Introduction: Cities and Public Space

[to reveal the production of space] ... we should have to look at history itself in a new light. We should have to study not only the history of space, but also the history of representations along with that of their relationships - with each other, with practice, and with ideology. History would have to take in not only the genesis of these spaces but also, and especially, their interconnections, distortions, displacements, mutual interconnections, and their links with the spatial practice of the particular society... (Lefebvre 1991: 42)

The slums are also crowded to overflowing with immigrant colonies - the Ghetto, Little Sicily, Greektown, Chinatown - fascinatingly combining old world heritage and American adaptations. Wedging out from here is the Black Belt, with its free and disorderly life. The area of deterioration while essentially one of decay, of stationery or declining population, is also one of regeneration, as witness the mission, the settlement, the artist colony, radical centres all obsessed with the vision of a new and better world. (Park 1984: 56 emphasis added)

Cities are the height of human achievement. Cities are fraught with ambivalence. We adore city life, it stimulates, entertains and excites. Conversely, urban experiences are scary, disorientating and may be physically and mentally deleterious. Cities are crucibles of democracy, yet they remain cauldrons of inequality and injustice. Ambivalence regarding the nascent modern industrial city was captured quintessentially in the visceral eloquence of Alexis de Tocqueville's disturbingