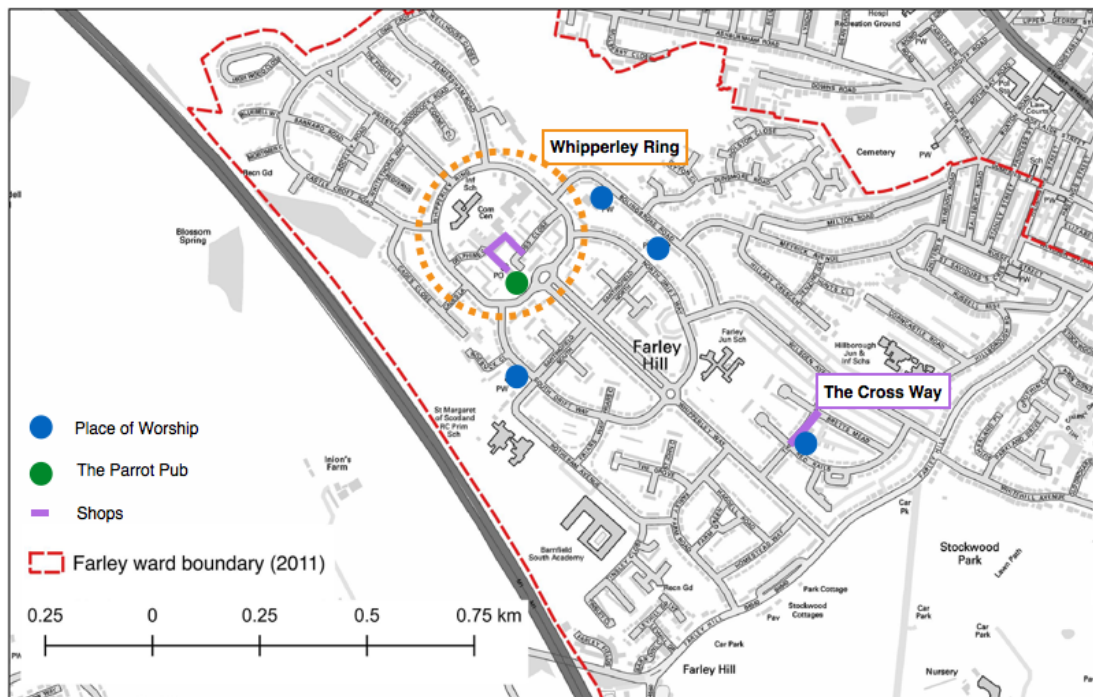
Data source: Office for National Statistics : National Records of Scotland : Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2016): 2011 Census aggregate data. UK Data Service (Edition: June 2016). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5257/census/aggregate-2011-1>. This information is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence [<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/2>].

Figure 8(3) – Farley Ward – Current boundary and changes since 1940
(Using UK Census Data 2011, and map archive in Luton Central Library)

According to data extracted from the 2011 UK Census, Farley Ward has a high proportion of ethnic White British (White English/White Scottish/White Welsh/White Northern Irish) or White Irish residents, especially compared to their neighbouring areas to the north east (see Figure 8(2)). A similar contrast is noticed in the distinction between religious identification of the residents. Yet, while the census has formed a fixed picture of the ward, there are some noticeable, and important, fluctuations in this data when compared to the 2001 census. In the decade between census', there has been an 8% fall in residents identifying as Christian in Farley compared with a 124.7% rise in residents identifying as Muslim. There has been a fall by 68% of 'Higher Professional workers' in the area alongside a 54.2% rise in self-employment, and a 100.9% rise in long-term unemployment. These kind of patterns actually put Farley ward on a very similar trajectory to those same neighbouring areas to the north east, to which it has such contrasting ethnic and religious residential patterns. However, given the prominence of ethnic and religious segregation in the town - central to the consideration of this study - Farley is therefore an ideal location in which to explore the state of public appearance in its social realm.

Within the expansive area of Farley Ward, I was to learn that there exists, among the inhabitants of the area, a sense that the original 1948 estate, on top of the hill and focussed around the Whipperley Ring road (see Figure 8(4)), is the heart of the social and public life. This area is known locally as Farley Hill. Whipperley Ring, at the centre of this area of Farley Hill, incorporates the main non-residential enclave of Farley Hill where a range of prominent social spaces exist. When I first visited Luton in Spring 2015, this area included a range of shops and cafes, barbers, a community centre, and a large public house called The Parrot. Not far from Whipperley Ring there was also a number of churches, an isolated row of shops in a place called The Cross Way, and an old doctor's surgery that was being used as a mosque (see Figure 8(4)). Exploring the impact of segregation on the publicness of social spaces, it was clear that an ideal location to train my focus would be one of these spaces in and around Whipperley Ring.

The Parrot pub, occupying a large space on the southern boundary of Whipperley Ring, was built and opened by a local brewery, Whitbread, in February 1960 (Smith, 1995: 171). It was the first public house in the Farley Hill area and rapidly became a focal point for social activity on the estate; offering a licenced place for drinking, a space for indoor sporting activities and club social events, a location for celebrations and entertainments, and more



Data source: Office for National Statistics ; National Records of Scotland ; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2016); 2011 Census aggregate data. UK Data Service (Edition: June 2016). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5257/census/aggregate-2011-1>. This information is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence [<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/2/>].

Figure 8(4) – ‘Farley Hill’ Area – Key potential social spaces identified

recently a space for eating and sharing food. At various points in its history, The Parrot was host to a range of political groups and appearances. It had contained and embodied a household sense of privacy for some of its occupiers, and had developed an embedded dominant perception – in some senses a ‘reputation’ – in the wider lived space of Luton.

Adding spatial and scalar complexity to Arendt’s notion of the ‘space of appearance’, I have discussed previously how social spaces that find themselves embedded within urban segregation – spaces such as The Parrot - are likely to be spaces in which we can witness the playing out of publicness, and can develop an appreciation for the fluidity of the private, social, and public realms. According to the ‘The Parrot Pub’ Facebook page, the space itself was a “Local community pub”. This is a familiar description for a pub in the UK, however, for the purpose of this study it is also fairly vacuous. It is necessary to consider; to what extent, and in what sense, is the space ‘local’? And, to what extent is the space communal – or plural? Without exploring these questions, it will not be possible to bear witness to the publicness of the space. With this in mind, I turn first of all to The Parrot’s primary manifestation; that of a social space. Such a space, according to Arendt (1959), is a space that plays out in a discriminatory way. The more discriminatory the activities are to

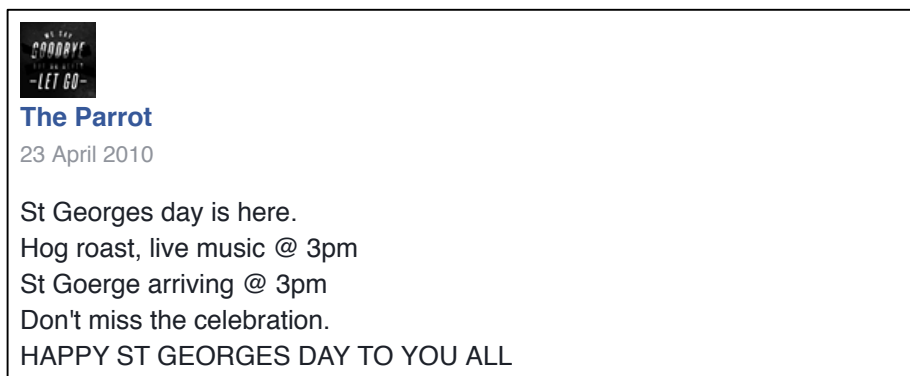
other identities, the more distinctly social, and not public, that the space becomes. This a-political nature of the pub is in its very essence, despite the neighbourhood residents' enthusiasm about it;

"...the last Landlord... ..he came in and was like, 'I want to do St. George's Day, I want to do St. Patrick's day, I want to do all of them, all the events', and he came in and he did it, and he wanted to boost the numbers in the pub because he knew the numbers had dropped. But functions, they used to be packed in there."

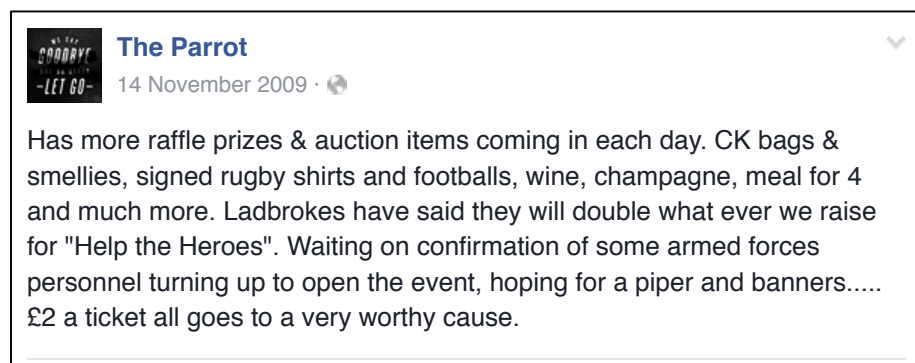
Interview with White British Female, 30+ Years

"Like honestly... ..Brilliant. Honestly, like the Halloween Party, we used to have St. George's Day festivals, that used to be a massive thing for the estate... ..Families from all different backgrounds would be [at] them kind of events. You know, it was, it kind of just summed us up as an area, to have them kind of events. Because, everyone was there. So yeah, definitely The Parrot was a major thing."

Interview with White British Female, 20+ Years



Extract from The Parrot Facebook page SM(a)



Extract from The Parrot Facebook page SM(b)

Hosting events that celebrate the patron saints of England and Ireland, established The Parrot as a space in which specific national identities emerge, and establish a sense of belonging while other national identities are absent. Combining the St George's day celebration in 2010 with a 'hog roast', established the consumption of pork as a sanctioned activity among the users of the space; discriminating against the appearance of the majority of Jewish or Islamic identities. Likewise, hosting a charity event for the British armed forces, and inviting military personnel to attend, showed support for UK military operations overseas – which I have shown was an extremely contentious issue in the town at the time, or for that matter even nationally (November, 2009). On top of this, the pub had sought financial backing from Ladbrokes, a gambling company, for their charitable event. All of these things cemented a socially discriminatory status for the space of The Parrot pub.

These revelations are not judgements on the use of The Parrot, despite it being appropriate and necessary to make such judgements of a social space. These elements have been picked out to show how the space clearly held a social position for many users in Farley Hill, at the expense of other potential users in the area. However, the presence of each of these elements does not forbid other identities from appearing in the space, or at least, such prohibition is not explicit. The space is not exclusive in the sense of being a private space that excludes the appearance of others. A St George's day event with a hog roast does not mean that a Muslim cannot appear in this moment. Yet, a Muslim respondent revealed to me, on the similar subject of consuming alcohol, that;

“...if I go to Spain, I sit in a pub, you can have a tea/coffee, somebody can have a drink, no problem. Of course the weather plays a big part in that, because you can sit outside. Everybody is chat[ting]...but here you go to the pub and ask for a coffee or tea, it's not going to go down very well is it? You're weird. You should have a beer. So now, you're not. When you go at the drinking habits, not everybody has these drinking habits in the communities. So pub would be a no no for so many people. So what is left?”

Interview with South Asian Male, 40+ Years

The encouragement and sanctioning of certain activities in The Parrot, while not prohibiting the appearance of others, does serve to discourage the appearance of publicness. In fact, one might suggest that there is a tendency towards the appearance of the private realm, as Arendt would depict it. Through Arendt, I have argued, that as a space becomes more social, it will likely simultaneously encourage private activities – the activities associated with labour – of those identities that it hosts. Private activities that will emerge as communal activities in the space;

“So people just used to go there, and I think people used to go there to drink...
...and then they'd have Christmas dinner for the pensioners...” “...yeah so we used to bring the tables and chairs over. And they used to have it in what. They used to have a back room there, and yeah. The pensioners party it was just called...”

Interview with White British Female, 40+ Years

“...Farley 40 years ago when Vauxhall was the main employer. Parrot used to be buzzing...” “...The reason everyone went to the Parrot was because busses back from Vauxhall used to drop them off either at 4:30pm or 5:30pm right outside the pub. The landlord at the time wasn't allowed to let them in until a certain time (5:30ish), and because they couldn't cope with the rush of people they used to have the pints already poured waiting for them”

Observations from St Margaret's Social Club (see Appendix 11.d)



The Parrot Pub Tweet SM(ff.)

Conceiving of the space of The Parrot as a “family” location conjures notions of the household realm, an exclusive realm. This is the realm where the needs of the body are met – needs like eating and drinking – and where the space serves as a sanctuary from the dangers and vulnerability inherent in the public realm. The above quotes depict The Parrot as a kinship retreat where, instead of returning home after work, one returns to the pub, and where familial intimacy is common place. The provision of a ‘pensioner’s party’ - a Christmas meal for the elderly on the estate – helps vulnerable members of the ‘family’ to meet their needs, while simultaneously reinforcing the discriminatory social affiliation of

the space with Christianity. Through these examples, The Parrot appeared to exhibit many aspects of the private realm, and was therefore, severely limited in its potential as a space for appearance. It was an exclusive space for 'one family', a whole made up of sameness and not the uniqueness of political subjects;

"The Parrot...so it was [part of] everybody who's in it together ...And I think the sense was that everything that we've got, could be threatened..."

Interview with White British Christian Male, 60+ Years

"The Parrot. Everyone would go there, especially like my generation, a few years older than me, everyone would be in the pub... ...we all lived on Farley Hill"

Interview with White British Female, 20+ Years

Yet, despite this apparent privacy, and accurate embodiment of a rising social realm, there was also another side to The Parrot, that showed the space to be a venue for instrumental politics and social movements;

"Well the pub was very vibrant when I was first, in the 70s, very busy. In fact, we, as the Labour Party, used to have our meetings in one of the back rooms. So it was used by all the communities going in there."

Interview with South Asian Male, 50+ Years

"...more recently, it's very very much linked to the Far-Right... ...I think it was as simple as, that the two main leaders who, from the EDL... ...they were Farley people, so they drunk there. So they were the kind of people that would go there after work and they would drink there. And so, when they started their campaign to build up the EDL, they naturally migrated to meet there. So they started having their meetings there. ...if they were posting anything on the internet, they'd say, you know, we're having a meeting or having a rally, meet up at the Parrot Pub. And it was always the Parrot Pub... So when there was a lot more media interest, any of the media wanted to come and speak to anyone about the EDL, the Far-right in Luton, they would go to the Parrot Pub. ...it became synonymous with EDL..."

Interview with White British Female, 50+ Years

“But, like the Parrot, was a place that a lot of people would meet. So that kind of went with The Parrot, sort of, oh it's a racist pub. The EDL, a fair number of them may have racist views, but it was not all racist, you know what I mean? You know, everyone has got an opinion at the end of it. It's how you voice it. Um, because you can always throw it back on other religions that are doing exactly the same thing. That could be seen as racism.”

Interview with White British Female, 20+ Years

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s The Parrot was host to the appearance of individuals who associated with the Labour party in the town. A room in the pub was used for regular meetings of this group, and the space was open and encouraging of debate and dialogue from this group to occur. A similar scenario seemed to be the case after 2009, with the appearance of the far-right group, the English Defence League. Dialogue and discussion by members of this group with one another, and with the wider occupants of the space would have been fairly frequent in the early years following their formation. Figure 8(5) shows the presence of the leader of the EDL at one of the St George's day celebrations at the pub; an event that was also filmed in the making of the Channel 4 documentary 'Proud and Prejudiced' (Channel 4, 2012). Irrespective of one's judgements on either of the political

Images removed due to copyright

"St George's Day, Farley Hill, Luton" - Pictures from Flickr site by Dave Wood - Accessed at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/liverpoolpictorial/sets/72157626436804509/> (Accessed on 8th June 2016)

Figure 8(5) – St George's Day at The Parrot pub – EDL leader Tommy Robinson present

groups, it is evident therefore, that the space of The Parrot was enabling appearance and dialogue. The question is; was there a degree of publicness to any of these appearances?

Members of the Labour party appearing in The Parrot in the 1970s, were already part of a prominent and widely supported movement in public dialogues all across the UK – and thus ‘powerful’ according to Arendt’s positive understanding of the term. While The Parrot may have embodied the segregation of a social space at the time, the plurality of public debate could have been enhanced with the frequent presence of this group³⁴ in the 1970s – bringing the plurality of appearances into the segregated space. In contrast, the English Defense League was only starting out as a political movement in The Parrot in 2009. It “was born [there], effectively” (according to a White British Christian Male respondent, 40+ Years), meaning that its power - in terms of its plural concert – was severely limited, especially as a result of the private and social elements already embedded in the space. Thus the publicness of The Parrot in 2009, could only be appreciated by exploring the draw of the space as this group appeared in the wider spaces of the town and eventually across the UK in the years following;

“...Tommy Robinson, used to drink in Parrot Pub. And, therefore his mates from EDL, English Defence League, started to go in there. They had a number of meetings, and he then gave the national media, this is the headquarters. Right. And whenever they had a meeting, they couldn't get more than 15 people in there. You know, that's how popular they were, right?”

Interview with South Asian Male, 50+ Years

In reference to the EDL in Farley and the Parrot: “[Respondent] says that the pub should never have let that type in to the pub. They weren't representing the people of the local area, but because they drew in numbers from elsewhere it meant that the pub made more money for a brief time. However, it put off a lot of people in the local area, and as a result people stopped going there.”

Observations from St Margaret’s Social Club (see Appendix 11.d)

³⁴ Of course the ‘publicness’ of appearance would have been even further enhanced and built with the presence of other and wider-ranging political groups in the pub.

“I mean, I've only drunk in there once, because to me, being [details removed]... I don't want to be seen, because it was linked to the EDL, I thought, you know, I don't want to be seen in there.”

Interview with White British Female, 30+ Years

The suggestion that the local draw to the pub diminished with the association to the EDL, despite a short-lived spike in the appearance of a EDL supporters from a wider radius, implies that the publicness of The Parrot was severely inhibited in its final years, from 2009-2015. While it may have held a position as a prominent social and private space for many people living in Farley Hill, it also become a space greatly devoid of public appearance. So, did a change occur at The Parrot in the years following the 1980s and the use of the space by the Labour party? And, if so, what events made such a change possible? I suggest, by way of an answer, that a legacy of violence at The Parrot, which can be narrated from 1990s through the early 2000s, may have contributed to the restricted nature of public appearance at the pub. I also suggest that this violence consequently made it possible for the space to become the host of a group such as the EDL.

“The Parrot is more, very much a more [a] working class pub. And I think it would be the kind of place er, that, my Dad would have drunk there in the, maybe in the 70s. But then, he probably hasn't been there inside that pub for 20 odd years. And you know... ...I think, it got a bit of a reputation for being a bit rough. Fights breaking out. It might have been to do with whoever was the landlord or whatever, having less control. It might have had that. But it was not the kind of pub, you know you just think I don't want to go there, because I actually want to go for a quiet pint, and talk to me mates. I don't really want to go somewhere where there's loud music, or there's people having a scrap because they've drunk too much after work or whatever.”

Interview with White British Female, 50+ Years

“My customers are the innocent victims in all this” Pub Manager Chris Sanderson is quoted as saying after an incident where The Parrot pub was involved in a gang fight between 30 young people in July 1997

“Mayhem at The Parrot” article in *The Herald*, 31st July 1997 (see Appendix 8.m)

Isabel Delamere (Prosecuting) said to court “It is quite clear that there had been bad feeling between a large group of Asians and a large group of white youths for quite some time”

Paul Addison (Defending) said “Abbas had not deliberately driven slowly past the pub to incite or tease anyone, but he was met by a barrage of abuse, such as Paki b*****, and remarks of that nature”

Defence and Prosecution quoted following incident at The Parrot in July 1997 – from **“Gangs clashed in the Battle of Farley Hill” article in *The Herald*, 2 April 1998** (see Appendix 8.n)

“police battle to break down the wall of silence surrounding racial attacks in Farley Hill” ... “Asian family attacked in their home by a gang of white thugs appealed for peace among the two communities” – The Asian family’s home had been ‘stormed’ by 20 men with pickaxes, baseball bats and sledgehammers

Reference to violence in Farley Hill during the summer of 1997 - From **“A wall of silence and call for calm” article in *The Herald*, 21st August 1997** (see Appendix 8.o)

“I think [the fight in 1997] was between two drug-dealing groups. I don't think it was racist. They tried to make it racist. Two groups of young people who were involved, both in drugs, and they reach for territory...” “...the people that were involved in that particular incident used The Parrot... ...and because it was Asian and a White gang, they turned out to be racist. But deep inside some of those people like myself knew, that the background was to do with drugs...”

Interview with South Asian Male, 50+ Years

Throughout the 1990s, The Parrot was host to fairly frequent violent incidents. It developed a reputation amongst some inhabitants of the area for being a ‘rough house’, where alcohol-fueled violence was a common event. The area of the Farley Hill itself also developed a reputation; a reputation for having an active drug trade among the youth on the estate at the time. This narrative of violence was compounded in 1997 with the violent attack on the pub that summer (Kesby, 1997a) and the subsequent ‘retaliatory’ violence that happened around the estate (Latimer, 1997; Kesby, 1997b; Kesby, 1998). Illegals drugs (and legal drugs in the form of alcohol) were central to the dominant narrative about this

event in Farley Hill (according to a South Asian Male respondent, 50+ Years). Being associated with this narrative, The Parrot became a place that outsiders would avoid; fearing, or simply just avoiding, a perceived likelihood of violence. Then, to compound the issues, ethnicity became an aspect that media and local voices brought to the fore in their narrative of violence for Farley Hill. The suggestion was made, and reiterated, that a clash of different ethnic groups was behind much of the violence on the estate. Developing an association with ethnic violence made The Parrot even more segregated from the plurality of identities in Luton. Such an association was given its most potent encouragement when on 9th October 2001, according to Luton on Sunday (2001), “A gang of Asian youths chanted ‘Bin Laden, bin Laden’ as they trashed [The Parrot] pub” causing £5000 damage, and forcing pub users to shelter under tables for safety. In the same article, a spokesperson for Luton police claimed that the incident was being treated as a “racially motivated attack as the gang of Asian youths were shouting racial abuse”. Being associated with persistent violence, and with ethnic tensions, The Parrot pub lost its publicness.

“Although, I recognise that pubs are good meeting places for community and that... ..I haven't set foot in that place for 20 years. Um, and a lot of people were nervous about going in there. People local. You know, 'I don't want to go in there because, you know, that's where them thugs meet'. That's you know, that's. Certainly if you were Black or Asian you might have a real problem going in there. But even if you were white, and you've been living in the community for ages, you would. My dad for example has lived in Farley all them years. He would be nervous about going in there...”

Interview with White British Female, 50+ Years

The history of violence in and around the pub in the 20 years preceding the emergence of the English Defence League had pacified the difference of opinion – or at least meant that differences of opinion had left the space - making it ideal for the development of a singular strong voice; a voice like that of the EDL that could vilify whole groups and identities in the town, and beyond, without reproach.

“...I mean it became known in the last few years as EDL central, you know, the 'Patriotic Parrot', and all those phrases we used on it.”

Interview with White British Male, 50+ Years

The violent and discriminatory voice of the EDL, was not however, the only echo of strength and violence that could be heard at The Parrot in the years following the events mentioned above. Studying the archive of social media entries posted onto their public online spaces by The Parrot pub since 2011, it is evident that the casual denigration and objective violence towards of a host of identities was frequent;



Extract from The Parrot Facebook page, anonymised feed SM(c)



Extract from The Parrot Facebook page, anonymised feed SM(d)



Extract from The Parrot Facebook page, anonymised feed SM(e)

In the years that followed the formation of the EDL in 2009, and its use of The Parrot pub to hold its meetings, the pub became a space that encouraged conformity to strong and discriminatory voices (or at least for apathy to the lack of opportunity to public appearance in the space). The publicness of the space disappeared, and it became an exclusive and

discriminatory space that served only the social and private functions of those that used it. In 2015, after years of decline in patrons - and thus also a decline in financial takings – The Parrot pub was forced to close (See Figure 8(6)). A sense of loss was expressed to me by one respondent from the area (see below), yet this sense only felt the loss of the social space, not the end of any public realm as well. Instead, it would appear, that the strength of a singular discriminatory voice was still echoing in the area, especially given the rumours that circulated about the closure of The Parrot;

“Farley will be the only area in Luton that will not have a pub on it... except for Bury Park. For me that is quite upsetting, because the Parrot has been there for as long as my parents have been alive. And most people, even further than that. Um, and that used to be a place that my mum and dad both went. And it was thriving, you know, it was a brilliant place to go. So that's quite upsetting when you think, like look at it now, even getting off the bus and walking past it, you think, 'I've got so many memories in that place', and it's just sitting there with a blue board around it at the moment, doing nothing. You know what I mean?...”

“...there have been talks. I mean this was just gossip on the estate; because everyone loves to gossip on here. Because everyone knows everyone, this is what it's like. That the Parrot was going to turn into a mosque. A lot of people were not happy about that because they were like, how bloody dare this, how can this be happening? You know, that is the centre of this estate. Do you know what I mean? I know it is bad to think that, like that. But this is just obviously gossip that has been discussed.”

Interview with White British Female, 20+ Years

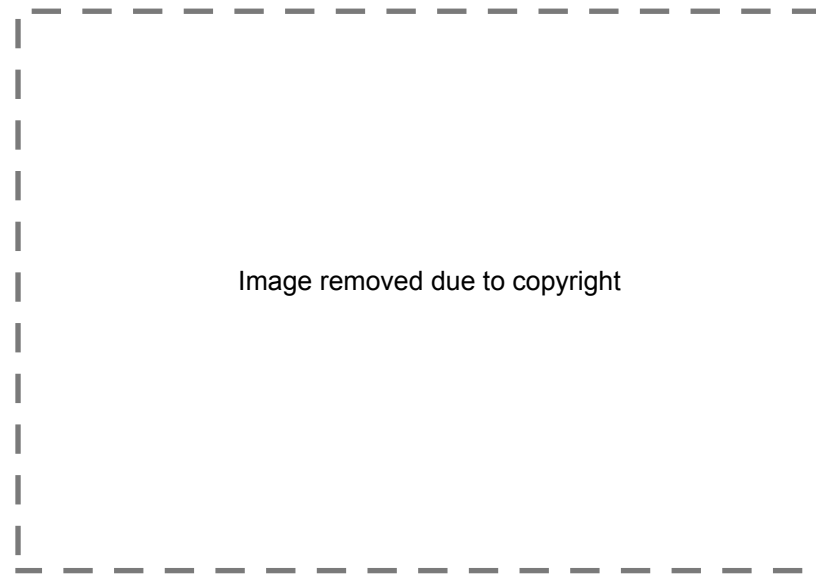


Figure 8(6) – Demolition of The Parrot pub (2016)
Image from The Parrot Facebook page (Accessed 3rd June 2016)

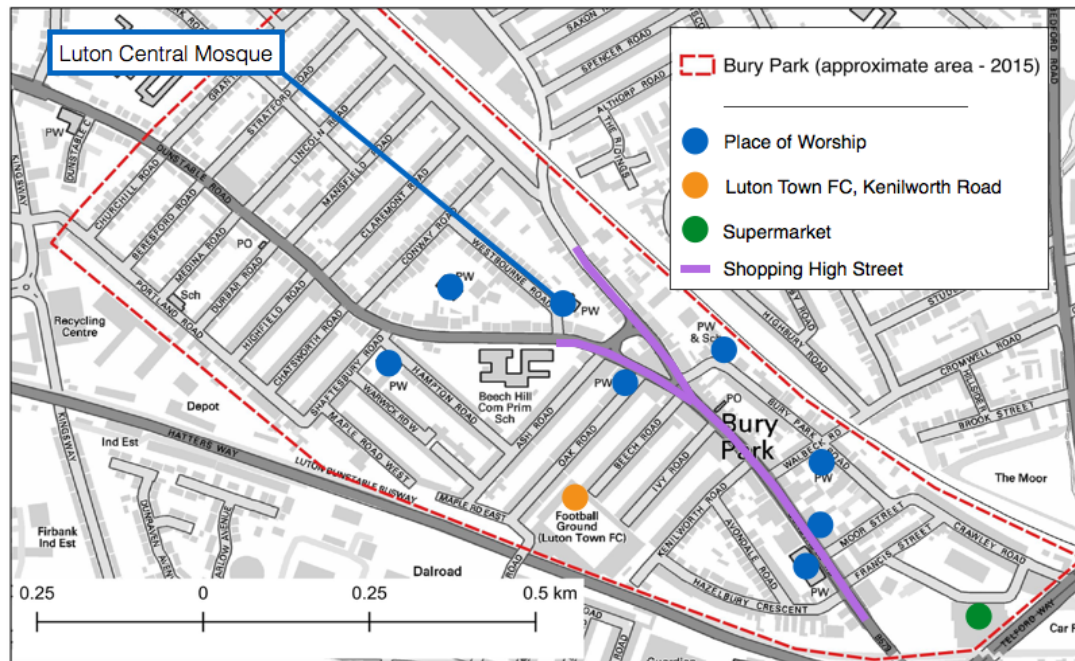
In contrast to the destruction and demolition of The Parrot pub in Farley Hill, another space only 1 mile away, likewise with the potential to be a space of appearance, was being expanded in 2015; the site of Luton Central Mosque in Bury Park. It is possible to turn to this site, and also consider its publicness in relation to being a social space. A social space that is situated on the other side of the residential ethnic boundary to The Parrot pub (see Figure 8(1)).

8(1)2. Luton Central Mosque, Bury Park

Comprising of a commercial high street on Dunstable Road, an array of residential streets, a supermarket, more than half a dozen religious buildings and Kenilworth Road football stadium, is an area of Luton known as Bury Park (see Figure 8(7)). Bury Park straddles the boundary of two electoral wards in the town; Dallow and Biscot (see Figure 8(2)), sitting firmly within an area depicted in Figure 8(1) as containing a high density of its residential inhabitants who claim an Asian³⁵ ethnicity. This is in contrast to those wards to the South, West and East of it. A similar residential segregation can be seen with regards to the religion of the majority of inhabitants in these wards. Continual changes to the religious

³⁵ According to the 2011 Census for England and Wales definition of Ethnic national identity (see ONS, 2017).

affiliation and ethnicity of inhabitants dominates the history of Bury Park in the last century, and indeed frequently punctuate the narrative of those living in Luton today;



Data source: Office for National Statistics ; National Records of Scotland ; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2016); 2011 Census aggregate data. UK Data Service (Edition: June 2016). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5257/census/aggregate-2011-1>. This information is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence [<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/2/>].

Figure 8(7) – ‘Bury Park’ area map, including potential social spaces (Using UK Census Data 2011)

“...Bury Park is an area where people, when they migrated here, have lived and then moved off from. So the Irish lived there, that's why the central Roman Catholic church is there. Because in the 50s they raised money to build that church. You've still got Irish there, and the Irish have moved on, all over the town. And then came the Caribbeans, and then came the Pakistanis. And now have come the Eastern Europeans and the Roma...”

Interview with White British Male, 50+ Years

“The white community, as it has got older, and passed away, sort of thing, sold their houses, and the Asian community seems to have come in sort of thing. There's quite a big Irish community, here as well...moved out, especially in this Bury Park area...” “...We've lost that mixture of a proper city, so you know, it's more become something that's linked to Pakistani, well it's Muslim Kashmiri, you know, area sort of thing. People are Muslim Kashmiri....”

Interview with South Asian Muslim Male, Late 50s

The current pattern of residency in Bury Park can be appreciated with a detailed look at the 2011 UK census data for Dallow ward and Biscot ward. The fluidity of this residency can, like with Farley ward, also be appreciated with a look at changes between the 2001 and 2011 UK census'. In Dallow the percentage of residents identifying as White (White British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish) was 10.5%, and in Biscot it was 11%. In contrast, residents in Dallow identifying as Asian (Asian British: Pakistani) was 40.3%, and in Biscot it was 34.9%. This is in stark contrast to the data for Farley ward. In both Dallow and Biscot however, there had been a significant rise in residents identifying as Muslim (Dallow increase of 49.8%, Biscot increase of 58.7%) between the 2001 and 2011 census', which is a similar pattern to that seen in Farley; despite in Dallow and Biscot the percentage already identifying as Muslim in 2001 being much higher than in Farley. On top of this, once again similar to Farley ward, both Dallow and Biscot saw large falls in Higher Professional occupations (Dallow down 75.3%, Biscot down 78.2%) between the census', and a rise in Small employers and own account workers (Dallow up 88.6%, Biscot up 97.4%). Therefore, aside from ethnic composition, the wards of Dallow, Biscot, and Farley – all adjacent to one another (see Figure 8(2)) – appeared to be on a similar trajectory of residential change from 2001. As such, selecting a site within Bury Park is an ideal comparison to the previous consideration of The Parrot pub in Farley Hill.

Prominent and central to Bury Park is Luton Central Mosque, situated on Westbourne Road (see Figure 8(7)). Built in 1982, Luton Central Mosque was the first purpose built mosque in Luton. Prior to this, the mosque's community had used a hall belonging to the nearby All Saint's Church as a temporary place of worship (according to Respondent 1³⁶). They had then bought a house on Westbourne Road as a makeshift mosque, and in the years leading up to the building of Luton Central Mosque, they managed to purchase 3 adjacent properties on the road, which were ultimately knocked down to build the current mosque (according to Respondent 2³⁷). Today Luton Central Mosque is a large religious building that accommodates an extensive local religious community in Bury Park. It is a space that claims to be open to anyone who wishes to visit it – in this sense 'public' like The Parrot - and is currently in the process of extending its physical structure to make a designated

³⁶ Respondent 1 was a local White British Christian Male, Late 50s.

³⁷ Respondent 2 was a local South Asian Muslim Male, 60+ years.

space for public community activities. It is therefore, an appropriate social space in which to explore its publicness.

As a social space, a mosque – like almost any other religious building – offers space and time for the specific religious practices that its primary users subscribe to. These practices, and the times when they occur, are by definition, discriminatory towards the free use and appearance of other identities and individuals. Indeed, the singular voice heard in such a space is frequently discriminatory to the appearance of similar, but distinct, voices from other Muslim identities in Bury Park;

“The main mosque, which is on Westbourne Road... ..there was troubles, it’s more power struggles sort of thing...” “...we’ve got Luton Council of Mosques, and I think 17 or 18 of the Mosques belong to that, and 3 or 4 belong to the Sunni Council of Mosques which split up from [Luton Council of Mosques], because of politics...”

Interview with South Asian Muslim Male, Late 50s

“...in [the Bury Park] community it’s fascinating because you’ve got the Shia Muslims, and then you’ve got the Sunni Muslims...and, being blunt, they have differences and there is friction there and tension there...” “... but then also in that community you’ve also got this competing of values.”

Interview with White British Male, 30+ Years

“...you will see certain groups going to certain mosques... ..who loves the prophet the most? That’s the biggest divide.”

Interview with South Asian Male, 40+ Years

Aside from the necessarily religious, and thus discriminatory, practices in Luton Central Mosque however, the appearance of individuals from the wider population of Luton is possible at the mosque. Luton Central Mosque has formalised such appearances, by offering a visiting ‘sign-up’ form on their website (Luton Central Mosque, 2017a). In fact, the religious practices themselves, are open for observance by the wider population, as I found during my participant observations. These visits, I was informed, were sanctioned under the understanding that as a visitor, I would not interrupt the religious performances and practices. In this sense, as a visitor, I was able to be present without actually appearing

in Arendt's sense of the term. As expected therefore, I was informed that the appearance of 'visitors' to Luton Central Mosque is fairly infrequent, just as visits to churches or other religious buildings by people of different faiths are equally rare.

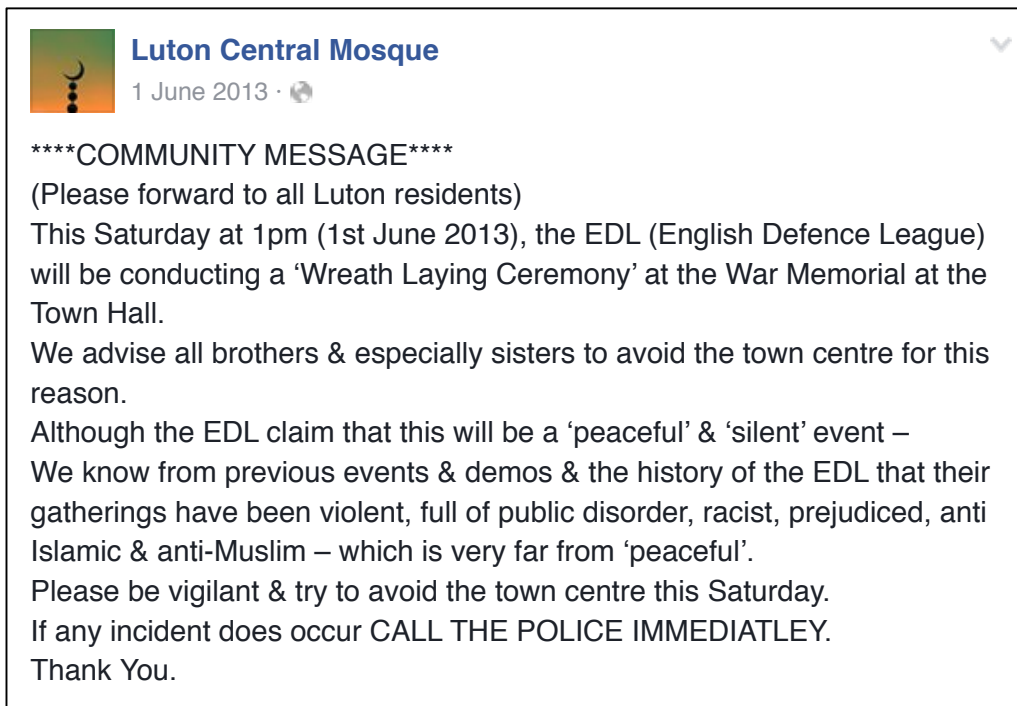
While the space of Luton Central Mosque is available for the appearance of others, implying a publicness to the space, the sense in which the space fulfils a social, and thus discriminatory, role for its users diminishes the opening for, and resulting occurrence of, public action. Indeed, the restriction on the appearance of others at Luton Central Mosque was expressed by a range of respondents during my empirical research. When I was with one respondent from the Mosque, a South Asian Muslim male (60+ years), the respondent told me that there were necessary restrictions on women entering the mosque while building work happened there. This same respondent also said that I must not mention to people at the mosque that my study was looking at Pubs in Luton, because they would not want to talk to me. Another respondent, from a church near to the mosque, told me how they had been to the mosque and found it problematic because speakers in the mosque never spoke in English (see Observations from All Saint's Church in Appendix 11.e). On top of this, I was informed by a member of the mosque committee that, despite building a community centre alongside the mosque, "of course [the committee] will get final say over what [that] space is used for. [They're] not going to have Britain First coming saying [they] should close the mosque down, and [they] won't allow people promoting homosexuality. But [they] will allow people for food banks, for holistic medicines, charity etc..." (see Observations from Luton Central Mosque in Appendix 11.f).

Restricting the appearance of English speakers, women, homosexuals, and even post-graduate researchers who were looking at pubs in Luton, suggested that the publicness of Luton Central Mosque was severely restricted by social discrimination. The religious building seemed to be primarily upholding its religious and discriminatory position as a social space in Bury Park. With this prominence of the social function associated with the space, it was therefore expected that there would also be evidence for the simultaneous existence of the private realm – a realm based on exclusiveness and a household-like display of unequal relations in the space. Indeed, during one visit to Luton Central Mosque I met the architect of an on-going building project in the mosque. I asked the architect how he came up with the design for the building, and he said to me; "I just came up with it". I followed up by asking whether he consulted other people in the design process, and he

replied; “No. I just know what the community wants” (see Observations from Luton Central Mosque in Appendix 11.f).

Directing activities on behalf of the users of the space, Luton Central Mosque is run by a management committee composed of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Head of Education, and 3 Imams and Khatibs (Luton Central Mosque, 2017b). This group, who recruited the architect quoted above, take responsibility for the mosque and as such govern the appearances that it hosts. The management committee is supposedly elected to their positions at Luton Central Mosque on a regular basis, sharing the strength over appearance that the positions hold. However, I was informed by a local South Asian Muslim man (60+ Years) that due to the extension work that is on-going, there had not been any changes to this group at Luton Central Mosque – this ‘head of the household’ – in recent years. In fact, this same respondent told me, that the committee rarely consulted *anyone* on its activities.

The committee members of Luton Central Mosque, and spokespeople sanctioned by the committee (such as the architect referenced in Appendix 11.f) hold a position of authority in the space, and are able to speak on behalf of, and even in-place-of, the plurality of voices in the users of the space;



Luton Central Mosque
1 June 2013 · 🌐

****COMMUNITY MESSAGE****
(Please forward to all Luton residents)
This Saturday at 1pm (1st June 2013), the EDL (English Defence League) will be conducting a ‘Wreath Laying Ceremony’ at the War Memorial at the Town Hall.
We advise all brothers & especially sisters to avoid the town centre for this reason.
Although the EDL claim that this will be a ‘peaceful’ & ‘silent’ event – We know from previous events & demos & the history of the EDL that their gatherings have been violent, full of public disorder, racist, prejudiced, anti Islamic & anti-Muslim – which is very far from ‘peaceful’.
Please be vigilant & try to avoid the town centre this Saturday.
If any incident does occur CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.
Thank You.

Extract from Luton Central Mosque Facebook post from June 2013, prior to EDL march SM(f)

The management committee exercise the strength to speak for the users of the space, adopting a parental tone (as seen in the above Facebook post) like my previous discussion of Luton Borough Council. At the same time, it would appear that there is obedience and silent behavior to the strength of this group by the majority of users of the space. During my participant observations at Luton Central Mosque, I was struck by the silent conformity of users in the space prior to, during, and immediately following the religious ceremonies that I observed. With hundreds of male worshippers attending Luton Central Mosque for Friday prayers I noticed only short and fleeting interaction between individuals in the half hour prior to the prayer sessions beginning, with such interaction almost completely ceasing during the prayers, and then again only exhibiting sparse interaction in the half hour following the prayers (see Observations from Luton Central Mosque in Appendix 11.f).

Prior to my visits, I had assumed that the presence of hundreds of people at the mosque, would reveal moments where individual users of the space appeared to one another as unique individuals; offering evidence for the publicness of the space. Instead, the overwhelming silence of the space was actually emphasised by the presence of these people obediently following religious practices, and then leaving the space in relative silence. There was the sense that duty dictated much of the activity in the space, and the uptake of the opportunity for public appearance was missed. Such silence however, has not always been the case at Luton Central Mosque. In 1992 the public appearance of differences and individual uniqueness actually led to Luton Central Mosque making national news headlines. Turning to these events, it is possible to show how the mosque held the potential as a space of appearance in 1992, and may in fact still hold this potential today.

After completing the building of Luton Central Mosque in 1982, a management committee at Luton Central Mosque – much like today – hosted events and religious teaching, and controlled the sanctioned appearances at the mosque. After 10 years, this management committee, led by Imam Qazi Abdul Aziz Chishti, was unchanged. However, the leadership of this group and the direction that they were taking for the use of the space, was not supported by all of those who occupied the space on a regular basis for their religious practices.

Mohammed Bashir - "I remember one Friday prayer in the month of Ramadan, more than a thousand people in the mosque when I raised this question, I said from last 10 years, there is no accountability there is no elections and I feel strongly there is something wrong going on. His supporters try to fight me and there was a number of occasions it happens"

Akbar Khan – "People would stand up from various corners and shout us down and threaten us with violence"

Mohammed Bashir – "One occasion on a Friday we had a fight in the mosque, downstairs hall."

Trouble at the Mosque Documentary – Transcript extract (People Focus, 2002)

During my conversations with a respondent, who claimed to have been part of the disruption at Luton Central Mosque in 1992, I was told that Friday prayer meetings in 1992 were attended by hundreds of Muslim men – much like those that I observed in 2015 – and this had presented an opportunity to voice thoughts and concerns about the use of the space in front of a vast plurality of people. While it would not be normal for such an appearance to happen, the presence of many people made it possible. Luton Central Mosque, as a gathering space, had a large *potential* publicness.

By standing up in 1992, amongst a gathering of many people using the space for social practice – for their religious duty – and speaking to them, the men that made their appearance in 1992 had disrupted the social practice of the space, and had opened up a moment for public dialogue. In that moment, the response of those that saw and heard the disruption, would have become part of the public action. As Arendt described plurality and action, a response from witnesses involving further dialogue and the drive towards a concert of voices, would necessarily start something new, and a new space would be created. Yet, this potential for continued public appearances could not be sustained if violence is implemented to silence them.

It turned out that what made the public appearances at Luton Central Mosque in 1992 reach national headlines was not the moments of public action, but instead, the resulting violence that tried either to force a change to the space, or the strength of those already controlling the space to violently end the disruption. The Luton News (1992) told of a moment where 60 police officers had had to ring the mosque to keep fighting groups apart,

while The Independent (Connett, 1992) mentioned punches and kicks being thrown against the Imam, and The Guardian (Mulin, 1994) reported that after Police had stormed the mosque, they found chains, a baseball bat, and pieces of wood with nails sticking out. The consequence therefore, of an original appearance at Luton Central Mosque during Friday prayers in 1992, was various displays of strength and violence. While a moment of public appearance was possible in the mosque, and was momentarily taken on various occasions in 1992, the legacy appeared to have been the emergence of violent repressions and the exercise of strength on both sides. Violence seems to have been the focus in telling the story, and not public action. This does not mean of course, that public actions and openings at Luton Central Mosque will have such a legacy today. The numbers of people using the space today, indicates that there is potential for public action in the space. Indeed, the current extension of Luton Central Mosque, could enhance the potential space of appearance today.

Another significant obstacle to publicness in Luton Central Mosque also exists. This obstacle can be seen in the mosque's inability to attract the appearance of those who are not already social users of the space. A reputation of violence and a discourse of ethnic discrimination at The Parrot pub was shown in the last section to severely limit the publicness of that space for those who had not entered the space before. The same applies to Luton Central Mosque as it is embedded in the narratives about Bury Park;

Q: What parts of town do you avoid? (and why?)

[from **Opinions of Luton Survey** – see Appendix 4.]

A: “Bury park, marsh farm, high town and lewsey farm. This is mainly due to cultural divides or gang territory”

White English Female, 18-25 years. Lives, works, socialises, shops, and was brought up in Luton

A: “Bury Park as I feel very uncomfortable being among so many Muslims and the area is dirty. No English shops left in the area”

White English Female, 41-55 years. Lives and works in Luton

A: “Bury Park.... It’s a different country inside Luton”

White English Male, 26-40 years. Lives, works, socialises, shops and was brought up in Luton

A: “Bury park, always too crowded. The people; mostly asian, stare (even though I am Asian myself)”

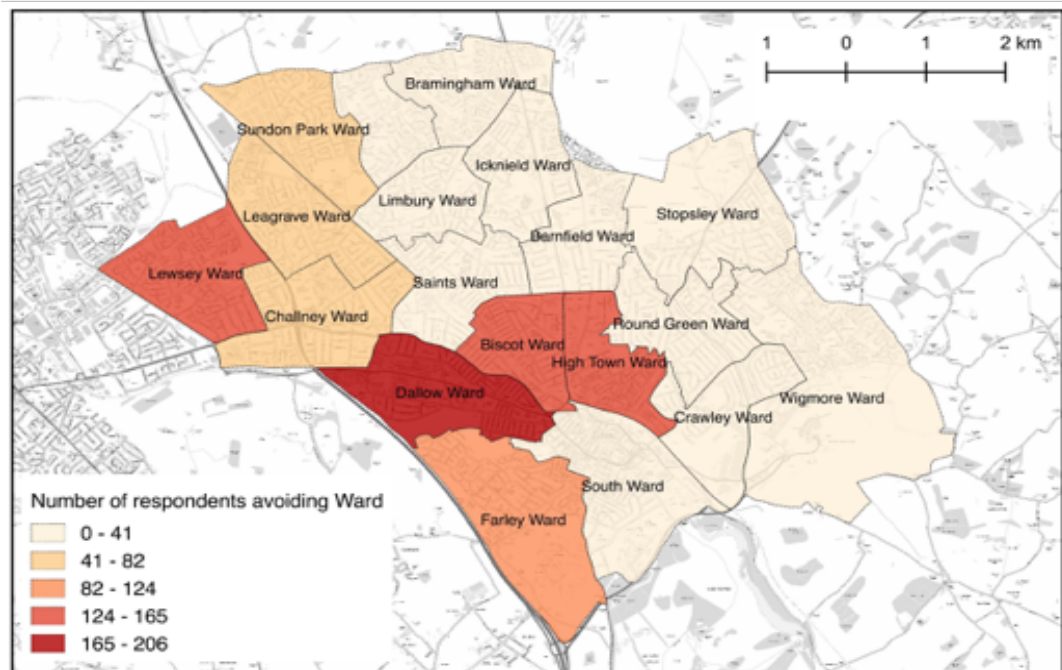
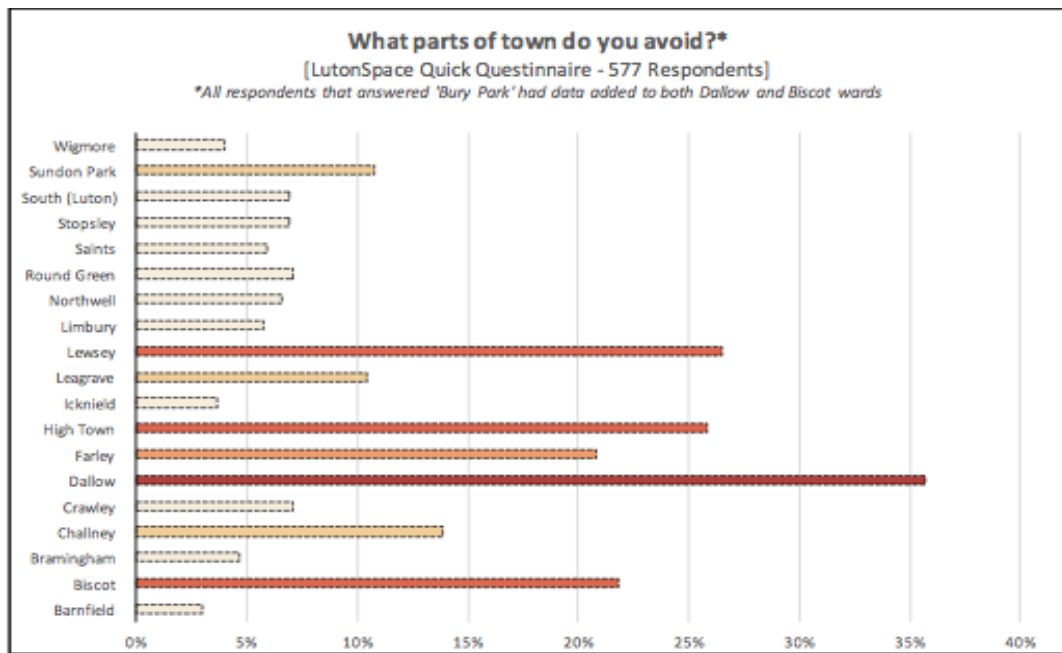
British Asian (Indian) Female, 18-25 years. Lives, works, socialises, worships, shops, and was brought up in Luton

A: “Bury park [Too] many people walking around in full burkas, no English speaking people, very intimidating to English people”

White British Female, 18-25 years. Works in Luton

The publicness of appearance at Luton Central Mosque is limited by the pervasiveness of the narrative about Bury Park. This is a narrative, expressed by many people, that one’s ethnicity or religion makes the area unwelcoming to your appearance. The same narrative has been exploited and developed by the far-right groups that have made their appearances in Luton since 2009 (Casciani, 2011; The Times, 2016). The extent that such a narrative is believed has subsequently meant that the diversity and plurality of potential voices existing in Luton is not established in Bury Park (see Figure 8(8)). From 577 respondents who answered the question in my LutonSpace Quick Questionnaire, Figure 8(8) shows the density of respondents who mention that they avoid the areas of Dallow Ward and Biscot Ward in their day-to-day lives; the two wards that cover the Bury Park area.

The tendency, that Lefebvre noticed in his critique of contemporary urban life, for a space to be reduced to a singular and simplified narrative, can have, in the case of Bury Park, extensive consequences on political subjectivity and the appearance of plurality. The publicness of social spaces, I suggest, is greatly limited by a perception of the wider area it is situated in. The publicness of Luton Central Mosque is dependent not just upon the social, private, violent and public aspects of the fixed space itself, but also on the perceptions of Bury Park in public discourse. Challenging this story is essential to build a greater space of appearance. This is also true in the case of The Parrot pub, and Farley Hill.



Data source: Office for National Statistics ; National Records of Scotland ; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2016): 2011 Census aggregate data. UK Data Service (Edition: June 2016). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5257/census/aggregate-2011-1>. This information is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence [<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/21>].

Figure 8(8) – Pattern of wards that people avoid in Luton – Based on online survey (LutonSpace Quick Questionnaire) carried out during 2015 with 577 responses

[Note: Respondents could select more than 1 answer. Thus each value on Y-axis of bar graph should be considered as a separate % out of possible 100%]

8(2). Violent Stories: Subaltern, Contradiction, and Silences

Q: What parts of town do you avoid? (And why?)

A: “I don’t avoid anywhere but I know many local white folk avoid Asian area Bury Park. I don’t understand why as no-one will harm anyone –its only local Asian people going about their business & shopping.”

Asian Bangladeshi Female, 41-55 years. Lives, works, socialises, worships, and shops in Luton [Opinions of Luton Survey]

Telling stories of actions experienced in everyday life that challenge the dominant and simplified narrative of a space, can provide openings for new public appearances. Recounting experiences from Farley Hill that challenge the drug/violence/ethnic discrimination narrative of the space, can serve to improve the potential publicness of social spaces in the area. Likewise, telling stories of Bury Park that challenge the unwelcoming/violent/ethnic and religious segregation narrative of the area can improve the potential publicness of a space like Luton Central Mosque;

“...the mosque, very little in Farley... ..opened up [during a Peace Walk event] and they came out, and they displayed their refreshments and their little boards of what things they do, and then they also walked on the peace walk, to visit the church and they had never visited. So they had crossed boundaries, so it is not so easy because of the racisms we talked about, the sort of social interaction does not take place...”

Interview with South Asian Male, 50+ Years

“So I went to Bury Park and got a Sari made and stuff like that. And when I went down there they were so polite, they couldn't be more pleased to see me in the shop, and they supported me, and I didn't want to go there on my own, so I brought my friend with me, who is actually Sikh oddly, so she came with me down there, and she spoke to them... so it wasn't an issue.”

Interview with White British Female, 30+ Years

“...when the riots erupted in the 80s in Luton, it was all based around rumours of an imminent attack on the mosque, the central mosque in Bury Park. So, spontaneously hundreds and hundreds of youth gathered outside the Mosque. Not Asian youth only. Black youth, Asian youth, white youth, you know...yeah. you know, this was like in the 1980s”

Interview with South Asian Male, Late 50s

The above examples show how telling stories can challenge dominant perceptions about a space, and become vehicles for changing, or at least disrupting, the stable narrative. Stories are fabrications of action. In this sense they are violent works that give moments of action a degree of durability. Their violence, in the case of a disruptive story, is an objective violence directed against the existing homogenising narrative. A new story becomes a vehicle for opening up the narrative. It reveals the limits of the dominant stable story, and therefore provides space for further public action. I suggest that disrupting the simplified narrative of an area through story-telling, actually enables greater potential publicness for the social spaces.

The memory of public action, the story-telling, is never a perfect fabrication of action; to be perfect it would have to actually replicate the action. I have already shown how the imperfect re-telling of actions frequently enables the strength of dominant voices to assert control, and to shift the focus of memories from action onto violence – this has been in the case of the 1919 Peace Day riots, as well as the 1992 mosque management challenge. The memory of violence seems to be told with ease and frequency in many occasions;

“I was trying to get people to the Arndale safely, and I saw the police line split, and then all these EDL members were running at us, and I mean, I love my Football Factory and all that, those hooligan films and that, and that's what it felt like. I felt like I was in a football factory. There were elderly and children, and they were so scared, and they became animalistic, they really did, and that was when I just thought, wow, I can't believe that this has happened to the town...”

Interview with White British Female, 30+ Years

“Before EDL came, there was a group in Luton. It was Luton United Front or something like that. And I was living in Park street and I remember how scary it was

as an Asian on that street. Because Luton South is heavily white... so all these people were walking the street and I had the windows like, if they had just thrown, just break and you could have put a fire. Everybody was really scared at that time.”

Interview with South Asian Male, 40+ Years

However, while I heard stories of subjective violence and fear told with ease and regularity in Luton, it was also the case that other moments of subjective violence were told as the background to remembered moments of public action. The pattern seems to be that moments of public action were recounted in their proximity to violence, and moments of violence were recounted in their proximity to public action;

“2004; when [Respondent] lived in Bury Park... ...All of a sudden, he said, windows were being smashed (and it was the black community that “blew the whistle”), and the local communities were very angry. He said that the windows being smashed [was] known all around, and many communities in Bury Park [got] together for a meeting. Knowing that tensions were escalating, [Respondent] said that he went and spoke to the victims [in their] houses [] to tell them that what was happening [had] nothing to do with the “Muslim community”, but it was an individual; a criminal. [Respondent] also said that he went to the mosques in Bury Park and “spoke on stage” to give a lecture that “this is our community”...”

Interview with South Asian Male, Late 50s

“Israel's invasion of Gaza in, on, Boxing Day 2008, and the response of the Muslim community here to that. In the run up to an event, to the holocaust memorial event in January 2009 ...suddenly there was this ultimatum that this event be turned over to the suffering of the people of Gaza. And of course the Jewish community weren't going to abide by it. And I said 'no, we're not having this'. Actually, in the end, we worked towards a Muslim and Christian and Jews standing up at the front, sort of saying 'whatever happens out there, we're going to hold the peace here'.”

Interview with White British Male, 50+ Years

“So a Bangladeshi Muslim comes and parks [in front of a ‘Sikh shop’], and this gentleman comes and says, 'Well, this is for my shop, you know, unless you are

coming for shopping in my shop, probably you better move and park somewhere else.' And he said, 'Oh no, I will come to your shop as well, just need to pick up some' 'Oh, that's alright, fine'. He went, goes, comes back, conveniently choses to drive away, and gets stopped by the shop owner again. Gets a bit heated argument, and er, converts into a bit of physical fight, and very soon it gets sort of communal, because he calls his 10 people, and 10 become 100. The other guy then also informs his people, and then suddenly becomes war. 'Our Sikh shop is being attacked', because they threw stones and they had to put shutters down, Police had to come... ..But here, it began to get communal. Um, so 1500 people on either side began to sort of gather together... so we had to then convene, intervene, and convene a very short meeting of somebody from the Council of Mosques and somebody from the Sikh Temple..." "...in no time, both issued statements that were very cordial, it got published in the press and things were sort of calmed down over a couple of weeks' time... ..community things were resolved, and we got back on with our life together. The shop is still there, it still operates, and probably that guy still comes, but, it's done."

Interview with South Asian Male, 50+ Years

In these three stories told, incidents of violence – local homes being attacked, an overseas military invasion, and a local ethnic confrontation – stand as merely a context to the emergence of dialogue and public action. Subjective violence, and attempts by certain individuals to use their strength, are here fabricated with inclusion of a space of appearance that was established in their aftermath. Indeed, a number of respondents revealed to me – some off the record – that the appearance of far-right demonstrations in Luton, with their history of violence and the expected appearance of future violence, have actually played a part in enabling moments of public action;

"The things is, when... the EDL comes through the town, most of the community join together..."

Interview with South Asian Muslim Male, Late 50s

"the work we do in preparation for an event, a march, demo or whatever, just accelerates what we should be doing all the time."

Interview with White British Male, 50+ Years

“We always said that we should thank EDL in one sense, because it has created those opportunities and spaces for social interaction. Otherwise, who's, I'm busy with my life, and even if I am not so busy, I would just like to do some gardening in my free time, rather than to run around in Bury Park and meet these guys who I've met today.”

Anonymous quote from Respondent

The pre-emption of subjective violence, or the attempts to resolve it, has provided a context in which public action has actually been memorialised and fabricated in Luton in these examples. The expectation of violence from an EDL march disrupted the everydayness of the urban space but not necessarily the dominant narratives already existing. However, the moments of dialogue and the openings for plurality that subsequently developed, do seem to disrupt those existing narratives. In the stories told here, public action is being remembered; it has gained a degree of durability. This is in contrast to the previous stories about public action, where violence that resulted was more readily remembered.

Evidently a choice exists in the fabrication of violence and action through story-telling. As an individual who re-counts or re-tells an event, one is not simply an echo of the praxis witnessed. The story-teller is also an author and a subsequent actor to the event. Choosing what is recounted, and how it is told, the story-teller acts with strength – and violence – against the memory. This is unavoidable. Therefore, the story told, and the story-teller, will influence the durability of the action and the extent to which the action is incompletely and destructively reimagined. Re-telling a story full of contradictions, errors, or lies will limit, and even destroy, the original action. Likewise, telling stories that contradict the recollection of others, will obstruct the durability of action as its re-telling will depend upon whose version is believed. When talking to different respondents from the Farley Hill area, there was a point where I was interested in hearing about the opportunities for, and memories of, public action in the local park – Stockwood Park (see Figure 8(3)). The range of responses that I received, showed the messiness involved in telling stories, and how contradictory these fabrications can be;

“...there is a real barrier, that Farley Hill road, seems to be a real psychological barrier for people here... ..They don't and it's just over the road. They've got this massive space, and they don't use it...” “...I think it is almost like a spiritual barrier, um. They just don't, they can't do it... ..you'd think that a family around Farley would think 'let's go out for a picnic over to the park', and they'd go over with a ball or a frisbee, and a kite and that kind of thing. But they don't. They don't. That's really strange isn't it? Strange...”

Interview with White British Christian Male, 40+ Years

“...when I went [to Stockwood Park], and this sounds really awful, it's probably going to sound, probably not right. When you go in there, you can tell the clientele that go in there, aren't from Farley Hill, they're from places like Harpenden and St. Alban's. You know they're quite wealthy...”

Interview with White British Female, 30+ Years

“...I don't know if anybody else would agree with you that Stockwood Park is not Farley Hill. To us, that is Farley Hill... ..I would never see it as not being Farley Hill. You going up there; it's part of us... ..the park gets used when there is events going on.”

Interview with White British Female, 20+ Years

Stockwood Park, according to one Respondent (White British Female, 20+ Years), is an open space used frequently by people from the estate for social gatherings, and likely contains openings for public appearance and dialogue. In contrast, the other respondents quoted suggest that the space is infrequently used, and would unlikely host public appearances. This contradiction shows that the recollection of a space, its fabrication in words – symbolic violence – is not contained by the praxis that occurred within it. The recollection of space, and praxis, is in part, controlled by the story-teller, who chooses how to narrate it. This narration is an exercise of strength (in Arendt's sense) over the lived space – the combination of the space and praxis. Thus, when contradictory stories are told about the same spatial practices, the strength of the story tellers, or the power of the story, comes into question. If the story tellers have equivalent strength, then the contradictions will mean that they cancel one another out, making both fabrications worthless. On the other hand, if one story-teller has greater strength – a more dominant

voice – their story will likely silence the other story. Yet, if a story itself has greater *power* – if it reflects a plural concert of voices – it will have greater amplitude, despite the minimal strength of the story-teller, and thus dismiss the quieter voice. The durability of action therefore, dependent upon its fabrication, plays out in a contest between the strength of the story teller and the power of the story.

In the last chapter I explored the strength of the story teller by looking at the production of public space in Luton. I illustrated that an officially sanctioned story existed, depicting ‘one Luton’, a ‘Luton in harmony’, made up of distinct identity groups who are, in the most part, geographically segregated around the town and where disruption, especially to commerce, was unwelcome. It is possible, in discussing the fabrication of public moments, to consider how such an established narrative actually influences, and to some extent silences, other story-tellers in the town – showing the strength of the established narrative over the fabrication of action;

“...there's certain things you've got to be careful how you say. Because you can be seen to be being racist. The way. The way I see it. I don't believe I'm racist. I don't think that at all...”

Interview with White British Male, 40+ Years

“Because, I think some people like put all Muslim and Asian people; oh they're all extremists. You know, you can't be like that. And I know, it's easier said than done, because, I suppose, everyone thinks, you know what, god you never know. You know what I mean?”

Interview with White British Female, 20+ Years

Q: Where in Luton are you most likely to go to talk about local issues or local politics?

A: “Nowhere because you aren't heard anymore! You just accused of being a racist if you raise any issues that you are concerned about...”

White British Female, 26-40 years. Brought up in Luton [Opinions of Luton Survey]

Q: Where in Luton are you most likely to go to talk about local issues or local politics?

A: “There is nowhere to go, we’re a minority in Our Own Town, speaking out gets you branded a racist”

White English Male, 41-55 years. Lives in Luton [Opinions of Luton Survey]

Among these respondents there is consensus that to be regarded as ‘racist’ is bad, and none of the respondents view themselves in this way. Yet, there is the suggestion from each individual that they are choosing not to appear in public – appearing in the sense of speaking and acting – or they are tempering their story-telling, for fear that they will be regarded as a ‘racist’ for contravening the dominant narrative on identity. This dominant narrative says fixed identities (ethnic, religious, racial) are revealed to others in public performance, and should not be ascribed by outsiders. The respondents above, some ascribing others’ identities in this way, are silencing their stories because of their deviance from the dominant narrative. Irrespective of one’s judgement of their views, this decision not to appear is a restriction on the public realm - the plurality of the public realm is reduced - and their decision to temper recollections of public moments, “not to sound racist”, shows how the strength of a dominant narrative is impacting fabrication.

The sensitivity and wariness that I witnessed in my interviews and observations in Luton, especially around the subject of ethnic and religious identity, stood out. Respondents were frequently cautious when talking about the subject, and many often they felt the need to add caveats to their statements, or to request that their opinions be made ‘off the record’. This self-censoring and caution revealed an existing violence, an objective symbolic violence, over speaking about the subject in public. Rather than holding a dialogue with me about these identities, or recalling memories associated with them, many respondents actually chose silence. Those that didn’t, nervously stumbled around what they perceived to be the ‘correct’ language to use;

“So our Jewish community is tiny. In Hertfordshire, I don't know about 20 Mosques, Mosques? Oh, oh my gosh, no, synagogues.”

Interview with White British Male, 30+ Years

“You have a very distinct white population. I mean there is the indigenous, if you can call it that really, um, um, population.” ... “Certainly the White community, indigenous, if you can use that word, um, also there is a real lack of a sense of community up here.”

Interview with White British Christian Male, 40+ Years

“Certainly face-to-face the acceptance is there I think, but behind your back the acceptance is not there. So there's a lot of people on Facebook that will kick off and say, oh, Muslim this and that, but they wouldn't say it to your face”

Interview with South Asian Male, Late 50s

“And, you know, talking to a lot of the residents, it sounds awful, but I think it's probably come, they're from the EDL, people's main problem - horrible to say it - it's, it's Muslims, and the Asian community. And it's because they feel that they've been pushed out by them.”

Interview with White British Female, 30+ Years

Evidently story-telling is not a simple fabrication of action. The strength of the story teller, the power of the story, and the symbolic violence of a dominant narrative, all impact the resulting fabrication. While Cronon explains that there is an “endless sea of stories” (Cronon, 1992: 1371) that can be told about any event, certain stories will clearly make bigger waves on this sea than others. The size of the wave – or the pervasiveness of the story – is dependent on these combined elements of story-telling. However, revealing the size of a ‘wave’ does nothing to indicate the genesis of a story which, according to Arendt, comes from the activities of labour or action.

This chapter has added new layers to the illustration of public space and violence in Luton that were made in the previous chapter. Looking at fixed social spaces and temporal moments, it has been possible to narrate a range of actual public appearances and violence in Luton; showing the fine line that frequently exists between the two. Two contrasting social spaces, in the form of The Parrot pub and Luton Central Mosque, have been placed alongside one another showing how traversing public, private and social realms is part of the continual embodiment of any social space. Following this, I have explored struggles involved in fabricating moments of public appearance in Luton. This has included the

struggle between remembering violence or remembering action, and the struggle existing between the strength of the story tellers and the power of the story told.

9. The Genesis of a Story: A Fine Line Between Public and Violence

Turning to the genesis of a story in the form of action, it is possible to develop further my discussion on the status of public space and the presence of violence in Luton. Rather than looking at the unpredictable echoes of action in the form of stories told, one can look at present moments of action as they appear in the presence of others, and interpret it; becoming therefore, a story-teller oneself. In this chapter I turn my attention away from fixed spatial forms therefore, to look towards the narration of temporal moments in the town; moments of potentially violent transgression. This involves narrating a demonstration that I witnessed during my empirical research - a march by the far-right political group Britain First – and exploring the durability of public appearance that emerges in a story told by one of my research participants. Given the messiness that, Lefebvre argues, exists in lived space, bearing witness to these moment in Luton should indicate both the existence of disruptive political openings in the town and the practical enforcement of restrictions to this action. These disruptions and practices can be placed in relation to the existing narrative that I have presented, and used to reveal the potential of forming a new story.

No new story can be isolated from any existing narratives; these form a story's context, their location in Cronon's 'sea' – much like no social space can be isolated from the area it is in (as shown above). Yet, it is possible that a new story can complicate an existing narrative, or even disrupt it entirely, in the way it narrates the present moment of praxis. Making a story therefore, can tread a fine line between being creative and being destructive. Any story told is a fabrication, but not necessarily a fabrication of something new. A story told which is new – containing a new perspective or understanding – is disruptive in a creative sense. In contrast, a story that silences the moment it fabricates in favour of an existing narrative, is disruptive in the violent sense. This is the fine line that exists between public and violence.

To first explore a moment of praxis and the process of its fabrication, I turn to an event I witnessed in Luton; the demonstration from 27th June 2015 by the far-right group Britain First. Recounting this event, I interpret the public action, violence, and urban encounter

that I witnessed, both on the day and in related moments throughout my empirical research, and I present the opinions and recollections of others who influenced my interpretation. As such, the story is not a complete and unbiased account of events that day. It is, as all stories are, a partial tale.

9(1). ‘Britain First’ Demonstration in Luton

The first that I heard about the far-right group Britain First planning to make an appearance in Luton, was during a participant observation exercise that I took on 20th May 2015, observing a meeting of the Luton Council of Faiths (see Appendix 11.a). Knowing nothing about this group, I absorbed the opinions expressed in the meeting. I was to hear that Britain First were “an offshoot of the EDL”, who had established a reputation for being “more disciplined” than the EDL - disciplined in the sense that their political demonstrations rarely involved the consumption of alcohol beforehand. In fact, I made a note that, at one point a police officer present suggested that Britain First were more “behaved” than the EDL, but then he quickly retracted to reiterate the notion of them being “disciplined”. The impression I got, was that Britain First were potentially unsettling an established association between the far-right and violence. Next, noting more from the Police Officer, I heard that Britain First were alleged to have “links to the paramilitary groups in Ireland and to the BNP”, and heard another member of the meeting say that the group used “paramilitary” tactics for their demonstrations. The example of such tactics given was that the group had been forcing their way into Mosques and handing out Bibles. The discussion at the Luton Council of Faiths meeting then concluded that council of faiths should respond to the planned demonstration. However, they were not agreed how to respond (some suggested opening dialogue with the protest group, but others vetoed this idea – see Observations from Luton Council of Faiths in Appendix 11.a). Bedfordshire Police also explained that they were already working to restrict the planned demonstration, by prohibiting its location and duration, and there was general agreement that this would include keeping the march “well away from Bury Park” (*ibid.* Appendix 11.a).

Following this first exposure to the demonstration by Britain First, I realised the centrality that the event might hold for this research. Thus, I took to asking questions, with my subsequent respondents, about the event and asking for their opinions on it. In discussions prior to the demonstration I was able to hear different people’s perspectives on what they

thought might happen, and after the demonstration, I was able to hear some reactions. On the most part, likely a result of the status and position of many respondents, I was to hear about a struggle to control, restrict and police the demonstration.

“Um, well, [Bedfordshire Police] clearly try and keep Britain First away from Bury Park, which is where they want to go ...so they used injunctions and so on quite effectively to try and minimise the impact. But yes, ultimately um, there are um, [pause], they are um, they do have to observe freedom of speech, and that's why it is difficult for them to actually totally ban a march like that. And actually, even if they did ban it, they'd still have to police the situation anyway. ...and it would be more difficult, and probably more expensive to police it.”

Interview with Police and Crime Commissioner (White British Male, 40+ Years)

“We placed restrictions on their, well not me, placed restrictions on where they could demonstrate and where they could march... so section 12 and section 14 of public order note says this, and it's basically so you know, allowing their democratic right, so they picked them areas specifically because it was a mixture of business, residential, it was close to the town centre...” “...the actual High Town community weren't happy with it...”

Interview with Bedfordshire Police Officer (White British Male, 30+ Years)

“They want to march from the railway station to the centre of town. Which is pragmatic because they'll arrive at the railway station... um, and actually they don't really know Luton... they think St. George's Square and George Street is where you need to be because that's all about George... ...they won't be allowed to do it because council have got a no town centre demonstration policy...” “...We will place community mediators in [the] vulnerable spaces. Because those are the places where local people interact with the demonstrators. Either negatively, or in a way that draws them in. Which is what they plan.”

Interview with White British Male, 50+ Years

Reflecting the sense of control and order over public appearance exercised by the dominant producers of public space in Luton – the state (discussed in previous chapter) - the demonstration by Britain First in Luton on 27th June 2015 emerged to me as an exercise

in the flexing of the state's strength over public appearance. It was also an experiment in the application of new strengths afforded to the state in recent legal acts. This experiment was most evident in the attempts by Bedfordshire Police to ban the organisers of the demonstration from entering Luton, and to place a series of other restrictions on the event in accordance with the Public Order Act (1986) and the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act (2014). These attempts led to a High Court appearance of both Bedfordshire Police and the organisers of the Britain First demonstration on the day before the planned event (26th June 2015). I observed this High Court appearance first hand (see Observations in Appendix 11.g).

In the High Court on 26th June 2015, a representative for Bedfordshire Police put forward arguments and reasons for trying to ban both the Britain First demonstration, and the future appearance of its organisers, in the town. First of all, there was, I heard, supposed to be an event hosted by Luton in Harmony on the day of the demonstration. This event had had to be cancelled due to the demonstration. The police representative said that the appearance of the demonstration organisers would cause problems because "They stand against harmony" (*ibid.* Appendix 11.g). I then heard that the banning orders had been submitted by the police because of the 'tension' that was believed to come with the organisers of the event. According to the police representative "Their "mere presence" in Luton [would] cause tension" (*ibid.* Appendix 11.g), and she claimed that Britain First were looking to inflame community tensions with their demonstration. Making reference to Bury Park – relying on the simplistic narrative in the way that I have already explored previously - the Police representative suggested that the demonstrators "don't want people there as part of their party", instead they were planning to alienate the people of Luton (*ibid.* Appendix 11.g). This claim was backed up with reference to previous activities in Luton, and the wider UK setting, by Britain First; including a so-called tactic of 'mosque invasions'.

In the legal setting of the High Court, the interaction between the state – in the form of Bedfordshire Police – and the individuals planning to disrupt public space through their appearance in Luton – in the form of the Britain First organisers – was limited and formalised through the statements of their representatives. Nonetheless, this interaction revealed the intentions of the state to "harness [the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014] legislation as a tool to control and curtail disruptive public political protest" (see Appendix 8.p), and to test the limits of its strength to control public

appearance in Luton. The public appearance of both groups, in the mediated dialogue of a court room, opened space for disagreement and led to the creation of a new situation – the situation where certain prohibitions were agreed on the demonstration;

Prohibitions on the march:

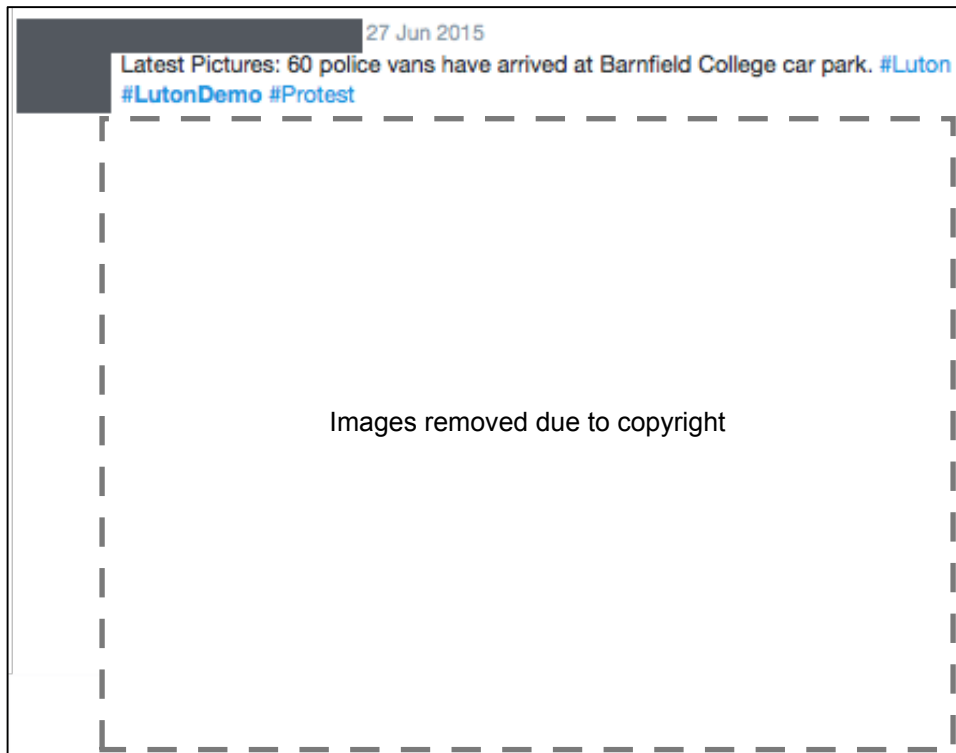
1 – “Entering a mosque/Islamic Cultural Centre/private grounds without prior invitation”

2 – “Carrying/displaying any sign/banner in Luton on the Day stating “no more mosques” or similar words”

Details from an online report entitled ‘**Chief Constable of The Bedfordshire Police v (1) Golding; (2) Fransen [2015] EWHC 1875 (QB)**’ published on 1st July 2015 (see Appendix 8.q)

Despite these prohibitions, the judge in the High Court, Justice Knowles, noted that the broader ‘powers’ that Bedfordshire Police tried to exercise, “to ban the leaders of a registered political party altogether from a town [was] a very considerable thing” (para 33) ... [and there was the] possibility that if granted, such an injunction could result in a myriad of similar applications across the country which would have an impact on political activity” (see Appendix 8.r). As such, the call to ban the march and the march organisers was denied by the court.

By denying the bans on the Britain First demonstration, the interaction of the High Court hearing exposed the limit of the state’s strength, and seemed to be protecting public appearance in Luton; at least the public appearance of any registered political party and its leaders. However, in detailing what I observed in Luton on the day of the Britain First demonstration, I show below that the court resolution did not establish protection of political or public appearance. Instead, I argue below, that the events in Luton on 27th June 2015 showed that the protection afforded by the legal structure of the High Court, only formalised the protection of *physical* appearance of individuals in the town.



Anonymised Tweet about Police vans congregating in Luton prior to Britain First demonstration SM(gg.)

Congregating around Luton on the morning of 27th June 2015, large numbers of police officers and vehicles, brought in from all around the UK, were strategically positioned in the town, ready to intervene in the demonstration that was planned for the afternoon. As Britain First protestors and counter-demonstrators began to emerge around Luton train station throughout the morning, these police officers were deployed in waves to keep the groups physically apart wherever they ended up meeting. Interaction between the different protesting groups was limited to shouting, inaudibly most of the time, in one another's general direction. One of the things that I observed in these early exchanges, which came as a surprise to me, was that the confrontations and aggressive shouting near to where I stood on Station road, came, almost exclusively, from the supposed counter-demonstrators, and not Britain First. As soon as members of the Britain First demonstration were spotted by members of the counter-demonstration, there was a rush to shout, chant, and gesticulate towards them. However, this maybe should not have surprised me.

During an interview with a Bedfordshire Police officer, the officer gave me the impression that the pattern of violence, where the counter-protest initiated the aggression, was frequently the case in other similar protests in Luton. However, *directly* expressing this to

me was avoided. The officer nodded and raised his eyebrows in our interview, rather than audibly agreeing when the idea was presented to him; no doubt due to the recording device that was being used. It seemed to me that this was done to preserve the established narrative about violence and protest in the town being perpetrated by the far-right. Nonetheless, turning to other interviews that I conducted, it is possible to argue that the prevalence of violence by far-right protests in Luton is actually an unstable narrative;

“...no damage, no stones were thrown, hardly any arrests because the thing about the EDL, if you can use the word good, is that they were well disciplined, and they wanted to give the impression, and you know they justified it, that 'we're not a bunch of hooligans', even though there are some hooligan elements, but they weren't about that. and they actually delivered on what they said.”

Interview with Caribbean Christian Male, 60+ Years

“Because you see the EDL has been quite a force in the area...it was huge here, 3 or 4 years ago. So you had two marches and a million pounds spent on policing it. The only trouble came from, the anti-fascist league...they are the ones who stirred up trouble. Because in fact, the Muslims stayed in this area, and we stayed with them really, and EDL marched down on the other side of town...”

Interview with White British Christian Male, 60+ Years

Another configuration of aggression however, stood out in my observations from 27th June 2015. In one of the early exchanges between individuals, while the police officers were still trying to establish order, a confrontation occurred. A counter protester I spoke to was shouting at the top of her voice at two other women on the Britain First side of the road. She said that she was shouting at the other side because she believed the women there were from Britain First and were not from Luton. When I spoke to the ladies on the other side however, they said that they were, in fact, third generation Lutonians who had just come down to see what was going on. They were not part of any protest, yet they were now upset at being shouted at.

In the conceptual discussion of this thesis, I used Arendt to show that public appearance requires distance (albeit, still with a degree of proximity), in contrast to violence, which erases the distance between people. Distance allows for speech and a response, and for the space to create something new. The distance between the three individuals in the above example however, much like its appearance, was purely physical. Physical space separated the individuals, yet simultaneously this separation was abolished when, without listening to the other, individuals made their assumptions about them. The 'other' was not able to appear. The actions of each individual, shouting and gesturing, maintained a physical distance but abolished any public distance; it was a moment of violence.



Image 1 - Initial confrontation between Britain First and Counter-demonstration. 2 uniformed Police officers visible.



Image 2 - 60 Seconds after Image 1. Confrontation interrupted by Police. More than 30 Police officers and 1 Police Van have entered shot.

Figure 9(1) – Initial confrontations and police segregation on Station Road prior to Britain First demonstration, 27th June 2015 (*Images taken by author*)

This moment had occurred without police officers keeping the individuals apart, yet this virtual separation was short-lived. Station road was quickly established as a fixed boundary by police officers who came rushing in to the area in the following minutes. Eventually the whole area around Luton train station and Station road became clearly physically segregated by a huge police presence (see Figure 9(1)). The opportunity for public appearance – despite it not being taken up in the encounter I witnessed - was now being forcibly restricted. Around the same time as this, Luton Borough Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire were turning to social media, and drawing people’s attention to a controlled, ordered, and silent town centre, in alignment with the established narrative that I revealed in the last chapter;



Luton Borough Council Tweet SM(hh.)



Police and Crime Commissioner of Bedfordshire Tweet SM(ii.)

As the officially sanctioned time of the Britain First demonstration arrived, members of Britain First were encouraged by the police to congregate at the start of the planned route on Midland Road in High Town, away from any counter-protestors at the station. Here, in a fairly informal and quiet gathering, members of Britain First were given flags by the organisers of the demonstration – St George’s Flags and Union Jacks – so that the leaders of the group could pose with them for photographs being taken, in the most part, by the local and national media (examples of these photographers are in Figure 9(2)). The demonstration from this point onwards, was to have a decidedly orchestrated feel. When the procession started, music was played out of a sound system that the Britain First organisers had brought with them, and members of the group walked slowly together, in silence, along their prescribed route. I noticed little, if any, agonistic or antagonistic dialogue with the procession from outside. Instead, all of those not involved in the

demonstration around me stood and quietly observed. It was evidently a performance of a fixed identity that was being witnessed, not a public appearance. Physically Britain First appeared, but politically there was silence.

Britain First leaders holding Crucifixes, rest of demonstration holding flags



Local and National Media photographing Britain First leaders & demonstration

Figure 9(2) – Orchestrated performance – Britain First demonstration and the media (*Image taken by author*)

The moving performance of Britain First obediently followed its designated path through High Town, surrounded by silent police officers, until it reached a designated space near Bute Street car park (see Figure 9(3)). Here the procession stopped for a period of time while leaders of the group gave speeches, using megaphones, to their members. All the time the group was surrounded by a large number of silent police officers. The stationary Britain First demonstration could at this point be viewed in its broader theatrical performance in the town from my vantage point at Luton train station (see Figure 9(4)). Separated by over 100 metres of empty car park space and hundreds of police officers, the demonstrators of Britain First were kept apart from a collection of counter-demonstrators who had been allowed to congregate at the opposite corner of Bute street. Exercising the full amplitude of their own voices, or using megaphones that they had with them, individuals on each side shouted inaudibly at one another across the vacant space. Absolutely no dialogue was possible.

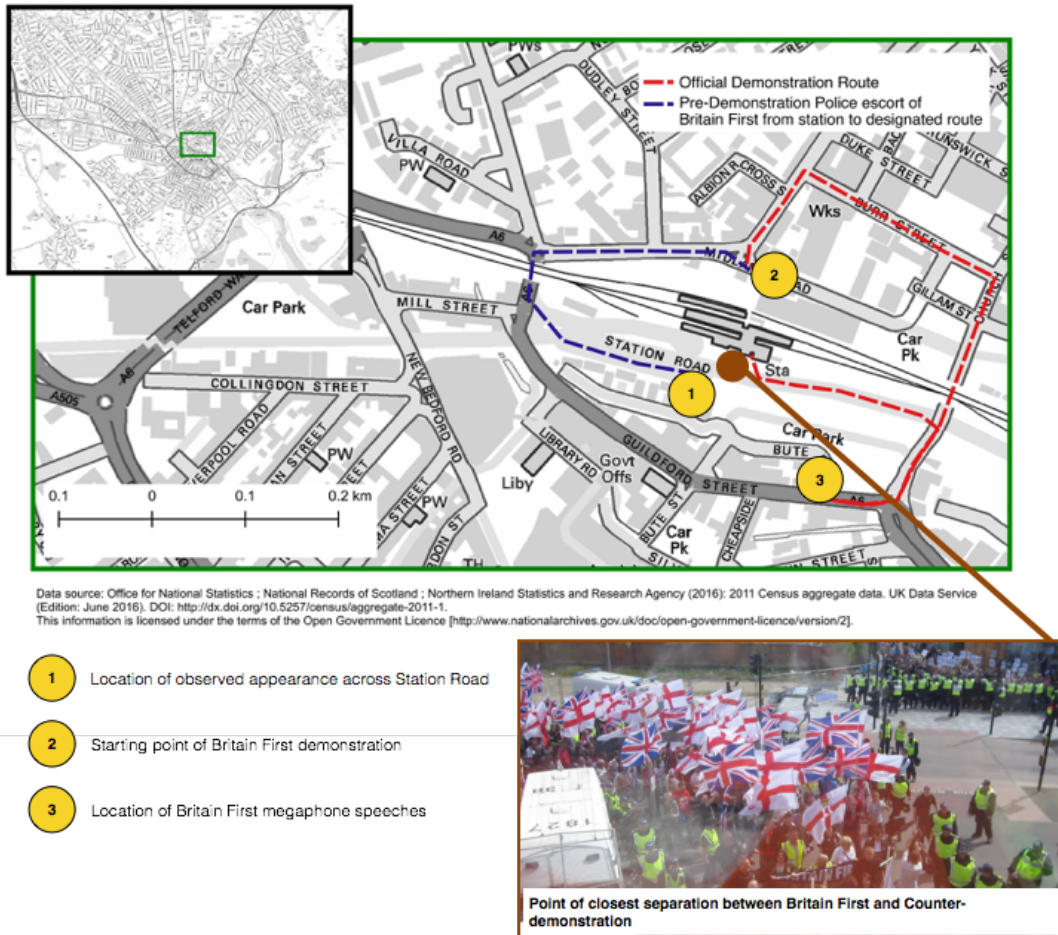


Figure 9(3) – Annotated map of Britain First demonstration on 27th June 2015 (Image taken by author)



Figure 9(4) – Theatrical physical appearance and separation of demonstration speeches on 27th June 2015 (Image taken by author)

Fairly soon the demonstration was brought to an end with the police escorting the demonstrators of Britain First back to Luton train station, where the majority were to board trains away from the town. All the while another large group of Police officers kept the counter-demonstration contained at the corner of Bute street. On the procession back to

the station, the two opposing groups were brought into their greatest proximity by sheer coincidence of the geography of the roads. At their closest, the two groups were maybe separated by only 15 metres (see Figure 9(3)). However, consistent to the pattern of the day, there continued to be only shouting, chanting, and physical appearance. Dialogue was never possible, public speech was silent. On the whole, the events around the demonstration of 27th June 2015, appeared to me as simply a 3-way display of strength through physical appearance; the strength of the demonstration, the strength of the counter-demonstration, and the strength of the Police/the state.



Bedfordshire Police Tweet SM(jj.)

However, I did hear other stories from 27th June 2015 which indicated that genuine public appearance could have happened in Luton as a result of the demonstration that day. Such appearances would unsettle and disrupt the actions that I witnessed, and the subsequent story that I have told. In Bury Park religious leaders and representatives from a range of faiths, council and charity sector workers, and residents carrying out their everyday routines, were brought into dialogue and discussion as part of a concerted effort by these groups to foster appearance in the town. The everyday activities of work and labour were interrupted as action took place. I was told by a respondent in the lead up to the demonstration, “the work we do in preparation for an event, a march, demo or whatever, just accelerates what we should be doing all the time” (Interview with White British Male, 50+ Years). It seemed as though fear of violence and unrest because of the demonstration, which didn’t actually materialise, had motivated the potential of public action, which already existed in Bury Park, to actually appear;



Tweet from 27th June 2015, Image taken in Bury Park SM(kk.)

This is an important contrast to the actions that I witnessed. Instead of missed opportunities for public appearance or the physical displays of strength, these actions reveal an unexpected and open moment of public dialogue. Fabricating this moment in the social media post (above) has made it a durable artefact of action. However, this particular post does not give any details about the content of the 'chatting', or about any consensus that resulted. In this sense, the post above is almost an empty fabrication of the public moment. We have absolutely no idea how the moment unfolded, or what form the action took. As such, its worth is minimal. Despite this post however, the moments themselves are not necessarily worthless. Even if all physical fabrications of the dialogue that took place were empty in the same way as the social media post, there is always a potential legacy of the action in the memory of those who participated. Recounting public action, at any time, is an everyday way that an individual involved in, or witnessing, action can give durability and worth to such an appearance.

9(2). The Durability of Everyday Memories

To conclude this discussion on the fine line between public and violence in Luton, I turn away from a moment that I witnessed first-hand, and instead reveal an everyday recollection of public action that I heard from one of my respondents. During interviews that I conducted, I offered many respondents the opportunity to narrate moments of disruption and public action that they had witnessed in Luton – many of these have been referenced already. Their narratives were, in the most part, uninterrupted with my questions, and provided for them a space to fabricate their memories, and subsequently to give the actions that they witnessed durability. The ability of respondents to tell these stories shows the potential that public action has for being fabricated by witnesses long after an event has happened. I have selected just one of these stories to re-tell below. This particular story has been chosen because it touches on many of the elements explored in this thesis, and manifests simultaneously as a disruptive and creative fabrication, as well as a violent artefact, of the public realm in Luton. It can summarise the fine line between public and violence.

The story I am re-telling came from a South Asian Male (50+ Years) during an extended interview that I held with him on 9th June 2015. It refers to an incident that the respondent recalled in Luton from 2012;

“The...incident happened, very recently actually. About a girl falling in love with a Muslim boy; Sikh girl falling in love with a Muslim boy. And there has been this grievance, like, you know, EDL has raised this issue ...of sex exploitation of white girls, that particularly Pakistani origin Muslim lads, tend to exploit. Like the Sikhs have a grievance that they always woo the Sikh girls, and convert them into Islam, because of the historical hostility that is there between Islam and Sikhism. So they just want to make a point that eventually we will try and wipe off Sikhism, because this was one thing that stood as strong opposition to [unknown] empire in part of India. And they want to, on the other hand, retain that identity, and sense of pride in that 'we stood against you, and we still stand against you, because Islam still continues to be very missionary religion'. So there is still that sense of hostility and underlying tensions, always there. So this began to get communal again, because the, somehow, the girl's side accused that they had actually exploited or,

blackmailed her, and made up accusations. Whereas actually both of them were doing, whatever they were doing, they'd reached a consent. But things became communal. Then suddenly in the night, about midnight, about 100, 200 Sikh lads gathered in front of Police station, and on the other side Muslims began to get together, and the guys friends began to get together. And again, we had to intervene... ..midnight, I got a call from Police Station that this was [] developing. So I contacted the president at the temple, and I contacted the chair of the Luton Council of Faiths, and somehow we sort of communicated to all those who had gathered at the Police Station 'go home now, but we will come back tomorrow, during the day time, in the Sikh temple, and let's talk there'. But prior to that, what we did was, we convened a meeting of faith leaders, and we asked police to be out, and we asked council leaders to be out, we asked politicians to be out, and said 'let community talk to each other', um... ..that's probably the first time actually that all the Imams came together, because they considered that this issue was so sensitive, and um, the Sikh people were also, well about 30 people gathered in the Sikh temple. There were 6 Muslims talking issues, 'what do we do about it?' They were simple saying like, 'look guys, this is one incident. We are not behind it, Islam is not behind it, so let's not make it communal. It's a particular individual who has done something, and we are sorry about it, if it has hurt the community's feelings. But let's deal with it [at the] individual [level], the law is there. You have filed a case against the boy, whatever you want to do, let's just follow legally this matter. But let's not turn it into a communal'. EDL was trying to come in as well, from the outside, and wanting to exploit that situation, to say to Sikhs, 'yes, we'll stand alongside you, yeh?' So they had to then say, 'no, you stay out of it'. So eventually what happened [was] that [a] Pakistan High Commission statement came, and all those big statements came, big leaders [were] brought in, things were calmed down. They've got on since then..."

Interview with South Asian Male, 50+ Years

I made the argument previously, that for an action to be public in Arendt's sense, it had to be disruptive. Indeed, Arendt claimed that action will necessarily "interrupt what otherwise would have proceeded automatically" (Arendt, OV: 30-31). The recollection of public appearance therefore, cannot simply retell an existing narrative. In recollecting action, in fabrication, a story treads a fine line between becoming a public artefact or becoming a

violent artefact. A recollection of action becomes a violent artefact if its disruption only serves to reinforce an existing story. Whereas, a recollection of action becomes a public artefact if it compliments its genesis and, as a disruptive form, is creative. Public action becomes a public artefact in the form of a new story, a new perspective.

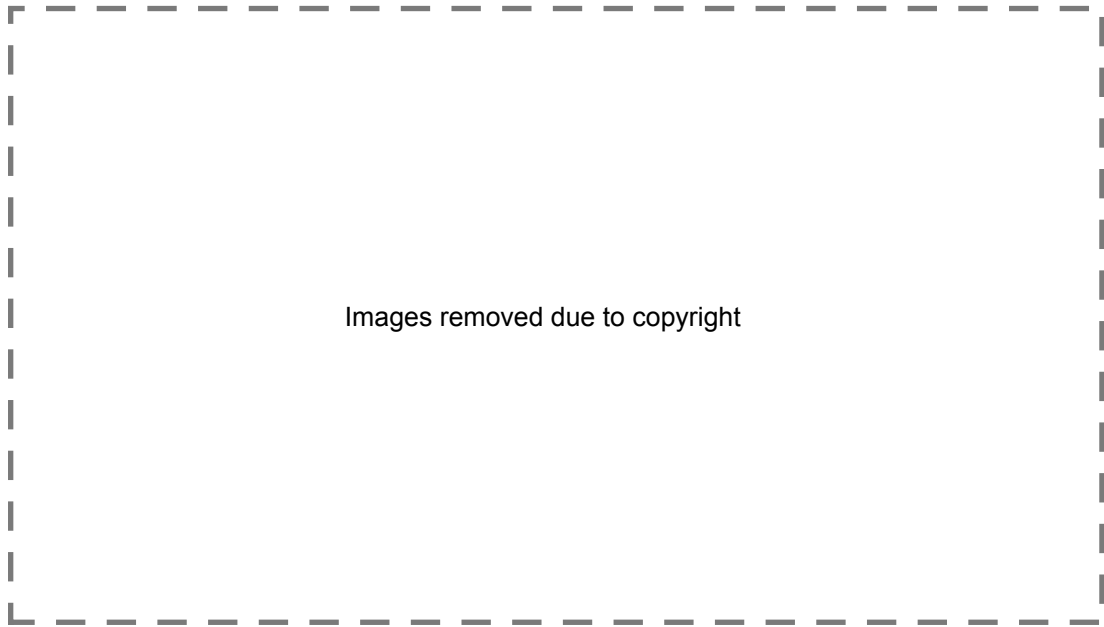


Figure 9(5)– Photos taken outside Luton Police Station during moment of public appearance discussed by Respondent (South Asian Male, 50+ Years) – *Images are screen captures from video posted online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gb8RYDaP5zl>* (Accessed on 24th July 2017)

In remembering, and telling, a new story about public dialogue and disruption, the respondent has given meaning and worth to such actions. If these events were not fabricated, they would be forgotten, losing all meaning and becoming futile (Arendt, HC). I therefore claim, that in telling the story about a space of appearance in Luton, the respondent was making their encounters in urban space meaningful. In this way, addressing Valentine's (2008) question about 'what makes an encounter meaningful in space?', I suggest that telling new stories about urban encounters across differences, is what makes such an encounter meaningful. The encounter itself may be public, but without being told – being fabricated – it has no public meaning. Telling a story to me during an interview, the respondent gave the actions they witnessed both meaning and durability. Elevating this story from its initial verbal fabrication and placing it into this thesis, I am further extending this durability – for at least as long as my thesis sits on the shelf in the university archives. On top of this, by re-telling my respondent's story, both quoting and para-phrasing it, and placing the story in the context of this thesis, I am

necessarily altering it. In this sense I am creating the story into a new story as well. Placing this new story into this thesis is therefore giving it new meaning and new life; giving it natality.

The above story fabricates many moments of dialogue and appearance in Luton. The respondent has not only narrated a story that is creative of something new, and in this sense a public artefact, but he has also re-told existing narratives, in themselves violent artefacts. Furthermore, the respondent has used the opportunity in telling the story, to express his opinion of events; an exercise of strength in his fabrication. I will explore each of these elements in turn, offering critique to the violent elements and elevating the public artefact.

As a violent artefact, the story reinforces the notion of fixed identities existing in Luton; in particular, those of Muslims and Sikhs in the town. No complexity is offered or added to these identities, giving the false impression that they are discreet and unproblematic. As has been discussed in the previous two chapters, everyday life in Luton frequently undermines this narrative, and thus it should be dismissed. To compound this simplification, the respondent also uses his story to re-tell existing falsehoods about these identities. In a form that he refers to as 'grievances', for example, the respondent offers the stereotype that Muslim men "always woo the Sikh girls, and convert them into Islam". While it is evident that the respondent does not believe this stereotype himself, its echo without contradiction in this story gives it the potential to form as a violent artefact. Such 'grievances', in my re-telling here, must therefore be stated as a mis-directed and false narratives.

Revealing his strength as a fabricator, the respondent also incorporates his opinion into the narrative. Claiming that, with regard to the two central protagonists, "whatever they were doing, they'd reached a consent", the respondent was taking voices away from the couple, abolishing his distance with them, and thus exercising his strength as a fabricator of action. In a similar way, when he later stated that the "EDL was trying to come in...to exploit that situation", the respondent was using his strength to abolish the distance between himself and the EDL, speaking for them and asserting their motivation. By exposing these moments of strength in the story, it is possible to re-read the respondent's narrative as a mix of

recollection and opinion. For example, we could read the above statement as “[In respondent’s opinion the] EDL was trying to come in...to exploit that situation”.

Most importantly for this thesis however, this story from the respondent emerges as a public artefact. The story recounts moments of public action in Luton; the speaking and acting of individuals in the lived space of the town. It captures the ‘space of appearance’ in these moments, and becomes part of the creation of a new story; a new lived space. Explaining how a violent confrontation in the town was diffused, the respondent recounts a public appearance where it was “communicated to all those who had gathered at the Police Station 'go home now, but we will come back tomorrow, during the day time, in the Sikh temple, and let's talk there'”. In that moment, the space outside the Police station in Luton had become a momentary public space (see Figure 9(5)); witnessing and enabling speech and action amongst a plurality of subjects. Following this, with the convening of a meeting of unfamiliar faith leaders, the respondent narrates another moment, resulting from the earlier appearance, where the Imams from different the Luton mosques met with Sikh leaders to have an open dialogue for the first time. This was another new space, another new moment. In this moment, the respondent recounts a position presented by the Islamic leaders “simple saying like, ‘look guys, this is one incident. We are not behind it, Islam is not behind it, so let's not make it communal...”. Offering details of the dialogue, the respondent is giving this second moment an enhanced publicness – the dialogue can now be heard outside of the meeting - and he is cementing a level of permanence for the moment in its recollection. Recounting his memories, the respondent has formed his story as a public artefact.

The events discussed by the respondent have not only been recounted and fabricated by him. At the time the event occurred, the local and national news outlets also covered the incident, fabricating it in their archives, and naturally there are an array of individuals who can also recount the event as witnesses. Nonetheless, the respondent used the opportunity in our interview in 2015 to narrate the event from 2012 and reveal the moments of appearance that he saw. Recollecting the event years after it occurred showed that it was not forgotten, giving it durability. By re-telling the respondent’s story here, my actions as the author, can give the initial actions even further durability. While dependent upon continued story-telling, fabrication, and re-telling, it is possible therefore that the action

may never end. Action, and therefore public space, can, as Arendt claimed, become immortal;

“Action is... the one miracle-working faculty of man [sic]” (Arendt, HC: 246)

To conclude, this chapter has added new layers to the illustration of public space and violence in Luton that were made in the previous chapters. Adopting the position of ‘story-teller’, I have fabricated a moment of potential appearance and violence that I witnessed in Luton; a demonstration by the far-right group Britain First. I have also turned to the durability and worth of public action in the form of an everyday story re-told to me by a research participant. Taking apart and reproducing these stories, it has been possible to show that the durability of action is found in its creative disruption and continual fabrication as a new form. I have also shown that, as a public artefact, the story also exists due to the strength of a story teller and their simultaneous creation of a violent artefact.

10. Concluding Discussion

Bringing into conversation the works of Hannah Arendt and Henri Lefebvre, this thesis sought to re-imagine and elevate the status of public space in geographical enquiry. To this aim an argument emerged that illuminated the central roles of production, dialogue, storytelling, transgression, and violence in the formation of such a public space, and also provided a set of questions to guide empirical research into its claims. These questions subsequently informed the design and implementation of a specific exercise in empirical research; an exercise in telling an illustrative story about an everyday urban setting. With the urban setting of Luton in Bedfordshire selected, and 12-months of fieldwork carried out (throughout 2015), such an illustrative story was narrated. This story hopefully added clarity, depth, and emphasis to the original arguments of the thesis. In this final concluding chapter, it is now possible to bring together all these elements of the project and present a summary of the core theoretical argument alongside its empirical illustration. It will also be possible to pose further questions that have emerged in this process and offer the potential for future lines of enquiry.

Given the centrality of the theoretical considerations in this thesis, it is appropriate to structure this concluding chapter around the logic of my core discussion. This structure simultaneously reflects the order of the research questions posed, and the foci of my illustrative story on Luton. First of all, I will present my conclusions on the production of public space, and the presence that both the state infrastructure and a dominant spatial narrative have in this production. Secondly, I will offer my conclusions on the relationship between 'space as social' and 'space as public'; reflecting upon the perpetual traversing of fixed spaces along a scale of publicness. Finally, I will outline my conclusions on the fine line that exists between a momentary appearance of public space and the reinforcement of everyday implements of violence, as well as exploring the necessarily disruptive and creative process involved in remembering such a public appearance.

10(1). The Production of Public Space

Henri Lefebvre's works on space, in particular *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre, PS), opened my exploration into the notion and importance of public space. Seeing space as the

existential basis of all social relations (Lefebvre, PS: 404), Lefebvre theorised a plural and public foundation to all space. This foundation, that all space is social, was the premise upon which Lefebvre developed a critique of the manifestation of space in the modern age (Lefebvre, PS). This critique claimed that social relations, necessary for space, are being ignored by the abstractions of those in positions of authority. Abstractions that are so pervasive that they serve to produce an alternative spatial reality; an 'abstract space'.

Spaces abstracted from their social relations, are ushered into concrete reality by the dominance of singular coherent understandings of spaces by those who produce them. These mental abstractions of those in authority become the dominant factor in producing lived experiences. They reduce a complex place, full of differing social relations, into simple models, made manifest through the employment of urban planners and architects (Lefebvre, PS). In Luton, I was to hear about a town that "has got so much going for it", reduced to a handful of components; "It's got airport, it's got motorway, railway, it's close to the capital, you know it's in the most prosperous part of the country" (Police and Crime Commissioner). I was to also hear about a town square at the centre of Luton, entered and occupied by thousands of people each day, that was purely a "public events venue" (Mayor of Luton). Luton, in the mental abstractions of those in authority, was even a space where ethnic, national, economic and religious identities, existed in distinct separate areas, and where the social relations of the hundreds of thousands of individuals living in the town could be atomised to "customers, communities, audiences" - apparently all words for the same thing.

These dominant mental abstractions of space, according to Lefebvre, come as an attempt to prioritise the functionality of space, and reflect the dominance of quantification in the political-economic system. They are also, more ominously, designed "to lie, to dissimulate not only the amount of social labour that they contain...but also the social relationships of exploitation and domination on which they are founded" (Lefebvre, PS: 80-81). Talking to members of the local state infrastructure in Luton, I was to hear numerous iterations of the idea that the local council's role was for social 'function', and not public facilitation. The state, I was told, existed to provide housing, healthcare, and litter collection and, of course, to save money. Any forms of social or public gathering were niceties beyond the council's concern. With this in mind, parts of the town, like Farley Ward, could be prioritised and planned using quantified census data, and town centre public spaces could be restricted

simply as the result of consultations with economic interest groups and limited numerical survey data.

The abstractions of space depicted and built a place without complexity and messiness. Instead homogenous and repetitive ideas could dominate the space, establishing a “tendency to uniformity” (Lefebvre and Levich, 1987: 7) and a place that was “the pure essence of boredom” (Lefebvre, NOM: 118). The goal of dominant producers of space would be to keep everything stable and clear of the social relations that exist within it; the coherence of their abstractions would depend on it. In Luton, in response to political protests and demonstrations from 2009-2015, state voices revealed their proximity to this idea in their mantra of ‘business as usual’ as the ideal status of the public realm in the town. Normal and uninterrupted business could only exist if the people in Luton behaved, and if possible, stayed silent. The low participation in public meetings hosted by the local council, and the emergence of the silent vigils, as a form of gathering in the town centre, suited this agenda perfectly.

To deflect the boring everydayness of dominant mental abstractions, and to ensure that the social relations of the present moment continued to leave their position unchallenged, producers of space would also employ what Lefebvre (2014) called *illusions*. Illusions such as “nostalgia for the past or dreams of a superhuman future” (Lefebvre, 2014: 150). These illusions are used to influence the thoughts and actions of the lives occupying the present space, and encourage their acceptance of the dominant abstractions. In Luton, a partial and divisive history of the town, premised upon a simplified nostalgia for the hat-making industry, was prominently apparent. This nostalgia was concurrently found in the agendas, ideas, and architectural plans of those across the positions of authority, whereas a disruptive and contentious memory of the more recent, and more relevant, car industry was, in the most part, entirely absent.

Aligned with the mental abstractions of dominant producers of space, is the forceful conception of these ideas as part of an attempt to control space. Simultaneously perceiving and conceiving of space, control can be exercised by the producers of space in their facilitation and sanctioning of “[t]he spatial practice of a society” (Lefebvre, PS: 38). Certain practices will be allowed, and are even be celebrated, while others will be curtailed through the enforcement of law. In Luton the state infrastructure depicted itself in a

parental role over its citizens, able to speak on behalf of the town, and used this position to justify its forceful restrictions on protests and demonstrations. Surrounding a far-right demonstration and counter-demonstration in Luton on 27th June 2015, I witnessed the state's attempt to 'ban the march', and then its deployment of hundreds of uniformed police officers to ensure that only the physical appearance, and not the political appearance, of individuals was possible in the town that day. What was desired, was to keep spatial practice 'normal' in the town. In contrast, when it came to abnormal performances of fixed cultural identities, Luton Borough Council actively encouraged individuals to share a stage, literally, at their 'public events venue' in the centre of the town for an annual *This is Luton* festival.

By controlling practices and stories about space, dominant producers create an abstract existence where "[e]verything is clear and intelligible...The text of [a space] is totally legible" (Lefebvre NOM: 119). There is the idea that an achievable reality can involve "flatten[ing] the social and 'cultural' spheres" (Lefebvre, PS: 23) that make space complex and unknown, and instead make all space comfortable, safe, and a familiar sanctuary; a space much like Hannah Arendt's depiction of the private realm (Arendt, HC). An employee of Luton's state-endorsed and state-sponsored charity, Luton in Harmony, told me their vision of the town being one where "none of us, feel afraid, or nervous, suspicious, all that business" (a quote from Chair of Luton in Harmony). There should be no disruptive and unfamiliar practices in the town. Indeed, this is why the Town Centre Public Space policy (2013) was made. Disruption, especially disruption to 'local commerce', couldn't be allowed if the legibility of the town centre was to remain. The town centre was surrounded by shops and commercial interests and thus, to the dominant producers of this space, it could only be read for this single function. However, as argued, creative disruption, in the form of creating something new, or appearing as different, amidst extensive control and restriction, is essential for the appearance of identity and political subjectivity; essential for the appearance of public space.

As dominant producers of space conceive legible abstractions of each space, absent of disruptive actions or different identities, the culturally complex elements of public spaces erode in favour of exclusive and fixed uses. In Luton, despite the diversity of identities (ethnic, national, religious) that traverse the entire town, the ease of narrating fixed patterns of segregation made manifest a range of related spatial practices. For many

people in Luton, there is the belief that certain identity groups should, and will, avoid parts of the town – whether this be Bury Park or Farley Hill – and a belief that there is a fixed spatial trajectory of wealth in the town – starting from poverty in Bury Park and ending with millionaire affluence by Wardown Park. The exclusive nature of these resulting spaces in the dominant narrative, becomes therefore, less like Arendt’s notion of a ‘public realm’, and more like her idea of the social realm; “that curious and somewhat hybrid realm which the modern age interjected between the older and more genuine realms of the public or political on one side and the private on the other” (Arendt, OR: 113).

The emerging social realm - hosting exclusive spaces and a pervasive spatial abstraction - also indicates the presence of Arendt’s ‘mass society’ (Arendt, OT); a society where people have no “opinions about, and interests in, the handling of public affairs” (Arendt, OT: 308), but instead accept the segregated ideas of space, and abide with their sanctioned spatial practices. In Luton the repetition of identical narratives about segregation in the town, was heard right across my respondent interviews, online surveys, and social media archives. I also found evidence of frequently poor attendance to local political events, general compliance with, and support for, a town centre policy which restricted political protests in the town, and a growth of so-called ‘political’ action in the town that took the form of silent vigils outside the town hall. All of these things indicated not just the dominance of simple spatial abstractions, but also the presence of a silent and conforming mass society.

Mass society, or culture, for Arendt, is “not held together by a consciousness of common interest” (Arendt, OT: 311). Instead it is premised upon “[s]ocial atomization and extreme individualization” (Arendt, OT: 316). What this means, is that as individuals withdraw from public life and become apathetic to political appearance, a space opens up for the creation of ‘public opinion’. This is not a democratically formed position made by common interest and action, but a singular voice that is heard amidst a non-thinking, and non-participating mass. Often this voice will emanate from the bureaucratic structures of society; the dominant producers of abstract space. In Luton, with the creation of the Town Centre Public Space policy, I was to see how business and financial interests located around St George’s Square were to found the reasoning of the state for restricting public appearances. Then, across the majority of voices that I was to hear from my empirical research, this same reasoning was given and supported by the voices outside of the

bureaucratic state structure. This suggested, given the general apathy to public appearance in other cases, the existence in Luton of Arendt's mass, and their 'public opinion'.

The result of all of these elements, would be the production of public space purely as something to be consumed by a mass. Mass society would "expect[] from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to "normalize" its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (Arendt, HC: 40); the sanctioned spatial practice that Lefebvre (PS) argued. Sanctioning certain behaviour and appearance in public space, the dominant producers of the space, employ the fixed narrative of 'public opinion' into their conceptions, and create a public space that facilitates the consumption of their abstractions. In Luton, dominant imaginations of fixed ethnic, national, and religious identities performed by bodies in the town were supported and elevated by local government sanctioned festivals, events, and appearances in the designated public spaces at the centre of the town. Simple and homogenising abstractions of different identities were all that could appear in public, confining 'public space' to that of the social sphere (Arendt, 1959).

Despite all of the limits and restrictions placed on public space in its production by dominant abstractions, Lefebvre argued that there would always be the potential for, even the inevitability of, transgression (Lefebvre, PS). Outside of the abstractions of space, there is always a lived space. A space where everyday life plays out. Indeed, Lefebvre claimed that "Man must be everyday, or he will not be at all" (Lefebvre, CE: 147). Lived space in everyday life, is where homogenising abstractions and simplification of the social relations in society fail. Everyday life is where "confusion is *lived*" (Lefebvre, CE: 213). In Luton, despite the restrictions on public appearance in the town centre after 2012, a Pro-Gaza protest happened directly in the restricted location of St George's Square in 2014. Knowing the plan for the protest, the dominant producers of space still realised the difficulty and violence that they would have to employ, or react to, if they tried to stop the protest from happening, and as such, they were un-willing to intervene. The messiness and confusion of the lived space enabled a transgression to the state policy, and showed that public appearance was not fully in the control of the state. There was, and is, always the potential for public action and the emergence of a space of appearance.

10(2). Space as Social or Space as Public

For Lefebvre, all spaces are 'hypercomplex', filled with "individual entities and peculiarities, relatively fixed points, movements, and flows and waves – some interpenetrating, others in conflict" (Lefebvre, PS: 88). This heterogeneity found in space cannot be completely hidden by the dominant structures and abstractions considered in the previous section. "Between the...structures consolidated by various means...there are holes and chasms. These voids are not there due to chance. They are the places of the possible" (Lefebvre 1996: 156). No matter how pervasive a dominant narrative, or how complete political apathy, mass culture, and 'public opinion' might appear, there is always the potential and the possibility for differences and challenges to the status quo. In Luton, despite the consensus around restricting protest in the town centre, some respondents voiced their opinion that there was too much policing in the town, and that protests should be allowed to happen anywhere in the town. Similarly, in contrast to the dominant view of a 'Luton in Harmony', another respondent called for an end to this narrative, and instead accept the need to "Get the true feel in the town, how people are feeling at the moment" (South Asian Male, 40+ Years). The dominant narrative was not entirely stable and in control; it was actually frequently being disrupted.

In spatial disruption, Lefebvre saw the potential for, not only a challenge to dominant abstractions, but also for a complete change of space, and by consequence, a change in the social relations in society. Lefebvre also acknowledged however, that not all disruptions would establish this change. "A break with the everyday by means of festival – violent or peaceful – cannot endure. In order to change life, society, space, architecture, even the city must change" (Lefebvre and Levich 1987: 11). This most disruptive idea for changing society, for an urban revolution, has however, been a persistent problem to Lefebvre's work; the problem that often 'the city' has not changed. There has always been a return to the status quo; a return to previous dominant abstractions. Seemingly, "everyday life [is] in thrall to abstract space, with its very concrete constraints" (Lefebvre, PS: 59). In Luton events like the Peace Day riot of 19th July 1919 and the subsequent burning of the Town Hall, the protests in St George's Square since 2009, and the worker's action following the cuts and closures to the motor industry in the town, have all shown how disruption to urban lived space are quickly cajoled into the previous order of society. The legacy of action is muted, and its memory, often erased.

The question therefore became, how to establish perpetual change through disruption? For this it is possible to look at Lefebvre, and his understanding of disruption as praxis. In order to establish perpetual change to urban society, Lefebvre argued that urban praxis had to change. This meant that the activities in everyday urban spaces meeting one's urban needs had to change (Lefebvre, PS) - for this is how he understood praxis. Changing everyday activities to meet your urban needs would meet the demands of Lefebvre's disruption. This naturally, then posed another question; what are urban needs? Lefebvre argued that urban needs are based upon the historical context in which one finds oneself (Lefebvre, PS), and as such urban needs are 'specific'. They can include "places of simultaneity and encounters, [and] places where exchange would not go through exchange value, commerce and profit" (Lefebvre, 1996: 148). Urban praxis itself reveals "the need for security and opening, the need for certainty and adventure, that of organization of work and of play, the needs for the predictable and the unpredictable, or similarity and difference, of isolation and encounter, exchange and investments, of independence (even solitude) and communication, of immediate and long-term prospects" (Lefebvre, 1996: 147). Using disruptive urban praxis to meet these everyday needs would, for Lefebvre, revolutionise urban life, and establish a perpetual change in society that was required to challenge dominant abstractions of space.

Meeting needs, urban or otherwise, is however insufficient for perpetual change according to my reading of Hannah Arendt. Arguing that Marx focused his critique of political economy on the pursuit of needs – through labour – Arendt said that "Marx...[aimed] at a society in which the need for public action and participation in public affairs would have "withered away,"" (Arendt, OV: 22). In this sense, upon the fulfilment of needs, Arendt saw the potential for previous social relations and the positions of dominant abstractions to resume. Pursuing needs gave no guarantee for perpetual change. While Lefebvre acknowledged that the 'needs' he depicted would always "change and become more sophisticated" over time (Lefebvre 1968: 41), there was still the sense that transgressive praxis sought an 'end'; the fulfilment of the needs. In contrast, Arendt argued that "human deeds [carried] meaning in and of themselves" (Buckler 2011: 23). This way, it would be the focus on actions, and not results, that could provide a perpetual change to the production of public space. In Luton, this was made clear in the way that issues with community cohesion and social segregation were approached by the state. Instead of focusing on the

pursuit of action, encounter and engagement between different identities in the town, there was persistent turn to the 'needs' of communities; needs of function, and 'needs' of recognition. Different 'cultures' were encouraged to appear in sanctioned annual festivals and celebrations, like *This is Luton* and *Luton Carnival*, which happened in the town centre for the purpose of recognising the culture and meeting their need to feel part of the town. However, once these events were done, normal segregated life would resume.

For perpetual change through disruption – perpetual change from the dominant production of public space - I proposed that it must be the activity of action, Arendt's notion of praxis, to which one turns. For Arendt, it is only the activity of action that "has no end" (Arendt, HC: 233). It is not necessary, or correct, to turn to meeting needs to find perpetual change. Meeting endless needs, a rationale of labouring society according to Arendt (Arendt, HC), leads to a futile pursuit of abundance – a "mirage in the desert of misery" (Arendt, OR: 130). "[T]he actual content of freedom...is participation in public affairs, or admission to the public realm" (Arendt, OR: 22). With this in mind it was necessary to look at participation in public affairs to find the challenge to dominant abstractions of space, and the fulfilment of the actual public realm as Arendt depicts it; the 'space of appearance' (Arendt, HC).

If "no human being ever exists in the singular" (Arendt, PP: 61) in public life, it is right to consider the spaces where one is likely to find the plurality of the public realm. Spaces where people "get together with [their] peers, to act in concert, and to reach out for goals and enterprises that would never enter [their] mind, let alone the desires of [their] heart" (Arendt, OV: 82). The most obvious location for these spaces would be the designated 'public spaces' in an urban setting; like the town squares and public streets where people encounter one another on a routine basis. However, as shown in Luton, these can often be heavily restricting on public action and the 'freedom' of participation of those using the spaces. St George's square in Luton, a supposedly 'public space' in the centre of Luton was actually a public events venue in which people could not 'act in concert' because the space was "not for political protest" (Mayor of Luton). However, if it is merely the presence of others and the potential to act in a creative way that defines the public realm, the realm of action, for Arendt, then one could consider other locations for public space. Locations such as those generally regarded as social spaces.

Social spaces, for Arendt, are defined by their levels of discrimination (Arendt, 1959). They are spaces in which people can appear alongside one another, but only certain people can appear. Indeed, Arendt says that “without discrimination of some sort, society would simply cease to exist and very important possibilities of free association and group formation would disappear” (Arendt, 1959: 51). The discrimination of the social space is what defines it, and it exists because of its position between the realms of the private and the public (Arendt, 1959). The private realm is built on ‘exclusiveness’, as a realm for meeting the needs that humans “share with all other forms of animal life” (Arendt, HC: 84). The public realm, on the other hand, is built on ‘openness’, and is a realm where those inhabiting it “can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity” (Arendt, HC: 50). Lying somewhere between these two realms, social spaces will exhibit elements of both. What I have argued is that the greater the extent that a specific social space exhibits public elements, the more it is open to the activity of action and the more it becomes a manifestation of the ‘space of appearance’ (Arendt, HC). In this way such a space becomes a public space, and a transgression to the dominant abstractions of the producers of space. In contrast, “as soon as we begin to reduce plurality...we begin to eradicate the very conditions under which action is possible and freedom can appear” (Biesta, 2012: 689), and the more private that a social space becomes. A privatised social space cannot act as a transgression to the dominant production of public space.

In Luton I turned to two social spaces to explore their positions along a scale of publicness; the Parrot pub in Farley Hill, and Luton Central Mosque in Bury Park. Both exhibited elements of the public realm and the private realm. The Parrot pub was exclusive in the sense of a ‘family’ that it seemed to represent, and the specific identities that it welcomed to the pub at the expense of others. Luton Central Mosque fulfilled its exclusiveness instead, through its religious functioning and by inviting visitors to observe its practices, but never to partake in, or challenge, them. The Parrot showed its public side however, by hosting political discussions and meetings at various points in its history. Similarly, Luton Central Mosque revealed its public side in its history of disruptive events that occurred in 1992. Despite these, both sites were still limiting in their publicness; The Parrot because it actually hosted a ‘political’ group that discriminated the presence of others, and Luton Central Mosque because its leadership structure had become, like in 1992, a decision-maker without consultation from the space’s users. Having said this, at the point of my research (2015), there was evidently a greater publicness, and greater potential for

appearance in Luton Central Mosque – especially with the building of a new community space – than there was at The Parrot pub³⁸.

Beyond the specific site of a social space, dominant abstractions about its local area may actually serve to reinforce its discriminatory nature, and restrict its possibility of becoming more public. The pervasiveness of dominant abstractions, at a spatial scale greater than the social space itself, can mean that the social space is trapped within the production of the wider space as social. In particular, I explored how segregation, by various tropes of identity (ethnicity, wealth, nationality, religion), at scales that intersect a single urban location, can become part of a dominant abstraction about the location and limit the lived space. Individuals in the space will likely avoid certain spaces and conform to dominant abstractions. In Luton, the familiarity of the majority of respondents with narratives about ethnic segregation in the town, and the subsequent reputations associated with Farley Hill (where The Parrot pub was situated) and Bury Park (where Luton Central Mosque was situated), meant that the social spaces I explored had their plurality greatly limited by factors beyond their walls. Given this limitation on fixed social spaces – similar to the restrictions present in Luton on fixed public spaces – it was therefore, necessary to challenge the notion that publicness might be *fixed* in the space. The permanent transgressions that recreate public space against the dominant abstractions of the producers of space, might need to be sought along new lines of spatial fluidity.

10(3). Fine Lines: Public, Violence and Memory

The permanent transgression of dominant spatial abstractions through publicness would make possible both Lefebvre's 'urban revolution' (Lefebvre, UR) and Arendt's 'space of appearance' (Arendt, HC). Permanent change would re-establish the elevated position of the public realm over the social and private realms, and reinforce the status of public space. However, the hunt for a *fixed* public space may have hampered efforts to witness its contemporary manifestation. Indeed, for Arendt, the public "is not so much a question of physical location as that it is about a particular quality of human togetherness which she characterises as 'being together in the manner of speech and action' ...In such terms the

³⁸ This is irrespective of the fact that The Parrot was also to close and be demolished in 2015. Of course, this act finally ended the public elements of the space.

construction of public sphere can be understood as an ongoing process of ‘becoming public’” (Biesta, 2012: 684). For public space to be found in ‘becoming public’, evidently there is a shift from a spatial register to a temporal register. Seeking *moments* of publicness, rather than spaces, is key to witnessing many of the transgressions to dominant abstractions which lead to permanent change³⁹. These are moments which can “come[] into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action” (Arendt, HC: 199). Witnessing a far-right demonstration, and its counter-demonstration, in Luton on 27th June 2015, I saw how opportunities for public action could be grasped or missed in fleeting moments, and how public appearance and physical appearance do not equate as one and the same thing. Many people can gather and appear in physical proximity to one another, yet still their moments for public appearance can be missed in a socially demarcated and heavily policed event.

The key to identifying the public moments sought would be that individuals’ actions in these moments were disruptive to the existing non-public or social everyday dominating the space, and would consequently have a permanent legacy. In Luton Central Mosque, conforming behaviour to the religious practices, normal social functioning of the space, and the pervasive silence of its users, required interruption for a public moment to occur. Standing up in multiple religious gatherings and confronting the leadership of the mosque, the men that made their appearance at Luton Central Mosque in 1992 disrupted the social practices of the space, and opened up moments for public dialogue. In these moments, the response and memory of those that saw and heard the disruptions established a legacy for them, and gave rise to a permanent change and transgression of the space.

An important question emerged in the pursuit and recounting of such public moments however. Moments, thus far, had been defined and understood by their transgressive actions, yet little was been developed about the *forms* that such action could legitimately take. Biesta (2012) has asked of Arendt; “what kinds of actions and relationships are actually possible in ‘public’ spaces”? (Biesta, 2012: 686). Indeed, Wellmer (1997) states that Arendt was “never able to explain what the content of genuine political action could be” (Wellmer, 1997: 37). With this limitation in mind, a specific question was proposed for this thesis; can disruptive public action include violence? The answer in this thesis, and by

³⁹ Although, the publicness witnessed in social spaces already considered, still has worth in finding the contemporary public realm.

Arendt, is an unequivocal, no. The demonstration of 27th June, 2015 was not a moment of public action, and the moments of dialogue in the High Court prior to it, only fleetingly fulfilled the criteria.

While the strength associated with violence is one way of observing its appearance, such physical threat is not its only form of appearance (Žižek, 2008). Witnessing violence can also be achieved by appreciating the different opportunity for, and form of, dialogue that exists when people gather. Arendt says that “[w]here violence rules absolutely...everything and everybody must fall silent” (Arendt, OR: 9). Restrictions placed on, and limitations to, dialogue in public are ways that public moments are silenced. The town centre policy in Luton (2013) evidently looked to silence dialogue in the town centre. Likewise, the vast police presence physically segregating demonstrators on 27th June 2015 in Luton, also silenced dialogue. Nonetheless, sheer audibility does not mean that public dialogue happens; the silencing through violence does not mean that a moment is quiet. The shouting and the use of megaphones at the demonstration in Luton did not establish public appearance. Violence in these forms can be described as ‘subjective violence’. They are forms of violence directed against, or directly impacting, a person or thing. Their result is destructive; destructive of dialogue, of appearance, and of action.

Arendt described another form of violence; the violence of fabrication (Arendt, HC). Fabricating is the activity associated with the human condition of ‘work’ in which humanity creates “an “artificial” world of things” (Arendt, HC: 7). Instead of being purely destructive, the “violation and violence” (Arendt, HC: 139) involved in fabrication is also creative of something new; an object. In this sense, I have referred to it as a form of ‘objective violence’. Resulting in the creation of an object, fabrication necessarily fulfils, intentionally or not, an objective. This objective can take a number of forms; the pursuit of action, the pursuit of power, the pursuit of labour, or the pursuit of strength. Either way, the objective violence of fabrication emerges as some kind of durable remnant of human activity (Arendt, HC).

As the durable remnants of human activity, fabrications can take an infinite variety of forms. Arendt describes story-telling, theatrical performance, and song, as well as tool-making and machinery, as being included in such forms (Arendt, HC). The fulfilled objective of any such forms, indicates the human activity that has been fabricated. In Luton the

nostalgia surrounding the hat manufacturing trade emerged as a fabrication of sorts. In this example, the state was shown to sanction the creation of artefacts to memorialise the hat industry, and offered funds and policy priorities to enable the creation of a nostalgic narrative. There was evidently a creative objective to memorialise past labour. However, it also appeared that a violent and destructive objective was fulfilled. The social complexity of the hat manufacturing industry in Luton was ignored by the nostalgia, destroying the memory of the exploitative relations in the industry and the tensions associated with its decline. On top of this, the social importance and memory of other industries – especially the motor industry in Luton – was forced into the shadows by the focus on the hat industry, silencing the memories of many current inhabitants of the town. The fabrication of nostalgia involved, therefore, both destructive and creative remnants of past activities. This, Arendt (HC) claimed, is a necessary duality found in the objects of work.

The creative/destructive duality of fabrication, and objective violence, places it in a fragile relationship with transgressive public action. Like subjective violence, fabrication becomes, in many instances, destructive to the potential of transgressive public action. One way it does this can be seen when fabrications support the continuation of a “‘normal’ state of things” (Žižek, 2008: 2) without disruption. In Luton the ‘business as usual’ mantra of the state, and their social media posts about the town being ‘normal’ during demonstrations on 27th June 2015, were fabrications of this nature. Another way that fabrications can be destructive to transgressive public action is as a result of the language and symbols they use; what Žižek (2008) calls ‘symbolic violence’. In itself, public action does not appear as a fixed form, written or drawn, but as a moment of interaction between subjects (Arendt, HC). Any fabrication therefore, creating a fixed ‘thing’, must abstract and change action (Lefebvre, PS and Arendt, HC). In Luton the disruptive actions during the Peace Day event in 1919 were destroyed by the multiple fabrications telling only violent memories, and by the rebuilding of a town hall with a 141-foot tower to loom over the inhabitants of the town. Likewise, the stories and published articles telling only of violence at Luton Central Mosque in 1992, showed how fabrications could ignore the public action that occurred. Also, the actions involved in creating the Luton in Harmony movement were forgotten as it became a fixed form aligned with the dominant intentions to neutralise disruptive and discordant voices in the town.

Fabrications do not always contravene the potential of transgressive public action however. A form created to remember public action – no matter what the form - gives action a legacy. In Luton, I witnessed many fabrications of this nature, in the form of stories. Contrasting dominant narratives of ethnic segregation in Bury Park in Luton, many respondents that I spoke to told me stories of moments and experiences they had in the area that broke down this narrative and opened up space for new public moments. Likewise, in contrast to the dominant stories of subjective violence and intimidation at far-right marches in Luton, some respondents told me of moments surrounding these events where public action had taken place and actually fostered the development of new dialogue among people in the town. Even though a fabrication will always be a partial form of an original action, it can provoke and promote further actions. In this sense, objective violence becomes part of the permanent transgression necessary for public space.

The potential for the objective violence of fabrications to memorialise public action, and give it on-going worth, does not mean however, that these same works are creative for other moments of public action. In creating works, the language/symbols used and the context given may reinforce or simplify existing works outside of the fabricator's focus, rather than opening them up for public challenge. Using familiar language, clichés, and contexts to stories, for example, a story-teller assumes a certain 'competence' of their audience. A competence that reinforces certain 'spatial practices' of the fabricated 'space' they have created; a competence in the *perception* of their space (Lefebvre, PS). Assuming this shared perception of public actions, a fabricator "abolishes the distance" (Arendt, OR: 76) between themselves and their subject, making this part of the fabrication "politically speaking, irrelevant and without consequence" (Arendt, OR: 76). In telling a story about public action in Luton resulting from a relationship between a Sikh man and a Muslim lady in the town, one of my respondents (a South Asian Male, 50+ Years) gave his story context by abolishing the distance between himself and the central protagonists, as well as abolishing the distance between himself and a far-right protest group. In doing this, his fabrication, while on one hand public - memorialising a moment of public action by recollecting dialogue and offering his opinion – was also violent, because it declared certain opinions as contextual facts. There can exist, in fabrication, a fine line between complementing and building the worth of transgressive public actions, and violently establishing, or reinforcing, other non-disruptive abstractions. Fabrications tread a fine line between creating or destroying public space.

To find which side of the line, between creating and destroying public space, that the objective violence of fabrication sits, each fabrication must be assessed for its public natality; whether it begins something new in the public realm. Arendt claimed that public action will always “interrupt what otherwise would have proceeded automatically” (Arendt, OV: 30-31), and Lefebvre argued that the bleak and boring everyday “implies an endless appeal to *what is possible*.” (Lefebvre quoted by Dawkins and Loftus, 2013: 669). Therefore, beginning something new is necessary. Public natality is the basis for finding the permanent transgressions to dominant abstractions that produce public space. Public natality in fabrication, means a fabrication must either add a new perspective to an existing fabrication, or spark new speech/action in itself. Finding such fabrications is key to witnessing both past moments of action and current manifestations of the public realm, and is necessary for elevating the status of public space. Turning to fabrication in the form of story-telling, this thesis sought such public natality both in hearing new stories from respondents in Luton, and in telling a new illustrative story of the town itself. For example, re-telling the respondent’s story about a moment of public action, gave new durability to a moment of public dialogue recollected from Luton, it introduced a new perspective on that moment and, by giving it prominence in my story, has opened the moment to further speech and action. It is in the on-going public natality of a fabrication that one can bear witness to, and elevate, the status of public space.

10(4). Key Contributions and Further Enquiry

Developing a dialogue between Hannah Arendt and Henri Lefebvre, I have elevated the status of public space in the urban setting, and have provided new intellectual perspectives on its spatiality. Using 12-months of empirical research in Luton, I have also provided an illustrative case study to narrate this dialogue in a contemporary urban setting. Throughout this theoretical and empirical process, new lines of enquiry and areas of interest naturally emerged. Some of these, given their immediate relevance, were pursued. Others were not. In many cases, the limitations placed upon this study - in terms of time, intellectual scope, and available resources – were the primary reason behind leaving certain lines of enquiry underexplored. In the brief final section that follows, I will outline some of the key underexplored lines of enquiry from this thesis. Future studies looking at these specific

areas would, I feel, add wider-ranging depth and interesting critical complexity to the conclusions presented by this project. Then, to conclude this chapter, I will make reference to what I regard to be the most prominent contributions that have successfully been achieved by this project.

The first area to look at for greater depth and complexity is the idea of the *dominant producers of space* developed from my reading of Lefebvre. The notion that I developed has implied either intentionality in production on behalf of the producers of space, or inevitability as the result of some dominant mode of production (capitalism). As a result of this perspective, I settled on a notion of dominant producers of space using a rather loose and ambiguous term; the 'state infrastructure'. This notion was then the basis upon which much of my empirical research in Luton was formed. I now consider that the 'state infrastructure' is too simple a way of depicting the dominant producers of space. While Lefebvre himself frequently rounded his criticism on the state (see Lefebvre's four volumes of *De l'État*; 1976a, 1976b, 1977, 1978), this reading ignores the more pervasive way that symbolic violence (in language and discourse) establishes a wider cohort of actors to be part of the dominant spatial production. Exploring instead, a broader manifestation of symbolic violence in spatial production – through the creation of a dominant discourse – would bring Lefebvre's work into an interesting dialogue with theorists such as Michel Foucault – especially his ideas of governmentality and biopolitics (Foucault, 2008, 2010) – and, in turn, might establish a clearer link between Lefebvre's idea of the production of space and Arendt's idea of mass society under the contemporary form of totalitarianism, the 'rule by nobody' (Arendt, OV: 81). This enquiry would therefore, bring greater clarity and breadth to the dialogue between Lefebvre and Arendt that I have presented in this project.

The second area that stands out for further enquiry is the subject of online space as public space. Online spaces evidently do not have the same physical parameters as the spaces in Luton explored in this study. Nonetheless, this project revealed that public space is ephemeral and momentary; dependent upon spatially public moments, and not fixed physical presence. With this in mind, it would be interesting to explore whether a space of 'appearance', a public moment, could potentially be online? Such a question would necessarily challenge, and add critical complexity to, the notion of appearance. It would also, given the convergence of acting and fabricating in a single moment in online space (as

is the case when one types something on a forum or blog), demand further exploration of the separation between work and action that Arendt suggests in *The Human Condition* (Arendt, HC).

The third area that has emerged for further enquiry, related to the above subject, is the question of *freedom* in the public realm; specifically, the freedom, not just to act and be remembered, but also the freedom to *not* act and to be forgotten. With smart phones and cameras recording many of the acts that people perform at any moment of everyday life, and with CCTV and Police/media cameras proliferating in the social, and so-called 'public', realms, the opportunity to have your actions forgotten, or your ability to step out of public/social life, into private life, is seemingly lost. This might make appearing and acting even more burdensome for the actor than in previous situations. It may also make everyday life more 'shallow', as people cannot step away from the public gaze. Necessarily therefore, one could ask; how have these technologies – these technological works – changed the public realm, and the status of public space? Have they influenced how people act? Have they impacted political subjectivity? And how is private life, and contemporary drives for anonymity (such as online anonymity), part of resisting these changes?

The fourth area for further consideration comes as a result of creating the notion of a 'scale of publicness' when looking at the public realm appearing in social spaces. Arendt's notions of plurality and the 'space of appearance', were shown to be lacking in scalar qualities, and this is why such a scale was proposed. However, it became apparent in applying the idea, that the premise upon which my scale of publicness was based, was on sheer numbers of people that an act appeared to. Taken to its extreme limits, this therefore gave the impression that the most public act, with greatest 'publicness', would simply be one witnessed by the most people. Such an appearance would surely, however, be limited in the opportunity for all witnesses to react and respond to the appearance – another necessary part of public action. The scale of publicness therefore, needs to be developed to incorporate the nature of appearance, and the opportunity that witnesses have to react and respond. Additionally, witnessing – seeing and hearing an act – could be considered to be a qualitative experience in itself. This would require that one considers the quality of the witness in the moment of seeing and hearing. There is no pure witness. Witnessing has to fabricate and violate the act that is seen and heard. In this sense, one could consider that

maybe the fine line between public and violence, is so fine a gap that the gap actually disappears.

Related to this enquiry, is a final area that I think could be explored for greater depth and complexity to this project; the question of alternative forms that both public action and fabrication could take. The variety of forms of action and fabrication were not explored in great depth by this study. Instead I chose to focus on story-telling as a single form of fabrication, and the question of whether violence could form part of public action. Alternative studies could look at an endless variety of forms of action, including non-verbal or non-linguistic action, and witness the different ways that such acts could be fabricated. Exploring these things, one might be able to consider whether, and to what extent, public action and politics are dependent on language and symbols. Such a consideration would help to challenge whether action could ever avoid symbolic violence. This again, would add another layer to the idea of there being a very fine line between public action and violence.

Offering these further lines of enquiry provides scope for the continuation of the journey that this thesis has embarked upon. Nonetheless, it is worth concluding this thesis by drawing attention to the key contributions that this project has made in, and of, itself; contributions to various realms of intellectual enquiry, and to an ongoing creative narrative about the town of Luton.

Bringing an enquiry of public space to the fore, this thesis has elevated the central role of political performance to the manifestation of public space. This has not meant elevating all performance as public, nor political, but making clear a distinction between private (deprived) acts and public (emancipatory) acts. This project has denied any notion of a fixed public space, or the opposite idea, that all space is public/political. It has also denied the existence of fixed identities as political. Only actions creating *who* one is, and not revealing *what* one is, are public. Public space therefore, has to be reimagined as a temporal and ephemeral moment. A moment that emerges out of a potential in space. Public space, is understood as the potential to “come[] into being wherever men [sic] are together in the manner of speech and action” (Arendt, HC: 199), but only potentially, never as a certainty.

This thesis has also brought some unfamiliar intellectual territories into proximate conversation; offering new directions and interpretations for future theoretical enquiry. I have shown how Henri Lefebvre and Hannah Arendt, academic contemporaries who are infrequently united, can be brought into important theoretical conversation around the ideas of praxis, disruption, and the public realm; showing both contradictions and complementarities across their bodies of work. I have also shown the contemporary relevance of academic debates about public space, segregation, and violence, and shown how each of these notions is intimately and intricately associated. Most importantly, I have brought complexity and intellectual contemplation to the, often under-theorised, notion of violence. This has ultimately revealed the fine, but essential, line that exists between violence and public action. With public action and violence shown to be opposites, sitting on either side of this line, the question of creativity or destruction has thus been revealed as the lens to distinguishing between them.

Finally, this project has created a narrative illustration of the town of Luton; applying the range of theoretical insights and contributions to an empirical setting. Telling this story of Luton has empirically grounded the thesis, and shown the ideas presented to be relevant for a contemporary urban setting. In doing this, I have demonstrated how a different direction is necessary in state and public policy approaches to diversity and segregation in the UK. I have also demonstrated the violent ways that actors, from state to citizen, are currently addressing the appearance of unwelcome talk in open spaces; ultimately closing these spaces to politics, reducing the opportunity for a public realm across all physical spaces, and elevating the segregating prominence of an all-encompassing social realm. Despite this, I have also revealed, through re-telling stories of public action in Luton, the unending capacity in people to act publicly and non-violently, and to be part of a creative disruption to the unknown and unknowable future.

“What makes man a political being is his faculty of action; it enables him to get together with his peers, to act in concert, and to reach out for goals and enterprises that would never enter his mind, let alone the desires of his heart, had he not been given this gift - to embark on something new” [sic] (Arendt, OV: 82).

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12. Appendix

12(1). Interview invite letter

<p>RECRUITMENT EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL PARTICIPANTS <i>REC Reference Number: REP/14/15-47</i></p>	
<p><u>Investigating how your wealth or your ethnicity influence where you go and how you feel in the UK</u></p>	
<p>Email Subject: King's College London PhD Research – Seeking your participation</p>	
<p>Attachments: Information Sheet for Participants</p>	
<p>Email content:</p>	
<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p>	
<p>My name is Julian Shaw, I am an ESRC Funded PhD Student from King's College London. I am currently conducting a piece of research in the Department of Geography that is investigating 'how your wealth or your ethnicity influence where you go and how you feel in the UK'. The specific research sites for this project are the town of Luton and the city of Oxford.</p>	
<p>I am contacting you with the hope that you will be willing to participate in this research by agreeing to be interviewed by me at some point in the coming 6 months. I have selected you because I believe that your official capacity as [INSERT ROLE HERE] will enable you to provide me with insights into wealth and ethnicity in Luton/Oxford that would be beyond my reach elsewhere.</p>	
<p>Attached to this email is an information sheet that I am giving out to all potential participants in the research which should help to answer any questions that you may have about my research.</p>	
<p>If you think that you may be willing to participate in my research I would be very grateful. Please do respond to this email as soon as possible to confirm your interest in participating. Should you wish to participate I will be in touch again shortly.</p>	
<p>Thank you kindly for your time and consideration,</p>	
<p>Regards,</p>	
<p>Julian Shaw ESRC Funded PhD Student Department of Geography King's College London</p>	

Above is an example of the recruitment email/letter that I sent to potential participants, who were being recruited due to their official role/job. The

email/letter was adapted at various points to reflect the different participants who were sought, and also due to the changing focus of the research.

The first significant change in the research focus was the decision to study only Luton, and not Oxford (as is mentioned in this template). Participants were informed of this change as and when the decision was made. The second significant change, was to re-think the focus of the title of the project. Instead of mentioning wealth and ethnicity in the title, it was decided to focus on 'public space' and the notion of participation in public space. This was to reflect the adjustments made in my theoretical approach.

The changes to the research focus also influenced the Participant information sheet (see Appendix 2.). At all times, participants were informed verbally of the focus of the research, and how it was adapting to the findings that I had made alongside the further reading that I was carrying out. It was however, not reasonable to keep changing the information sheet at every juncture in the research process. Verbal updates to participants was deemed reasonable.

12(2). Participant information sheet

Version Number 2 – 26/03/15

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

REC Reference Number: REP/14/15-47



YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Exploring how religion, wealth and ethnicity shapes our everyday lives in Britain

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project which forms part of my PhD research. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in anyway. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this study is to enable people from across Oxford/Luton to reveal the complex ways that religion, wealth, and/or ethnicity shapes their day to day life in the City/Town. The reason for doing this is to create a real-life sense of the different communities in Oxford/Luton. My particular interest is in public space (streets, markets, parks and open-access buildings), and how such spaces can be occupied by people in a variety of ways to build their communities. I am also interested to see how these spaces can also restrict some communities, and how different people feel more comfortable in some public places than in others within Oxford/Luton. To do this I am inviting people to take part in some informal interviews with me, giving them the chance to tell me their thoughts and experiences on the city/town. I am also exploring the use of a method called 'Participant Photography'. Basically, I will be giving willing volunteers the chance to take photos of places around the city/town to deepen my understanding of the things they talk to me about in our interviews.

Why have I been invited to take part?

I am inviting a number of adults from around Oxford/Luton to take part in the study. People are being selected for a number of reasons. The vast majority of people are being selected because I have met them in one of a number of public places in the city/town; places such as sports clubs, community centres, religious buildings, and social spaces. I will also be inviting a small number of official people to participate in this research. For example I will try to interview a number of local councillors and local government representatives. Officials are being selected to explore how religion, ethnicity, and wealth are understood in the city/town from an official perspective.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is voluntary. You do not have to take part. You should read this information sheet and if you have any questions you should contact me at any time (email: julian.shaw@kcl.ac.uk). You should not agree to take part in this research until you have had all your questions answered satisfactorily.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. At a time convenient for you, I will then call you to discuss the interview procedure with you. Next you will be given the interview topic guide. With your consent, I will arrange to interview you in a time and place that we can both agree on.

The interview will take approximately one hour and be based on the interview topic guide, but it is designed to be flexible so as to meet your needs. The interview will be recorded, subject to your permission. Recordings of interviews will be deleted after transcription. Even if you have decided to take part, you are still free to cease your participation at any time and to have research data/information relating to you withdrawn without giving any reason up to the point of publication in summer 2016.

During some interviews I may ask if you are willing to take part in the 'participant photography' method I am employing. Once again, this is a voluntary method, and there is no pressure or expectation on you to take part. If you do agree to take part you will have to agree to certain points in the original consent form.

For the participant photography method I will be asking participants for the following month after the interview, to take around 20 photographs in the public places of Oxford/Luton that we have spoken about in our interview. It will be left to you to choose how, where and when these photos are taken.

After the photos have been taken I will arrange to meet with you again for a follow-up informal interview where you can show me the photos and explain why you took them in the way that you did. This will help me to develop my understanding of how you use and view the public spaces of Oxford/Luton.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in the study. All of your interviews, discussions, and photographs will be kept anonymous, and only used with your permission. The main disadvantage to taking part in the study is that you will be donating around an hour or two of your time to influence the understanding of this research. It is possible that you may find answering some of the questions challenging. This is unlikely but if it were to occur the interview could be terminated at any time.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no direct benefits to taking part. However, the information I get from the study will help to influence current academic interest in ethnic and wealth identities in the UK, and the importance of public space.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

What is said in the interviews and shown in photos taken are regarded as strictly confidential and will be held securely until the research is finished. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind, you are free to stop your participation and to have your data withdrawn without giving any reason up to the point of publication in Summer 2016. All data for analysis will be anonymised. In reporting on the research findings, I will not reveal the names of any participants. I will also never identify the organisation where you work without permission.

The UK Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to all information gathered within the interviews and held on password-locked computer files and locked cabinets within King's College London. No data will be accessed by anyone other than me; and anonymity of the material will be protected by using false names. No data will be able to be linked back to any individual taking part in the interview. You may withdraw your data from the project anytime up to the point of publication in Summer 2016. All recordings of data on audio-equipment will be deleted after transcription. If you ask me to withdraw your data at any time before Summer 2016 I will remove all traces of it from the records.

How is the project being funded?

This project is being funded through a scholarship from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The study is being conducted by a full-time King's College London post-graduate student. The study has been approved by the King's College London Research Ethics Committee.

What will happen to the results of the study?

I will produce a final report summarising the main findings, which will be sent to you. I also plan to disseminate the research findings through publication and conferences in both the UK and around the world.

Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following contact details:

Julian Shaw
Department of Geography
King's College London
Strand Campus
London
WC2R 2LS
julian.shaw@kcl.ac.uk

What if I have further questions, or if something goes wrong?

If this study has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the study you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Student Supervisor:
Dr Daanish Mustafa
Department of Geography
King's College London
K7.41 King's Building
Strand Campus
London
WC2R 2LS
daanish.mustafa@kcl.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)20 7848 1667

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research.

12(3). Participant consent form

Version Number 2 – 26/03/15

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.



Title of Study: Exploring how religion, wealth and ethnicity shapes our everyday lives in Britain

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: REP/14/15-47

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes mean that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

Please tick or initial

Please tick or initial

1. *I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated [26/03/15 Version 2] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and asked questions which have been answered satisfactorily.
2. *I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to the point of publication in the summer of 2016.
3. *I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the UK Data Protection Act 1998.
4. *I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the College for monitoring and audit purposes.

5. *I consent to the one of the following levels of anonymity in the final research publication:

A: I wish to remain completely anonymous. It will be impossible to determine who I am from the research publication.

B: I wish to remain anonymous, but I am happy for the following job title to be ascribed to me:

.....

7. I agree to be contacted in the future by King's College London researchers who would like to invite me to participate in follow up studies to this project, or in future studies of a similar nature.

9. I agree that the research team may use my data for future research and understand that any such use of identifiable data would be reviewed and approved by a research ethics committee. (In such cases, as with this project, data would/would not be identifiable in any report).

10. I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report and I wish to receive a copy of it.

11. I consent to my interview being audio recorded.

12. I understand that I must only take part if I am an adult (aged 18-65) and have received and understood the information sheet provided.

15. I agree to maintain confidentiality of anything spoken about during interviews.

16. I understand that any photos I take for the 'participant photography' method will be owned by me, and I will be required to sign and date any photographs used in the final research report.

17. I understand that by signing and dating any photographs I take for the 'participant photography' method gives permission to the researcher to use these photographs in the final research report.

18. I understand that I am responsible for the content and subject of any photographs taken for the 'participant photography' method.

19. I agree that all photos I take for the 'participant photography' method will be taken in public places.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

12(4). Surveys

a. LutonSpace Quick Questionnaire

The quickest to complete survey that I designed was called the LutonSpace Quick Questionnaire. This survey was designed for participants who weren't willing to spend a long time answering questions, but might be willing to spend a minute looking through the survey on their phone or tablet while travelling to work, for example.

On the whole the LutonSpace Quick Questionnaire was designed as a 'click' survey; meaning that participants could click an answer to a question, rather than formulating an answer themselves. Naturally this limited the depth of responses. However, it also encouraged a greater number of responses than the other surveys, and the data used could be quantified into tables and charts; aiding the deeper description that formed the larger part of my narrative.

In total, there were 582 participants for this survey online. While not all respondents filled in answers to every question, I did not discount any respondent for this. It just meant that the analysis of certain questions had more or less responses to be looked at.

The actual online survey can be accessed at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LutonSpaceQuick> (Still accessible on 11th December 2017)

Before the 15-questions asked in the questionnaire, a brief introduction was provided. It said the following:

*Welcome to the **Quick 1-minute Questionnaire** This is part of my PhD research project 'LutonSpace'*

[To find out more on this research go to: lutonspace.wordpress.com]

*All opinions expressed in this survey will be kept **confidential and anonymous**.*

The sections, questions, and possible answers to the LutonSpace Quick Questionnaire were then as follows:

PART 1: YOUR DETAILS

[The reason for asking for this information is to ensure that I am selecting participants from a variety of backgrounds. All of this information will be kept confidential.]

1. How old are you?

[You must be over 18 to take part in this survey]

- 18-25 yrs
- 26-40 yrs
- 41-55 yrs
- 55+ yrs

2. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

3. What is your relation to Luton?

[Please select all options that apply to you]

- I live in Luton
- I work in Luton

- I worship in Luton
- I socialise in Luton
- I grew up in Luton
- I shop in Luton

4. How would you describe your ethnicity?

[Please select one option from the drop-down list]

- Arab
- Asian Bangladeshi
- Asian Pakistani
- Asian British
- Asian Chinese
- Asian Indian
- Black African
- Black British
- Black Caribbean
- White & Asian
- White & Black African
- White & Black Caribbean
- White British
- White English
- White Gypsy or Traveller
- White Irish
- White Scottish
- White Welsh
- White Northern Irish
- Other (please specify)

5. What is your religion?

[These categories are defined by the UK Census]

- No religion
- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other religion (please describe)

6. How would you describe your employment status?

[Select all options that apply to you]

- Unemployed
- Self-Employed (Part-time)
- Self-Employed (Full-time)
- Full-time Employed (Current employer for 5 years or more)
- Full-time Employed (Current employer less than 5 years)
- Part-time Employed
- Student (Higher Education)
- Other (please specify)
- Private Sector Employee
- Public Sector Employee
- Managerial Position (Managing 5 or more employees)
- Managerial Position (Managing less than 5 employees)
- Apprentice Employee
- Internship Employee

PART 2: LOCAL ISSUES IN LUTON

[A few questions on the local issues you see]

7. What are the biggest issues facing Luton today?

[These options are based on previous survey responses and do not reflect the opinions of the researcher - add others if you think an issue is missing]

- Drug Use/Gangs
- Poverty
- It's Image/Reputation
- Extremism
- Racism
- Immigration
- Lack of Jobs/Unemployment
- Corruption
- Traffic Congestion
- Homelessness
- Other (please specify)

8. Where in Luton are you most likely to go to talk about local issues?

[Answers based on previous survey responses - not opinion of researcher]

- Pub
- Community Centre
- Local Councillor/MP
- No where
- Online/Social Media

- Public Park
- In my home
- The Mall
- Religious Building
- At Work
- Other (please specify)

PART 3: LUTON PLACES

[Your day-to-day places in Luton]

9. What parts of town do you spend most time in?

- Barnfield
- High Town
- Biscot
- Icknield
- Bramingham
- Leagrave
- Challney
- Lewsey
- Crawley
- Limbury
- Dallow
- Northwell
- Farley
- Round Green
- Saints
- Stopsley

- South (Luton)
- Sundon Park
- Wigmore
- Other (please specify)

10. What parts of town do you avoid?

- Barnfield
- High Town
- Biscot
- Icknield
- Bramingham
- Legrave
- Challney
- Lewsey
- Crawley
- Limbury
- Dallow
- Northwell
- Farley
- Round Green
- Saints
- Stopsley
- South (Luton)
- Sundon Park
- Wigmore
- Other (please specify)

11. Why do you avoid the places you selected above?

[Feel free to be honest - this is an anonymous and confidential survey]

PART 4: CELEBRATIONS, PROTESTS + POLICING PUBLIC SPACE

This section is looking to hear your opinions on performances, celebrations, protests and demonstrations that occasionally happen in public spaces in Luton. Please feel free to add any options to questions if your opinions are not offered.

Don't forget - all answers will be kept confidential and anonymous.

12. Which public street performances/celebrations do you attend in Luton?

[Select all the events that you go to]

- Luton International Carnival
- Luton Mela
- St. Patrick's Day
- St. George's Day
- Festival of Transport
- Other (please tell me of other public events that you attend...)

13. Why do you go to the performances/celebrations mentioned above?

[Select all answers that apply to you. Please feel free to add any answers that are not included]

- Entertainment
- Relaxation
- Meeting with friends
- Meeting new people
- For new experiences

- Interacting with strangers
- To support the organisers
- Other reasons that you attend these events...
- To be proud of your community
- To be seen supporting the event
- Something to do
- For work-related networking
- To promote my business/work
- I don't go to any events

14. In your opinion, where should political protests be allowed to happen in Luton?

[Please select all options that you agree with, and add additional options if you wish]

- In any street
- In St. George's Square
- In the Mall
- In a public park
- In religious buildings
- In the Town Hall
- In commercial properties
- Anywhere
- Only where Bedfordshire Police decide
- Only where people aren't inconvenienced
- Only where Luton Borough Council decide
- Other (Please suggest other places where protests should/shouldn't happen in Luton)

15. In your opinion, what are the biggest issues about protests/demonstrations in Luton?

[Again, please be reassured your opinions will be kept confidential and anonymous]

- Too much Policing
- Too little Policing
- Too much media attention
- Eruptions of violence
- Costs of Policing
- Protests create tensions
- Not enough spaces to protest/demonstrate
- Too many restrictions on protests/demonstrations
- Too few restrictions on protests/demonstrations
- Disruptions to day-to-day living
- Other thoughts/comments...

b. Opinions of Luton Survey

The first survey that I designed was called the Opinions of Luton survey. This survey was designed for participants who were willing to spend time answering questions, and were most likely recruited from face-to-face contact with me during my empirical research.

On the whole the Opinions of Luton survey was designed as an in depth qualitative survey; meaning that participants would write answers in full prose, offering their own interpretation of the questions, and steering their answers towards their own priorities.

In total, there were 382 participants for this survey online. While not all respondents filled in answers to every question, I did not discount any respondent for this. It just meant that the analysis of certain questions had more or less responses to be looked at.

The actual online survey can be accessed at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OpinionLuton> (Still accessible on 11th December 2017)

Before the 12-questions asked in the questionnaire, a brief introduction was provided. It said the following:

This is a quick online survey that is being conducted to inform a PhD research project from King's College London.

[To find out more on this research go to: lutonspace.wordpress.com]

*All opinions expressed in this survey will be kept **confidential and anonymous**.*

The sections, questions, and possible answers to the Opinions of Luton survey were then as follows:

1. What is your relation to Luton?

(Select as many of the options that apply to you)

- I live in Luton
- I work in Luton
- I socialise in Luton
- I worship in Luton
- I shop in Luton
- I was brought up in Luton

After this question, as on each page of the survey, there was the following information provided:

****IF YOU ARE IN A RUSH DON'T LEAVE - PLEASE CONSIDER DOING THE 1-MINUTE QUICK QUESTIONNAIRE** [**CLICK HERE**](#)**

If you have a bit more time (it's only 5 minutes), I would rather that you continued with this survey. Thanks.

PART 1: LOCAL ISSUES

[A few questions on the local issues you see]

2. What are the biggest issues facing Luton today?

[Your opinion matters]

3. Where in Luton are you most likely to go to talk about local issues or local politics?

PART 2: LUTON PLACES

[Your day-to-day places in Luton]

4. **What parts of town do you spend most time in?**

5. **What parts of town do you avoid? (And why?)**

[Feel free to be as honest as you like - these answers are confidential and anonymous]

PART 3: LUTON PROTEST

[Your opinions on protest in Luton]

6. **Have you been involved in any protests/demonstrations/marches in Luton*? If so, please tell me about your experience (what was the event, what happened, where was it, etc.)** **All responses will be kept completely anonymous*

7. **Where do you think protests should be allowed in Luton? And why?**

8. **Where do you think protests should not be allowed in Luton? And why?**

9. **How much do you think the Police and Luton Borough Council should intervene in protests in Luton?**

FINAL PART: YOUR DETAILS

[The reason for asking for this information is to ensure that I am selecting participants from a variety of backgrounds. All of this information will be kept confidential.]

10. **How old are you?**

[You must be over 18 to take part in this survey]

- 18-25 yrs
- 26-40 yrs
- 41-55 yrs
- 55+ yrs

11. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

12. How would you describe your ethnicity?

[Please select one option from the drop-down list]

- Arab
- Asian Bangladeshi
- Asian Pakistani
- Asian British
- Asian Chinese
- Asian Indian
- Black African
- Black British
- Black Caribbean
- White & Asian
- White & Black African
- White & Black Caribbean
- White British
- White English
- White Gypsy or Traveller
- White Irish

- White Scottish
- White Welsh
- White Northern Irish
- Other (please specify)

c. Luton Protest Survey

The final survey that I designed was called the Luton Protest survey. This survey was designed to seek participants with particular experience/opinions on protesting in Luton. These participants were primarily sought using online social media advertising (Facebook and Twitter).

On the whole the Luton Protest survey was designed as a qualitative survey; meaning that participants would write answers in full prose, offering their own interpretation of the questions, and steering their answers towards their own priorities.

In total, there were only 61 participants for this survey online. It is considered that the low turn-out comes from the specificity of the topic - meaning that many people were not interested in taking part - or that those with opinions were not keen to share on a survey that focused on the question of protest.

This survey chose to mix both qualitative and quantitative questions in order to allow for respondents to offer a variety of responses.

The actual online survey can be accessed at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LutonProtests> (Still accessible on 11th December 2017)

Before the 12-questions asked in the questionnaire, a brief introduction was provided. It said the following:

*Welcome to this **1-minute Questionnaire** on Luton Protests This is part of my PhD research project 'LutonSpace'*

[To find out more on this research go to: lutonspace.wordpress.com]

*All opinions expressed in this survey will be kept **confidential and anonymous.***

The sections, questions, and possible answers to the Opinions of Luton survey were then as follows:

PART 1: YOUR DETAILS

[The reason for asking for this information is to ensure that I am selecting participants from a variety of backgrounds. All of this information will be kept confidential.]

1. How old are you?

[You must be over 18 to take part in this survey]

- 18-25 yrs
- 26-40 yrs
- 41-55 yrs
- 55+ yrs

2. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

3. What is your relation to Luton?

[Please select all options that apply to you]

- I live in Luton
- I work in Luton
- I worship in Luton
- I socialise in Luton

- I grew up in Luton
- I shop in Luton

4. How would you describe your ethnicity?

[Please select one option from the drop-down list]

- Arab
- Asian Bangladeshi
- Asian Pakistani
- Asian British
- Asian Chinese
- Asian Indian
- Black African
- Black British
- Black Caribbean
- White & Asian
- White & Black African
- White & Black Caribbean
- White British
- White English
- White Gypsy or Traveller
- White Irish
- White Scottish
- White Welsh
- White Northern Irish
- Other (please specify)

5. What is your religion?

[These categories are defined by the UK Census]

- No religion
- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh

Other religion (please describe)

6. How would you describe your employment status?

[Select all options that apply to you]

- Unemployed
- Self-Employed (Part-time)
- Self-Employed (Full-time)
- Full-time Employed (Current employer for 5 years or more)
- Full-time Employed (Current employer less than 5 years)
- Part-time Employed
- Student (Higher Education)
- Other (please specify)
- Private Sector Employee
- Public Sector Employee
- Managerial Position (Managing 5 or more employees)
- Managerial Position (Managing less than 5 employees)
- Apprentice Employee
- Internship Employee

PART 2: LOCAL ISSUES IN LUTON

[A few questions on the local issues you see]

7. What are the biggest issues facing Luton today?

[These options are based on previous survey responses and do not reflect the opinions of the researcher - add others if you think an issue is missing]

- Drug Use/Gangs
- Poverty
- It's Image/Reputation
- Extremism
- Racism
- Other (please specify)
- Immigration
- Lack of Jobs/Unemployment
- Corruption
- Traffic Congestion
- Homelessness

8. Where in Luton are you most likely to go to talk about local issues?

[Answers based on previous survey responses - not opinion of researcher]

- Pub
- Community Centre
- Local Councillor/MP
- No where
- Online/Social Media
- Other (please specify)
- Public Park
- In my home
- The Mall
- Religious Building

- At Work

PART 3: PROTESTS + POLICING PUBLIC SPACE

This section is looking to hear your opinions on protests and demonstrations that occasionally happen in public spaces in Luton. Please feel free to add any options to questions if your opinions are not offered.

Don't forget - all answers will be kept confidential and anonymous.

9. Have you been involved in a protest/demonstration in Luton*?

**Your answers will be kept anonymous*

- Yes
- No

10. If you answered YES above, please tell me a bit about your experience (what was the protest, what happened, etc.)

11. In your opinion, where should political protests be allowed to happen in Luton?

[Please select all options that you agree with, and add additional options if you wish]

- In any street
- In St. George's Square
- In the Mall
- In a public park
- In religious buildings
- In the Town Hall

- Other (Please suggest other places where protests should/shouldn't happen in Luton)
- In commercial properties
- Anywhere
- Only where Bedfordshire Police decide
- Only where people aren't inconvenienced
- Only where Luton Borough Council decide

12. In your opinion, what are the biggest issues about protests/demonstrations in Luton?

[Again, please be reassured your opinions will be kept confidential and anonymous]

- Too much Policing
- Too little Policing
- Too much media attention
- Eruptions of violence
- Costs of Policing
- Other thoughts/comments...
- Protests create tensions
- Not enough spaces to protest/demonstrate
- Too many restrictions on protests/demonstrations
- Too few restrictions on protests/demonstrations
- Disruptions to day-to-day living

12(5). LutonSpace Recruitment Flyer

In order to recruit participants to take part in the surveys that I was conducting in Luton, I created a 'flyer' that was printed in A5. I carried these to all interviews, observations, and visits that I made to Luton. If an opportunity presented itself, I would hand a flyer out to potential participants. The website mentioned on the flyer would give the potential participant the chance to fill in the survey, and to visit the LutonSpace website to find out more about the research (see Appendix 7.). An example of the flyer is presented below:



This is part of a PhD research project. For more details please visit www.luton-space.wordpress.com

12(6). LutonSpace Advert in 4 Languages

On Facebook I advertised the research that I was doing to all Facebook users who had identified their 'location' as Luton (+10-mile radius). By clicking on the advert, users would be directed to the quick questionnaire page (which also contained links to the LutonSpace website – see Appendix 7.). With the help of a number of colleagues, I was able to develop this advert into 4 different languages, in order to meet some of the most prevalent groups in Luton. These adverts, and their language, are shown below.



1. LutonSpace Facebook Advert - *English translation*



2. LutonSpace Facebook Advert - *Urdu Advert*



3. LutonSpace Facebook Advert - *Polish Advert*



4. LutonSpace Facebook Advert – *Bengali Advert*

12(7). LutonSpace Website

A key part of the recruitment of participants for my empirical research was found in developing a website that potential participants could access. In order to create the website, the project itself was branded as 'LutonSpace: Public Spaces from Public Perspective'. This branding was used for the website (<https://luton.space.wordpress.com/>). At the bottom of this section is a screen shot of the website's homepage, to show its design and style. First of all, however, it is important to present the details included on the key pages; the 'Home' page, 'The Research' page, and the 'FAQs' page.

[Note: Originally a 'participatory photography' method was planned to be carried out with participants. This method is mentioned in the text on the LutonSpace website. However, this method did not get adopted in the eventual empirical research. Time constraints and the judgement of the researcher, meant that the method was abandoned before any photographs were taken]

'Home' page text:

LUTON: PUBLIC SPACE, PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

DO YOU USE PUBLIC SPACE IN LUTON?

—

IF YES, #PARTICIPATE NOW!

If you use public spaces in Luton and you haven't participated in the research yet, then please click to find out how to participate

GO STRAIGHT TO THE PARTICIPANT POLL:

[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/OPINIONLUTON](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/opinionluton)

'The Research' page text:

WHAT MAKES A SPACE PUBLIC?

Public space is a term that conjures a different idea for everyone in the UK. From concrete play areas and residential streets, to rolling country estates and grand central plazas, notions of public space range widely. But what makes a space public?

By turning to the work of the political and social theorists Hannah Arendt and Henri Lefebvre, this research is attempting to provide a potential answer to this question. To do that, this research is interested in exploring how a space becomes (and remains) public in the sense that these theorists describe. This can be through its use, through its reputation, and through the interactions between people that take place in it. This is why some of the spaces that have been selected for this study you may not have immediately associated with public space. Spaces such as pubs, mosques, sports clubs, and churches. It is also why social movements are being considered – social movements could be considered as moving 'spaces' of community solidarity.

The plan is to bear witness to some potentially public spaces, both fixed and moving, to meet with the different communities who use these spaces, and to develop an understanding of how these space have become public for the communities who use them.

WHY LUTON?

When designing this research some key factors had to be considered; limited time (fieldwork had to be completed by January 2016) and limited resources (only one researcher travelling from London each day). Thus it was decided that a single

central case study should be selected in the UK, with a second option available if time permitted.

This central case study, it was decided, should be a small urban settlement somewhere outside London – somewhere that wasn't too far to travel to by public transport from King's College London. Such an urban space would have the potential to contain a large number of well used community spaces in a relatively confined geographical area. In addition to this, the research wanted a town that contained great diversity in its population – diversity, it was hoped, would mean many communities using multiple public spaces. So, by being a small urban area with a diverse population, this research expects the central case study to offer many different communities using many different spaces that are in close proximity to each other.

As a result Luton was selected as the ideal place to carry out this research.

DON'T FORGET TO PARTICIPATE:

[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/OPINIONLUTON](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/opinionluton)

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PARTICIPATING – CLICK HERE

#PARTICIPATE

'FAQs' page text:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why have I been invited to take part?

I am inviting a number of adults from around Luton to take part in the study. People are being selected for a number of reasons. Some people are being selected because I have met them in one of a number of public places in the city/town; places such as sports clubs, community centres, religious buildings, and social

spaces. Other people are being invited to take part because they have visited this website and feel that they have relevant experience or opinions to inform the study. And still, others are being invited because their details have been passed on to the researcher through someone else that he has spoken to in Luton – people who a participant thinks may be able to assist in the research.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is voluntary. You do not have to take part. You should read all information on this website and if you have any questions you should contact Julian at any time (email: [details removed]). You should not agree to take part in this research until you have had all your questions answered satisfactorily.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part you should complete the participant poll. The researcher, Julian, will collect all of the data in this poll. From this data he will be selecting around 30 participants to invite for an informal chat. If Julian selects your poll response, he will inform you by email. You will also be given an information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. At a time convenient for you, Julian will then arrange the informal chat with you in a time and place that you can both agree on.

The informal chat will take approximately one hour and be based on an 'interview topic guide', but it will be designed to be flexible so as to meet the research needs. The interview will be recorded, subject to your permission. The reason for the recording is so that the researcher can focus on your answers rather than trying to write notes while you are talking. For your reassurance, all recordings of interviews will be deleted after transcription.

Even if you have decided to take part, you are still free to cease your participation at any time and to have research data/information relating to you withdrawn without giving any reason up to the point of publication in summer 2016.

During some interviews the researcher may ask if you are willing to take part in the 'participant photography' method. Once again, this is a voluntary method, and there is no pressure or expectation on you to take part. If you do agree to take part you will have to agree to certain points in the original consent form.

For the participant photography method the researcher will be asking participants for the following month after the interview, to take around 20 photographs in the public places of Luton that they have spoken about in the informal chat. It will be left to you to choose how, where and when these photos are taken.

After the photos have been taken the researcher will arrange to meet with you again for a follow-up chat where you can explain why you took the photos in the way that you did. This will help the researcher to develop my understanding of how you use and view that public space in Luton.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in the study. All of your chats, discussions, and photographs will be kept anonymous, and only used with your permission. The main disadvantage to taking part in the study is that you will be donating around an hour or two of your time to influence the understanding of this research. It is possible that you may find answering some of the questions challenging. This is unlikely but if it were to occur the interview could be terminated at any time.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no direct benefits to taking part. However, the information I get from the study will help to influence current academic interest in public space and communities in the UK.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

What is said in the interviews and shown in photos taken are regarded as strictly confidential and will be held securely until the research is finished. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind, you are free to stop your participation and to have your data withdrawn without giving any reason up to the point of publication in Summer 2016. All data for analysis will be anonymised. In reporting on the research findings, I will not reveal the names of any participants. I will also never identify the organisation where you work without permission.

The UK Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to all information gathered within the interviews. No data will be accessed by anyone other than the researcher (Julian Shaw); and anonymity of the material will be protected by using false names if requested. No data collected on site will be linked back to any individual taking part in the interview. You may withdraw your data from the project at any time up to the point of publication in Summer 2016. All recordings of data on audio-equipment will be deleted after transcription. If you ask the researcher to withdraw your data at any time before Summer 2016 they will remove all traces of it from the records.

For confidentiality and anonymity details **click here**.

How is the project being funded?

This project is being funded through a scholarship from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The study is being conducted by a full-time King's College London post-graduate student. The study has been approved by the King's College London Research Ethics Committee.

What will happen to the results of the study?

Julian will produce a final report summarising the main findings, which will be sent to all participants who would like a copy. He also plans to disseminate the research findings through publication and conferences in both the UK and around the world.

Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact Julian using the following contact details:

Address: [details removed]

Email: [details removed]

What if I have further questions, or if something goes wrong?

If this study has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the study you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Student Supervisor: [details removed]

Website Homepage Screen Shot

LUTONSPACE
PUBLIC SPACES FROM PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

HOME · THE RESEARCH · #PARTICIPATE · FAQs · #BIOGRAPHY

Hi. Thank you for visiting my research website. You will find all you need to know about my research here.
If you haven't participated yet, then please click on the link below.
If you have taken some photos for my research, don't forget to send them to julian.shaw@kcl.ac.uk*

Julian Shaw PhD Researcher
Department of Geography, King's College London

LUTON: PUBLIC SPACE, PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

DO YOU USE PUBLIC SPACE IN LUTON?

IF YES, #PARTICIPATE NOW!

[Click Here](#)

If you use public spaces in Luton and you haven't participated in the research yet, then please click to find out how to participate.

GO STRAIGHT TO THE PARTICIPANT POLL:

[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/OPINIONLUTON](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/opinionluton)

**To understand what photographs I am talking about, [click here](#)*

KING'S College LONDON

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

12(8). Newspaper + Misc. Archives

As part of my secondary data research, I looked through a number of Newspaper archives, both online and in libraries (in particular, Luton Central Library). The details of these searches are contained in Chapter 6 of my thesis. In this section of the Appendix, I detail all of the newspaper references that were directly made in the thesis. There is also reference to some additional sources, such as legal sources related to the High Court hearing with the leaders of Britain First and Bedfordshire Police (2015), and reference to a letter that participants at a 'Community Cohesion' conference in Luton (2015) received from Luton Borough Council in their welcome pack.

These references are in the order that the archives are referenced in the main body of the thesis:

- a. The Manchester Guardian (1942) "Luton's Fight: Its Threatened Industry", Article from *The Manchester Guardian* (1901-1959) from 30th November 1942, p.6. using; Guardian Archive (2009) *Guardian News and Media Archive Website*, Accessed online at: <https://search.proquest.com/hnpguardianobserver/index> (Accessed on 7th August 2017, using KCL login)
- b. The Manchester Guardian (1919) "The Luton Riots: Comparison with French Revolution", Article in *The Manchester Guardian* (1901-1959) from 31st July 1919, p.7, using; Guardian Archive (2009) *Guardian News and Media Archive Website*, Accessed online at: <https://search.proquest.com/hnpguardianobserver/index> (Accessed on 7th August 2017, using KCL login)
- c. Parris-Long, A., (2014) "Appeal for calm as EDL march looms", Article in *Luton Today* published on 20th November 2014, Accessed at: <http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/crime/appeal-for-calm-as-edl-march-looms-1-6427347> (Accessed on 20th June 2016)
- d. Luton Today (2015) "VIDEO: Bus Anchors itself in Luton for a cheesy promotion", Article from *Luton Today* on 10th March 2015, Accessed at:

<http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/community/community-news/video-bus-anchors-itself-in-luton-for-a-cheesy-promotion-1-6624456> (Accessed on 20th June 2016)

e. Luton Today (2016) "Town throws celebration for The Queen", Article from *Luton Today* on 12th April 2016, Accessed at:

<http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/community/community-news/town-throws-celebration-for-the-queen-1-7323942> (Accessed on 20th June 2016)

f. Parris-Long, A., (2014) "Public sector protesters march through Luton during strike", Article from *Luton Today* on 10th July 2014, Accessed at:

<http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/community/community-news/public-sector-protesters-march-through-luton-during-strike-1-6171515> (Accessed on 20th June 2016)

g. Parris-Long, A., (2014) "Appeal for calm as EDL march looms", Article in *Luton Today* published on 20th November 2014, Accessed at:

<http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/crime/appeal-for-calm-as-edl-march-looms-1-6427347> (Accessed on 20th June 2016)

h. Kelly's Directory (1914) *Kelly's Directory of Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, and Northamptonshire, with coloured maps, 1914*, London: Kelly's Directories Ltd

i. Greenfield, E., (1963) "Luton not simply an affluent town", Article in *The Guardian* (1959-2003) from 31st October 1963, p.3., using; Guardian Archive (2009) *Guardian News and Media Archive Website*, Accessed online at:

<https://search.proquest.com/hnpguardianobserver/index> (Accessed on 7th August 2017, using KCL login)

j. Luton Today (2015) "Helping spread message of faith", Article in *Luton Today* from 13th July 2015, Accessed at: <http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/community/community-news/helping-spread-message-of-faith-1-6847170> (Accessed on 20th June 2016)

k. Luton Today (2010) "'Troublemakers will not be tolerated' – council", Article in *Luton Today* from 23rd July 2010, Accessed at:

<http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/local/troublemakers-will-not-be-tolerated-council-1-1037720> (Accessed on 20th June 2016)

I. A letter contained within an information pack at Luton Borough Council's 'Community Cohesion' Conference (2015). The letter is from Cllr. Jacqui Burnett (Portfolio Holder, People and Places, Luton Borough Council) dated 26th November 2015. To contents of the letter are as follows:

"Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your attendance and participation in today's conference on Community Cohesion.

Luton, like many place, has changed and is increasingly influenced by event internationally, nationally and locally.

Luton has had to face some specific challenges in terms of cohesion. Whilst the national media has focused on the extremes of Luton's community we believe that the resilience of our communities has been resolute and has risen to meet this challenge which has been demonstrated by the results of The Neighbourhood Governance Programme's Residents' Survey, undertaken by 1,234 residents from June to August 2014. 82% of residents agreed that people from different backgrounds got on well together in their local area.

The aim of this conference is to develop a shared multi-agency understanding of community cohesion in Luton and to collect views, evidence and information to produce a draft strategy and action plan.

I look forward to meeting you all at what hopefully will be a positive and productive event.

Yours sincerely

Cllr. Jacqui Burnett"

- m. Kesby, J., (1997a) "Mayhem at The Parrot" newspaper article in *Luton Herald* (31st July 1997), Accessed on 17th June 2015 in Luton Central Library archive
- n. Kesby, J., (1998) "Gangs clashed in the Battle of Farley Hill", Newspaper article in *Luton Herald* (2nd April 1998), Accessed on 17th June 2015 in Luton Central Library archive
- o. Kesby, J., (1997b) "A wall of silence and call for calm", Newspaper article in *Luton Herald* (21st August 1997), Accessed on 17th June 2015 in Luton Central Library archive
- p. Thirlaway, V., (2016) Chief Constable of Bedfordshire v Golding [2015] EWHC 1875 (QB), *European Journal of Current Legal Issues*, 22(1):pp.1-4
- q. Lamb Chambers (2015) *Chief Constable of The Bedfordshire Police v (1) Golding; (2) Fransen [2015] EWHC 1875 (QB)*, Article published on 1st July 2015, Accessed at: <https://www.lambchambers.co.uk/news-and-resources/chief-constable-of-the-bedfordshire-police-v-1-golding-2-fransen-2015-ewhc-1875-qb.htm> (Accessed on 13th December 2017)
- r. Thirlaway, V., (2016) Chief Constable of Bedfordshire v Golding [2015] EWHC 1875 (QB), *European Journal of Current Legal Issues*, 22(1): pp.1-4
- s. Luton News (1992) *Police called over dispute at mosque*, Article in Luton News (27th May 1992). Accessed at Luton Central Library
- t. Connett, D., (1992) *Mosque peace plan is 'impractical'*, The Independent (28th July 1992), Article archived online at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/mosque-peace-plan-is-impractical-1536149.html> (Accessed on 10th June 2016) – (see Appendix 8.)
- u. Muilin, J., (1994) *Muslims in middle start repair work after mosque battle*, Article in The Guardian (31st March 1994). Accessed at: <https://search.proquest.com/hnpguardianobserver/index> (Accessed on 7th August 2017, using KCL login)

v. Luton on Sunday (2001) *Bin Laden mob smash up pub*, New article published in Luton on Sunday (14th October 2001). Accessed at Luton Central Library

w. The Guardian (1992) *Tension fills car park prayers at riven mosque*, Article in The Guardian (30th May 1992). Accessed at Luton Central Library

x. Latimer, S., (1997) "Moves to defuse racial tit-for-tat", newspaper article in Luton Herald (8th August 1997), Accessed on 17th June 2015 in Luton Central Library archive

12(9). Luton TV documentaries

As part of my empirical research using secondary sources about Luton, I turned to a series of television documentaries to help develop my narrative. Many of these documentaries are well-known, and have been viewed by millions of people across the UK in recent years. Others, including those from the Anglia Television archive, are less well-known. Each of these documentaries have been watched in full with extensive notes taken. The documentaries featured in the list below are referenced because they feature in the main body of this project, or because they were particularly informative to the narrative that has been created.

Documentary List

Anglia Television (1965) *“Focus on Luton” Documentary directed by Stanley Joseph.*

Accessed online at the East Anglia Film Archive:

<http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/206002> (Accessed on 26th August 2015)

Anglia Television (1976) *“Luton ’76” Documentary directed by Harry Aldous for Anglia Television,* accessed online at: The East Anglia Film Archive

<http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/95742> (Accessed on 25th August 2015)

BBC Three (2012) *Stacey Dooley Investigates: My Hometown Fanatics,* Documentary directed by Juliette Murray-Topham for BBC Three. First broadcast on BBC Three on 20th February 2012. Details found

at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01cl48b> (Accessed on 8th December 2017)

Channel 4 (2012) *Proud and Prejudiced,* TV Documentary produced by CTVC and broadcast by Channel 4 (UK) on 27th February 2012.

People Focus (2002) *Trouble at the Mosque,* Documentary Film produced by People Focus for Channel Four, Transcript accessed at:

https://www.journeyman.tv/film_documents/1255/transcript/ (Accessed on 10th June 2016)

12(10). Social Media search details

In order to find social media entries that were relevant for this project, there were a number of searches that I carried out on the two social media platforms selected; Facebook and Twitter. Facebook was used sparingly; only to look through the posts contained on the Facebook 'pages' of the two social spaces that were selected for the empirical study; The Parrot Pub in Farley, and Luton Central Mosque in Bury Park. In contrast, using the 'advanced search' page on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/search-advanced?lang=en>) I conducted a number of searches to trawl the Twitter posts that I deemed relevant for the project. These searches included looking at tweets from specific state bodies – Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police – as well as looking at posts containing key phrases (like 'Luton demo' or 'Luton march') from key periods of time in the narrative about the town that I was creating.

Below are details of the specific social media searches that I carried out in order to find the social media posts used in the main body of this thesis.

Social Space – Media Searches

I searched two Facebook pages:

1. Luton Central Mosque Facebook Page - *Accessed 3rd June 2016* (Can be found at: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/LutonCentralMosque/>)
2. The Parrot' Pub Facebook Page - *Accessed 3rd June 2016* (Can be found at: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/theparrotph/>)

I also searched through the tweets associated with one Twitter handle:

1. 'The Parrot Pub' Twitter handle [[@Theparrot_luton](https://twitter.com/Theparrot_luton)] - *Accessed 8th June 2016* (twitter.com)

Twitter Searches

There were 3 searches that I carried out on both the Luton Borough Council Twitter handle (@lutoncouncil), and the Bedfordshire Police Twitter handle (@bedspolice). The details of these searches are as follows:

Tweets from Bedfordshire Police (@bedspolice)

1. Search term 'Luton' from 31st May 2015 to 31st May 2016 - *Accessed on 3rd June 2016 (twitter.com)*
2. All tweets from 19th June 2015 to 29th June 2015 - *Accessed on 3rd June 2016 (twitter.com)*
3. All tweets with search terms 'demo', OR 'demonstration', OR 'protest', OR 'EDL', OR "Britain OR First" - *Accessed on 3rd June 2016 (twitter.com)*

Tweets from Luton Borough Council (@lutoncouncil)

1. Tweets containing 'Luton' [Date range 31 May 2015 to 31 May 2016] - *Accessed 3rd June 2016 (twitter.com)*
2. Search terms - demo, OR demonstration, OR protest, OR EDL, OR "Britain OR First" - since 1st January 2011 - *Accessed on 3rd June 2016 (twitter.com)*
3. All Tweets from @lutoncouncil [1st June 2015 to 12th July 2015] - *Accessed on 3rd June 2016 (twitter.com)*

There were also some broader searches across the whole of Twitter (i.e. searching 'all users'), based on specific periods of time and/or specific contents included in the tweets. The details of these 4 searches are as follows:

1. Search all tweets using term "Luton demo" - *Accessed on 3rd June 2016 (twitter.com)*
2. Search all tweets using phrase "Luton march" - *Accessed on 3rd June 2016 (twitter.com)*
3. Search only tweets using hashtag: #LutonDemo - *Accessed on 3rd June 2016 (twitter.com)*

4. Search for all tweets containing 'Luton' in them from 27th June 2015 -
Accessed on 8th June 2016 (twitter.com)

12(11). Participant Observations

In this section are a selection of notes taken during various Participant Observation exercises that I carried out during my empirical research in Luton. These notes have been included in the Appendix because they are directly referenced in the main body of the thesis. Participant Observation notes that aren't directly referred to, are not included in this Appendix.

a. Luton Council of Faiths Meeting (20th May 2015)

Location: Hindu Temple

Date: Wednesday 20th May 2015 (7pm)

Having made contact with a member of Luton Council of Faiths by email in April 2015, I was invited to attend and observe a meeting of the group. Below are the notes that I took during the meeting.

Before Meeting Note:

- Before meeting a vicar spoke to me and mentioned 'you should make sure that you put forward that you are looking to find a positive side to the communities in Luton, because there is a sense that people are interested in Luton for all the bad press and negative images, and they want to present a different one'.

During Meeting Notes:

Agenda Item 1 – Britain First demonstration

- First item on discussion is the news from Police Community Cohesion Officer on a planned march in the town from the far-right group 'Britain First'.
March due to take place on 27th June.
- Member (from Church) said that the Churches Together group have drafted a letter to Britain First saying how they totally disagree with them - this is going to be an open letter that they hand out to the media as well.
- Apparently the Britain First group use 'paramilitary' tactics (according to member) - they have been going in to Mosques and handing out Bibles.
- Member said that the media should not be giving 'oxygen' to these types of groups and suggested that the Luton Council of Faiths should engage with the media telling them that they should not be doing this.
- Apparently Britain First is an offshoot of the EDL - but 'more disciplined' (Member) as they do not go drinking before a march (as the EDL used to). According to the Police Officer this group have links to the paramilitary groups in Ireland and to the BNP. Apparently they are not that big but that they have an active online web presence.
- Another member suggests that what is needed is a big presence on social media, and asks why they (Luton Council of Faiths) are not actively doing this. There is general agreement of this, and a motion is put forward that some kind of statement is made here - however confusion comes out when they are trying to adopt the Churches Together letter (which is specifically from a Christian perspective according to member from Church) and making a succinct paragraph statement that they feel they should release.
- Britain First did a march in Dudley, Birmingham last week. They were claiming that there was 500 people who attended the march, but in actual fact the police intelligence says that there was around 120. The police officer agreed with member that the group were 'disciplined' (implied that they 'behaved', but corrected himself to make a stronger statement - negative connotation of disciplined).
- Police then made statement of reassurance that the march would use public order powers to restrict the march. They can prohibit location and duration

- of the march - and someone suggested that 'I assume you will be keeping them well away from Bury Park' (general agreement with this notion).
- There was then a discussion again of the media role, and a harkening back to previous far-right marches in the town. Apparently when the EDL marched in November 2014, Luton in Harmony printed out leaflets to show the other side of Luton (one of positive mixing of different communities).
 - On discussion of use of social media, Police Officer referred to use of 'ringmaster' to circulate messages.
 - There was then a suggestion that maybe Luton Council of Faiths should send a letter to Britain First and engage with them in dialogue. This was overruled by the chair of the meeting - they will not even try and talk with that group - suggestion that there has been some experience of this and it is no good for them.
 - A member again draws attention to the use of social media - says that it is good for engaging young people.
 - There is reference by the chair of the meeting that it is the 'silent majority' that they represent - that these far right groups are shouting loud, but that there is the need for the Luton Council of Faiths to represent the voices and feelings of the silent majority.
 - Next there is a turn to some strong statements of national identity - but in reality 'we are Britain First' (according to member). [My observations during this statement was the not all members seemed to be in agreement - and also a general observation that I made at this point was that Muslim communities (very sparsely represented) had been silent throughout meeting so far - this would remain until they left early].
 - The statements of national identity are strong in the meeting - talking about the stealing of the flag as their symbol (first there is the talk of the St. George's flag) then there is talk about the Union Jack - then Britain First and EDL are discussed in relation to UKIP – A member exclaims; "they stole the Union Jack as well".

- Discussion moved to where are the Britain First from? Police Officer said that it is unlikely that many of the group are from Luton - they are from outside.
- A member then makes suggestion that Britain First get invited to the Luton Council of Faiths meeting? This is met with some real negative statements - 'Oh no' - there is absolute outrage at this. Apparently the Islamic Centre tried to talk to the EDL at some point - 'came up a cropper' apparently, and this is seen as proof that inviting Britain First to talks is not possible or sensible.
- To finish this discussion on the Britain First march – two Church members talk about the common feeling and dedication to 'Peace' of all the faith communities and how they should remember all this.

Agenda Item 2 – Peace Walk

- Peace walk is happening on the 26th September. Last year this peace walk was in Farley - this year it will be taking place in Lewsey. The intention is to show young people that there is hope (faiths together) - showing how communities can be together.
- Aim to recruit at schools for the peace walk.
- Last peace walk the mosques gave roses, balloons were released by the church.

Agenda Item 3 – Catalyst Awards

A notice raised by female church member and by 'Muslim Woman' (this is her description of herself) that women were not being represented or listened to in the Luton Council of Faiths meeting - this notice was raised during prizes given out in the CATALYST awards when randomly selected faith leaders were selected who all happened to be men. There was definitely a sense that gender issues were prevalent in the meeting.

A female member next to me repeatedly made points that Hindus were also poorly represented in the meeting. In reference to the Catalyst program, she noticed that all students attending were Muslims. Apparently the catalyst program was advertised in the Hindu Temple but not young people from temple registered to attend.

Agenda Item 4 – Near Neighbours (NN)

- In the last year the NN program have given £143,500 to the community projects. NN have 4 community workers in post currently. They see themselves as a fundraising body for faith communities.
- Member talks for the CATALYST program of Youth Leadership.

Agenda Item 5 - FEAST

According to member the program began in Birmingham (it is about Christian - Muslim dialogue). Suggestion is that more fund-raising needs to be done. FEAST has been run by member in Farley. Feast has looked to engage encounters in Barnfield S and W and in Stopsley - Why? Apparently in these areas because there is the best proportion of numbers of races and faiths.

Agenda Item 6 – Coffee Mornings

Member says these events are useful because they are bringing generations together (different to a coffee morning because it served chicken soup and samosas) - young person at the event spoke about the use of technology and how it is good for communication, but also how it is isolating and preoccupies many young people (I immediately was reminded of the young Muslim man who was at the meeting before, who had spent a lot of his time typing on his phone). Member from Luton Borough Council was also involved in the discussions and suggested that the format of the coffee morning needed tweaking to make it more successful.

Agenda Item 7 – Cohen’s Yard

Member explains that Cohen’s Yard is the garden that you can see on the Busway journey. Funding for this came from a NN grant. The project has also used volunteers from TUI (Thompson). In the local area there is a sense that people want to be involved. Idea of creating an allotment space around All Saints.

Agenda Item 8 – Luton Food Bank

Member spoke about how there is a need to raise more funds for the food bank. Raising money for the food bank and its activities is said to be an example of the diversity and working together of the community. Apparently the demand for the food bank is increasing rapidly. There has been a demand of 30% up in first 3 months this year to the same time last year. It is expected that this demand will continue to grow. Problem for them as well now is that they are having to buy food to hand out as the donations of food are not reaching the demand.

Agenda Item 9 – Any other business

Member of Bahá’í community talks about new year celebrations - hopefully it will be happening around 21st March next year.

St. George’s Day celebrations were apparently successful according to Luton Borough Council - there were free cream teas and lots of money was raised for the Food Bank. VE Day event was thought of very last minute (as was St. George’s Day event apparently) - VE Day event was apparently same day as the election count. The event was hosted by Luton in Harmony.

A Freedom of Speech event was discussed – Member explains that it was very good and the participation was very varied. Member asks ‘can we have these events more please?’ - apparently the meeting wasn’t too contested and heated - Chair said (in ref to the speaker) “she didn’t annoy anyone” (implying that this has

happened or was expected to happen). Another member said that dialogue is important, we may not agree on things but we can talk about it. Let's engage more with the 'unconverted'. Next event in Oct/Nov on the Counter Terrorism and Security Bill - needs a speaker for this event - The chair said that he wanted feedback on this topic, but he said that it was important and he proposed that it should happen. Apparently the discussion here is 'not just Muslim communities' who are interested in this. The suggestion by the chair is that the CTS Bill has contentious issues in it that need discussing.

Next Luton Council of Faiths meeting is arranged for 23rd July. Then in final thanks a mention was made to how the temple we were in was once a Methodist Church and how the synagogue in the centre was made into a Mosque.

Notes after meeting

Chat with Church member: EDL is in Farley apparently - thinks that some of the leaders of this group have some respect for him, but the hooligans in the area don't. He said that he won't walk through the estates in the area any more. He also tells me that there is a large Irish community in the Farley area - says that he knows someone who could talk to me who has been in the area for years.

Next I chat with Police Officer – He said to me that it is within the different communities that we find the most tension

Next I chat to member of Bahá'í community - 20 people from community in Luton - use their homes mostly for meetings, but would love to have their own space. This man was very vocal at the meeting.

Chat with Jewish member - Jewish community has long history in Luton, but recently has moved back to London.

b. The Mall, Luton (4th November 2015)

Date: 4th November 2015, 3:30pm

Location: The Mall, Luton

This observation exercise was undertaken while sat in a window seat of a coffee shop in the centre of The Mall in Luton. This exercise was undertaken as one of many Participant Observation exercises that I did, attempting to witness everyday public life in Luton. The Mall was, by far, the busiest space during the day in the town centre, and thus was considered to be a space where encounters might be witnessed, and where the potential for a 'space of appearance' existed.

The exercise was done as a 'stream of consciousness', to see what interesting observations could be elicited from such an intense exercise. This method is a development of 'psychogeographic methods' used by the Situationist International in France.

Observation notes:

Sparkling Debenham's lights and gentle music, air conditioning. Still people walk, shopping in hands looking in. Many people walking along looking at their phones. People always moving - like a flow - no agreed side but movement is constant. Many people walking on their own. Debenhams written with large letters many times - you cannot miss the sign. Different areas of the Mall are busier - suggesting it has a through fair element. Old man crosses 'road' and traffic flows around him.

Tesco trolley man crosses the flow. People sat on central island, no one talking, all sitting and staring - mostly men. One man in fluorescent jacket is talking on phone. Two elderly women are talking to each other. Family stop in centre and talk to each other. Person stops to do up lace. Partially sighted man almost bumps in to her.

Very sad looking woman sat opposite me on her own with a coffee - sat in silence looking at floor.

Estate agent's island in centre of Mall asks the question 'How much is your property worth?' Group of 3 men sit on central island chair (in a line) and try to make semi-circle to talk to each other. Seating area has a square box around it - making it visually like an island. Disabled lady in wheelchair is pushed around effortlessly. Two older women walk past slowly staying in the flow of people. Woman stops to itch her leg and again this stops the flow of people. 3 young men stop in same place as family did before and talk. Then they set off in a different direction.

Despite the height of the ceilings, there is nothing up high to distract you - blank and uninteresting walls. Old woman with trolley blocks man in walkway; everyone has to flow around her. People stand still inside square box, with people moving outside of it. Much more diversity of dress in this area than I have seen in Bury Park. Lots more elderly people walking around.

When in the Mall, looking up gives you access to pure utility - signs for toilets and lights for seeing, air conditioning for temperature. Eyes at 'correct height' and you see shops, displays and masses of people. All people are on the same level. There are no undulations in the Mall. On the edge of the flow of traffic is the established shops. In the middle is the pop up shops. These inner shops have a sense of impermanence; like the people sat on the benches; a most uncomfortable and poorly designed seating area. The bored silence of the people sitting in the central island is overwhelming. Sad woman gets up and enters the flow of people.

3 Tesco workers bump into two more in suits - they talk and seem more relaxed in the space; happily traversing the flow of people. Tesco workers have conversation with cafe workers and there is a sense of familiarity. An old lady waves to an old man sitting in the central square of benches. He waves back, but other than that makes very little movement. She gestures that she is going to shop and he nods and stays put. 2 kids run around central estate agents stand and bump into each other,

then run through the central square of benches - the only energy in the place that disrupts the flow. Young woman meets two friends on central seat in the square. They talk, one sitting and two standing. Then all three sit, and in a manner similar to men before them, they try and make an arc for the three of them to be able to talk.

3 young men jog through the mall - another rare disruption but they stay in a straight line (with the flow). People in flow cut corner through the corner doorway of Debenhams - and have to negotiate the advertising signs as they do this. A cleaner with sweep walks and talks to man - again this worker seems to have confident familiarity with the setting and cuts through flows of people. People stop to talk, hug each other at the edge of the flow. CCTV looks down on people from above, covertly hidden amongst the beams - painted the same colour as the beams.

A queue develops for a smoothie stall in the centre of the flow; blocking a number of people. This forces the flow of people to change. Another older lady sits in the corner of the cafe and speaks to the cafe worker with a degree of familiarity - talks to the staff member about how there seems to be a lot of new staff. A man who has lost a bag comes to the staff in the cafe to ask about it - the staff member looks and recommends to the man that they call security. Staff calls security on a mobile phone and stands outside the shop. Man waits, leaning against the door. Security wave to staff and as he walks past her, he looks at her up and down. Man is advised to go to security desk to see if they have his bag. A group of 3 young people stand in the main flow of people now; forcing people to walk around them.

End of observation exercise (4:10pm)

c. The Bricklayer's Arms, High Town (26th June 2015)

Location: Bricklayers Arms, High Town

Date: 26th June 2015 (14:30 - 16:15)

The following notes are from conversations held with regulars at the Bricklayers Arms one Friday afternoon in High Town. All respondents claimed to be regular visitors to the pub and had been living in and around the area for more than 10 years.

All respondents are anonymised. The conversations were not recorded and notes were made immediately after the participant observation exercise.

(The conversations were disjointed with all four participants interjecting at different times - as such there is not really a narrative flow to these notes - they are a collection of quotes and references made throughout the couple of hours that I spent in the pub)

There are 4 respondents during this exercise, which I have numbered 1 to 4, to preserve their anonymity.

Conversation Notes:

Conversation started with 1 leaves me with overwhelming idea that Luton has changed a lot in the time he has lived in the town. There used to be a lot of pubs - you could do a pub crawl in High Town - not anymore, there is only 3 pubs - Bricklayers, Painters, and Greenes.

1 says Vauxhall used to be main employer - lots of little firms closed when Vauxhall shrunk. 1 doesn't know why there is no union activity in the town - there never has really been any union activity in Luton.

1 tells me how Arndale Centre ruined lots of local businesses - still in decline in the local area - When Arndale came people were very excited - used to go down there with a picnic for a day out.

1 refers to two different groups in High Town; Poles and Eastern Europeans. 3 says that both groups keep themselves to themselves - no trouble.

1 explains how the Bricklayers is a football pub for Luton Town FC - 'but there isn't any trouble here'. On match day the pub is apparently very busy with loads of fans (including some fans who come over from Norway - 'they know how to drink') - people walk from stadium all the way to the Bricklayers before and after the game (12pm - 5pm).

2 tells how number of pubs has really declined. Community has really changed in the local area. However, pubs are still where "deals are done, and wars are won". The pub is where you come to source things and people. Everyone in the pub knows each other.

2 says how High Town has changed - used to be lots of different shops, grocers, fishmongers, co-op etc. Not so anymore - due to the big Sainsbury's and other supermarkets. Now High Town is just takeaways and hairdressers.

1 talks about the Afro-Caribbean man in the hairdressers. Says that he is a 'scary looking man' - helps him (as he has disability) to the pub from the hairdressers.

1 says how Sundown park is the area that is associated with the London overspill.

2 talks about the New Estates such as Farley Hill - 'nothing there for them' (except the Parrot and Barn Owl pub that have both closed) - 2 didn't know that the Parrot pub had closed, 1 did.

1 talks to me about Weatherspoon's pubs in Luton. He says that he doesn't go in to them. Hears voices of people he recognises, but he knows that her doesn't like their 'sort'. He thinks that people only go to these pubs because it is cheap. 4 chips in and says that you wouldn't find old people in the Weatherspoon's pubs.

1 talks to me about the interactions between different communities - English and Indian cricket club at Warden Park - tells me that I should go along and see it on a Saturday. 1 tells me that "Indians are always really nice".

1 talks to me about Bar 32 and the family that own it. Apparently the family are opening the new pub on Park Street.

1 tells me that the Painters used to have some troublesome customers.

1 talks about when he was younger - he was scared of the call to prayer that echoed around Bury Park.

3 talks about the change in Asian men in Luton - he mimes a shy walking style, and then a confident shoulders back walking. 3 then tells me that the police have their hands tied, and that the council is a representation for the Asians in Luton.

4 tells me that the pub will not be opening tomorrow due to the march that is due to be passing through High Town. 1 refers to the march as being 'The racists'.

3 talks to me about Bury Park and says 'you wouldn't want to walk down there'. 3 then talks to me about 'Polish murderers' - 'nice lads - went for drink with them and everything'.

3 says that High Town has a lots of Irish, Farley Hill has both Irish and Scottish, and Bury Park has the Asians.

1 tells me that the dividing line in Luton used to be the railways - High Town was seen as separate from the rest of the town. Used to have all you needed in High Town.

3 talks to me about when he used to live in Bury Park. Roofs being built in Bury Park in 1982 - apparently the Asian communities got support and funding for building

their roof, whereas his family didn't - 3 claims that he felt significant mistreatment and referred to his right because he has always paid taxes.

2 talks to me about local businesses - he claims that it is the advent of the internet that has ruined the local businesses in the area.

2 says how he feels intimidated in Bury Park. 3 interjects and says that Cameron and Clegg wouldn't walk alone up Bury Park.

3 refers to Margaret Thatcher - 'if it wasn't for her, my mum wouldn't have been able to buy and then sell her council home'

1 tells me about 'spitting' in Bury Park - says how he heard it first, and it offended him.

3 tells me about walking down the pavement in Luton, apparently Asians don't get out of the way, even for pregnant women - there is a 'lack of respect'.

End of Notes

d. St Margaret's Social Club, Farley Hill (24th November 2015)

Location: St. Margaret's Social Club

Date: 24th November 2015 (9pm)

Having identified Farley Hill as a key empirical research location, I then identified one of the few social spaces in the area, that was still open, was St. Margaret's Social Club. I made enquiries about visiting the space, and I had a conversation with the local priest, who's church owned the social club. Then, after meeting with a

Labour councilor in one of the interviews I conducted in the town centre, this councilor invited me to join him, and the rest of the local Labour group, at St. Margaret's Social Club. It turned out that the Labour group met in the social club regularly. The notes that follow come from a visit to St. Margaret's Social Club with the local Labour Group. All notes were written up immediately after the observations were completed.

Notes:

Individual told me about Farley 40 years ago when Vauxhall was the main employer. Parrot used to be buzzing - it was where everyone in the community used to go (old people would go 5 till 7, and then home for dinner, as did young people - but young would come back to pub after). The reason everyone went to the Parrot was because busses back from Vauxhall used to drop them off either at 4:30pm or 5:30pm right outside the pub. The landlord at the time wasn't allowed to let them in until a certain time (5:30ish), and because they couldn't cope with the rush of people they used to have the pints already poured waiting for them.

Another individual tells me about how there used to be football matches between the different pubs in the town (and the breweries used to support their clubs with prizes like a keg of beer). Individual recalls a match, the final, between The Parrot and The Foresters at the bottom of Farley Hill.

I am told that there used to be loads of youth clubs in Farley Hill where everyone used to go to when they were growing up.

Reference to the EDL in Farley and the Parrot. Individual says that the pub should never have let that type in to the pub. They weren't representing the people of the local area, but because they drew in numbers from elsewhere it meant that the pub made more money for a brief time. However, it put off a lot of people in the local area, and as a result people stopped going there.

Another individual tells me that houses and ownership are the biggest problem in reducing community in Farley. Landlords and their greed is the problem now.

Another individual tells me that usually on a Tuesday night at St.M there is much less people, only around 6 people, but tonight it is busier because of the darts night.

I am then told by a few people that [name removed] is a good person to talk to regarding getting communities together in Farley Hill. He apparently brings the Muslim and Black youths together for football. I am also told by an individual that there is a 5-a-side football regularly held by the Turkish community in Farley at Barnfield Academy.

Individual tells me that he lived in Farley Hill before the main bit of the estate was built beyond Market Square. He says that the second bit of Farley Hill was built much smaller, and that land was generally getting more expensive after the first building of Farley Hill (reference to the smaller properties built in Lewsey Farm and Marsh Farm). With particular reference to the value of properties in Farley Hill; the implication given is that the corner properties are big and worth a lot of money (even possible to build a second house on the land).

I am also told of how successful the boxing has been in Farley Hill at St. Margaret's - and lots of other sports clubs - but these have all gone because of the reduction in funds. Individual then talks to me about setting up a golf session in Farley Hill and team; but that they were thwarted often because of the Free Masons and the non-working-class lot who owned the cricket pitch, the rugby and the golf. They didn't like the Farley Hill lot coming and playing golf. Individual also tells me about the Celtic supporters club in the town and how it has strong Catholic routes.

There is also a discussion about UKIP and the up-coming by-election in Oldham. Two individuals are in strong disagreement about the election and the reasons that people are moving between Labour, Tory and UKIP.

At some point we have a discussion about the council officers and getting things done in public spaces. I am told that [name removed] is a can do person, who gets things done. On the other hand, I am told that [name removed] is the opposite and is always someone who finds ways not to get things done.

Two individuals both tell me that there is no community in Farley Hill any more. One believes that the core reason for this is the right to buy introduced by Thatcher (Another individual, I am told, strongly disagrees with this).

An individual tells us all about the investment by multinationals in Luton. He tells us about a visit he has made to a site that is doing defensive weapons in Capability Green (anti-missile things - where your phone can be wiped by the weapons). When we talk about whether such multinationals will mean jobs for people in Luton, another individual implies that while they want to believe that it will mean jobs for people in Luton the reality is that they will probably be specialist jobs that will not end up going to people living in Luton. Then the first individual responds with example of a company called 'Cemex' who have got 25 apprenticeships going, and 18 of them have gone to people from Luton.

Two individuals confirm that they feel there has been a definite rise in self-employment and the petit-bourgeoisie in Luton - people with vans etc. and many many taxi companies (reference made to individual present being one of these). This individual reveals how people are struggling to get mortgages, and that in the taxi firm 'his drivers' ask him to stamp the form to show that they earn £30-40 000.

I am told that there are so many corrupt landlords in Luton now. Properties used to be owned by the industries and companies - and that they invested in the life of the town. Now there are just a few landlords who take advantage of the people living in the town.

There is a discussion about the buses up to Farley Hill. The last bus up the hill is at 20:30. There is a joke that this is one of the individual's fault as he is in charge of transport.

There is also a discussion about Tony Blair. One individual says to another; 'you think Tony Blair was the best leader'. He denies this and says that a 4 letter word is the reason he wasn't a good leader; Iraq.

After Social Club Notes:

On the way back from the Social Club, an individual has given me a lift to the station in his car. We have discussion about local Labour party and local politics. Individual says "Not to sound racist" and then talks about Kashmiri councilors and how in Kashmir it is seen as honour and status to be a councilor. Sees that some people moving from Conservative to Labour just to win (pure and simple - is how he puts it). Individual tells me that the Pakistani ambassador has come to Luton more than any other town in the UK.

Individual tells me that the Labour group is very divided in Luton - but that it is less about politics and more about personality.

End of notes.

e. All Saint's Church, near Bury Park (31st May 2015)

Date: Sunday 31st May 2015

Location: All Saint's Church, Luton

Close to Bury Park is All Saint's Church; one of the space that I considered could exhibit the publicness of a social space. I made contact with the vicar of the church

in April 2015, and I was invited to observe two services that were held in the Church one Sunday. As a result, I visited the Church on 31st May 2015. The notes that I made immediately after the observation exercise, include notes from the services, and also from conversations that I had with individuals in the Church that day.

Arrival: 9.15am

Depart: 1.30pm

Notes from Service 1:

Sunday Service of All Saint's Church of England (9.30am)

On arrival at the church, I said hello to an individual. She informed me that the vicar had informed her that I would be attending the service. She asked that I sit fairly near the front as it was unlikely that the congregation would reach far back (in reality, the congregation number was only around 20 people). I sat at the front left of the church at the far edge of the pew to try and be quite anonymous.

In the 15 minutes that I waited for the rest of the congregation to arrive and the service to start I made a few observations:

- People were mostly sitting in small groups of between 3 and 4 individuals. These groups were on the whole gender, and ethnicity segregated (or so it seemed to me).
- There was a definite majority of women, and only about 4 men in the congregation.
- Most of the congregation were elderly (I would predict the youngest would have been in their 50s) and many had walking/mobility issues.
- One lady with glasses and a fur coat seemed to be most willing to move about the congregation and speak to a lot of people.

The service itself followed a clear service guide in English. There were 4 hymns (all sung almost imperceptibly quiet) and it was a very formal service. An obvious moment of community and people encountering one another was during the 'Sign

of Peace' ritual where everyone went around and shook hands with one another. The sermon was done by the vicar and focused on the idea of knowledge and knowing God - instead of the 'scientific method', Christians are supposed to know God through love. The sermon also mentioned about the difference between the Christian and Islamic faiths that could not be reconciled - the one-ness of God in Islam, and the 3-in-1 God of Christianity. [After the service I spoke to the vicar about this and he informed me that his sermon had been adjusted because of my presence - he told me he was planning on being more damning of the scientific method].

At the end of the service I was asked to come forward and introduce my research to the congregation (this was unplanned).

After the service I went and got a coffee at the back of the church and had the chance to have a couple of conversations with members of the congregation.

Details of these conversations are as follows:

- I spoke to a lady who had been born in Luton and was now in her 80s. She spoke to me a little bit about Bury Park and how it had changed an awful lot in the time that she had been here. In particular, she said how there used to be a lot of little useful shops that she could use, but now there are a lot of groceries that spill on to the street. She says that she doesn't understand why 'they' need so many groceries, and she told me about the problems associated with the street narrowing and the pavement widening (delivery lorries regularly block up the road). The lady also spoke to me about the problem of young people not coming to the church any more - she said this was probably because of young people having lots of other commitments these days.
- Another lady started to join in our conversation and the two ladies started to talk about the young people these days - not giving up their seats and riding their bikes on the pavement. They wouldn't have been allowed to do that 'in our day'. One also talks to me about how her street has changed over the 55 years that she has been in Luton. Says that the other people

moving on to the street are actually very nice people, and 'their' kids know her as 'Auntie'.

- A man then talks to me. He told me how Bury Park has changed a lot in the time he has been here - apparently there used to be a lot of pubs in the area - and he specifically says how Luton used to be known as a place that was lively and full of entertainments - used to be strong and vibrant communities of Irish, Welsh and Scottish people. He also wanted to tell me all about the songs that were sung in some of the pubs supporting the Irish, or songs that were either Protestant or Catholic. He said that there weren't really problems, but there were strong sense of identities that were different. He repeatedly told me about his idea of 'social difference' and how he didn't like the idea of segregating and separating in life. He told me how he has been to many different Mosques in the area, and finds it problematic that they never speak in English in the mosque, and that he has told the leaders this, and apparently they hadn't even thought of doing this. He also spoke to me about some of the fundamental Islamic preachers on the streets of Luton, and how when they had their stalls on the streets the more moderate Muslims had thrown aside the tables, demanding that such preaching is not welcome in Luton - Man believes that more should have been made about this in the media - apparently only 30 secs was dedicated to it on Look East. Man also talked a bit about the EDL - said how the people of Luton had forced them out of the town - they don't belong here. He also went on to talk about Farley Hill and how it used to be called 'Debtors Retreat' - people who were poorest and fallen on bad times went up there. Man said it was bad how the council had bunched people together with nothing in this way.

Notes from Service 2:

Sunday Service of Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Hope Congregation) - 11am - 1.30pm

The first thing I noticed was how little the two congregations mixed - they are definitely two distinct; encounters do not seem to happen. When I arrived in the congregation of this community was a fairly obvious split between the men sitting on the right and the women sitting on the left. The service was very lively and much less formal than the earlier service - and it contained a mix of dialects and English - apparently there was more English put in to help me out.

Early in the service I realised that I was being invited up to introduce myself to the congregation (again it was a congregation of about 20 people) - this was useful because I noticed that a lot of people were turning their heads to see me in the congregation. There was a very strong sense of shared community here, with dancing and talking between people throughout the service, and the sermon was very interactive with the congregation laughing and making comment/hallelujah's at various points.

The sermon itself talked very pointedly about the distinction of the 'Presbyterian' identity and about the countries (Switzerland and Scotland mentioned a lot) and journey of the identity. The sermon focused on the importance of learning and of knowledge, and as such sought to teach the congregation about 'their' history; the history of Presbyterians. The sermon also talked about 'science' as a form of knowledge, chosen as a belief system that did not ask the questions, but was adopted and dominant in the society around 'them'. At various points when statements about science and other beliefs there was laughter and agreement from the congregation.

Following the sermon and many more songs, there is an elaborate offertory ritual, and lots of celebrations about the amount of money raised. The behaviour during the offertory seemed to me to be quite interesting - some gave money into the bucket quickly while others dallied (one lady seemed to run up at the last minute) - it seemed to be very performative. I would also say that I noticed a degree of performative behaviour that was gendered - women would look at each other and laugh together at certain points, dancing would start in the same parts of the

congregation and be joined in last by the men on the right, men seemed to act more seriously and each sat with space between him and other men, whereas women were all sat fairly close in a huddle (except for lady at back with a young child).

At the end of the service I spoke to the leader of the service. People all seemed to acknowledge me and say hello after the service.

End of notes.

f. Luton Central Mosque, Bury Park (26th February 2016)

Location: Luton Central Mosque, Bury Park

Date: 26th February 2016 (Friday 1pm)

Luton Central Mosque is a central social/religious space in Bury Park. Having visited Luton Central Mosque on 2 occasions already, and spoken with a former member of the Mosque committee, I was invited to come to prayers on 26th February 2016, to then meet some of the current committee, and to be shown around the site by the architect of the new building project that was happening. Below are the brief observations that I made from my visit; typed up immediately after the visit.

Notes:

When I arrived the member of the committee said I was lucky because the architect was there today, which is rare and so I would get shown around the new building. We went around the back, put on hard hats and high visibility jackets. We walked up the steps. My contact told me about how this new building was going to allow the community to use the space. Offices, reception, classrooms and multi-purpose halls. He explains to me about religious guidance and how they have to separate

Luton Central Mosque into a Masjid (for prayers) and a Masala (for other purposes). He tells me that one top hall can be used to be rented by community groups, inter-faith and cohesion events. He says rooms can be rented for medical and legal firms. He tells me about the provision for women, how there will be space for women to pray and their own entrance (they don't have a space at the moment because men have to pray on Friday and women don't - although he does tell me that when sisters come to pray, they will keep them outside and move men about to make separate space for them) - [There is a piece of paper taped on the door that I notice saying 'females other side']. When showing me the female prayer hall I notice windows/pillars to men's area; my contact confirms that women can see through to men when praying, but men cannot see women, which is good he says because men would be distracted by women.

Throughout tour committee member tells me that there are community needs, where Luton is lacking; not having a mortuary or hall for funerals (at the moment he tells me that people have to clear their living rooms for funerals). With the new building I am told that Luton Central Mosque can offer this service. He tells me that during funerals, prayers and did the space with be very busy and so they will have to make prayer hall expand to other areas. There is also going to be a library on the second floor; I ask if this will be for public access - the architect responds by saying (in what I perceive as sarcasm) "Yeah, for anyone who is interested in theology". Upstairs my contact then tells me that they may also have sports uses of the hall (for Pool etc.) and that downstairs there will be a gym for Yoga etc., and a sauna.

When I was down in the basement seeing the gym and kitchen area, the architect was with us. I asked him how he came up with the design for the building. He said, "I just came up with it". I asked him whether he consulted other people about rooms or uses and he said, "No. I just know what the community wants".

Outside when my contact talks to me about provisions for women, he talks about importance of giving autonomy to women. They 'can't' mix but they need to give them some space apparently. Additionally, when we talk about appropriate use of

the space, he says “of course we will get final say over what space is used for. We’re not going to have Britain First coming saying we should close the mosque down, and we won’t allow people promoting homosexuality. But I mean we will allow people for food banks, for holistic medicines, charity etc...”

An additional thing that I notice today, given that I was waiting for my contact to arrive after prayers. There was very little conversation outside the mosque between the mosque users. People were generally content to sit in their cars and wait to leave the very busy mosque car park. Generally, I noticed only brief interactions and conversations between the mosque users.

End of notes.

g. Royal Courts of Justice, London (26th June 2015)

Location: Court 37, Royal Courts of Justice, London

Date: Friday 26th June 2015 - 11am

I found out that a court hearing was going to happen the day before the Britain First demonstration in Luton. This court hearing would bring the leaders of Britain First to stand against an injunction from Bedfordshire Police, to try and stop their demonstration in Luton on 27th June 2015. Given my interest in the event for this project, I attended the court hearing, and took extensive notes. Following are the full notes that I took while in attendance as a member of the public at the back of the court room.

Notes:

Court session began at 11:28am according to my watch.

The Bedfordshire Police representative suggested that there is no clear link for why the planned march should be going to Luton. They suggest that the reason for the demo is to cause stress and harassment. Evidence for this is supposedly from the first video made by Britain First on 3rd January 2015 and posted in the public domain. This video supposedly causes harassment, alarm and distress.

Next the Bedfordshire Police representative talks about Luton in Harmony - and makes reference to their work going to schools with badges about harmony in the town etc. - They say that an event that they planned was cancelled due to march. Then this is changed to say that, actually it was not cancelled, but shareholders have cancelled (some of them) in the last 3 weeks.

Apparently the Britain First demonstration was offered a route for their demonstration, but Britain First didn't engage, so they Police have agreed a route for the demo. The Police representative informs that Britain First have been served a notice; but the Police intervention is not about stopping the march, but because "they are going to speak at the march".

The plan that the police originally suggested for the march was to make sure that it was not around mosques or Islamic cultural centres. However, the Police representative claims that "it goes close" to mosques; "any march is going to be very close" they claim. However, the Police representative says that they don't seek to stop the march. They are seeking the injunction due to the behaviour of the two leaders on 3rd June (reference made to transcript).

The question was asked by the judge, why was the action called today and not before? Why not more prompt?

The Police respond that they "did consider" a sooner action. And in fact they reveal that they did a previous 'without notice' application (not known by the leaders of Britain First). At this revelation the judge raises their eyebrows. This application was apparently made at 4:37pm on Friday 19th June. However, it was refused, because

there was no evidence that the pair in question were intending on returning to Luton before the 27th June.

Following this there was a little bit of legal background explained. Including something called the 'anti-social behaviour test'.

There is then the statement made that this call by Bedfordshire Police was a 'statutory injunction' and not under civil procedure rules. The reason for this injunction is that the 2 individuals in question are causing harassment, harm, distress by their behaviour. Additionally, there is a worry about other groups at the demo. Plus, to a lesser extent, the Luton in Harmony event will be affected.

Additionally, the 2 individuals in question regularly visit mosques. Their video has caused harassment, harm and distress. Plus other things on other occasions.

The group in question is apparently against those who live and reside in Luton. As such it is going to cause alarm and distress. It is revealed that the group attended a mosque on 3rd June; and Bury Park. There are apparently also previous incidents that show the pair's behaviour.

The Police representative then makes a mention to the fact that they legislation is very new, and that their injunction is "not to stop the march". The march should be 30 minutes and constantly moving. This is because a 'march' is the "only way it can be controlled".

The Police representative says that the 2 individuals have caused tension. Their "mere presence" in Luton will cause tension. Apparently if the 2 individuals hadn't used words causing harassment and distress in their videos, "we wouldn't be here" according to the Police representative (as such it is the harassment that is the reason for the injunction).

There is a discussion of the policy of 'mosque invasions' by the group Britain First. The two individuals claim that they have ceased doing this. However, Police representative claims that they said they had stopped this on 26th May 2015, yet they went past mosque on 3rd June. There was a bit of discussion about the 'going in' to a mosque. The police representative concedes that the group went into "private grounds" of the mosque, but not 'in'.

The defence then explains that the two individuals are the leader and deputy leader of the political party. To take away these two from activity is quite a "strange thing". The group say that they have their own security.

There is a quote read out by the Police representative from the Britain First video; "This is our town, a British town"... "Why don't you go back to your own country?". The representative says that with 'Bury Park', they don't want people there as part of their party.

The call from the Police representative is that the group don't have the demo in Luton. On 3rd June the group inflamed tension against themselves. According to the Police, had this not occurred on 3rd June, then they wouldn't have asked for an injunction. The police action is due to the behaviour of the pair on 3rd June. Just because they are the leader and deputy leader, they should not get special treatment.

The video from 3rd June shows that the pair stayed there and inflamed tensions in Bury Park. As such the accusation is that they used their presence to alienate people of Luton, and "in particular of Bury Park".

The police representative says that arrangements have been made by the police to deal with disorder - 6 weeks prior to march this was done. The Police apparently specified the route; despite the fact that Britain First wanted to march through the town centre. The Britain First Deputy Leader has been briefed by the police on the route of the march and knows the points.

There is a reference, and a warning about the behaviour on the march; with the phrase “animal behaviour” used as a prohibitive warning to the 2 individuals.

However, it is revealed by the defence that there is no evidence to suggest that the attendance of the two individuals will be public disorder.

The route will be abided by according to the representative of the two individuals.

Then there is explanation for the video and location of the 3rd June. Apparently the video being made was a “documentary being made” commissioned by the BBC. The film made by the 2 individuals had a film crew filming in the car behind them. The BBC film crew asked the Britain First pair to pose by the mosque for 60 seconds. This BBC program was apparently due for a September 2015 release.

The group stand by the claim that the policy of ‘mosque invasion’ has ceased (since July 2014) when a certain member left.

The group claim that the injunction against them is dangerous. Without the presence of the leader and deputy leader of the group it will be a rudderless group that marches. There will be no-one accountable, and thus there will be more danger.

There is a response to the Luton in Harmony event. The two individuals reveal that they were not aware of this at all. The presumption of the group is that the police will keep conflict away from the march. Additionally, the representative of the two individuals says that Britain First has a trained security team to keep order and to minimise any public disorder.

The police representative responds by saying that the Luton in Harmony event is an annual event.

Additionally, they claim that the footage from 3rd June is not part of a documentary.

The claim is that the attendance of the two individuals in Luton will cause problems; "They stand against harmony".

There is a discussion of the power of arrest order (pending) against the banner that the group has been seen holding that says "Britain First - No more mosques".

The judge explains that they are anxious about the 'no more mosques' banner.

As a result, the hearing is decided that there will be an injunction to prevent the 2 individuals entering mosques or Islamic centres and private grounds without written consent. And no distribution or display of words of religious hatred. However, the judge refuses to stop the pair entering in to Luton preventing their presence on the march. Apparently this order will continue until the full hearing happens.

There is a further order that is applied - forbidding the Britain First group from having the no more mosques banner (or any words to that affect) - a power of arrest is attached to this.

The Police representative then say that they are concerned about speeches made by the 2 individuals and so call for there to be no speeches made. However, the judge says, cannot make this order. Public order act must be honoured on speeches.

End of notes
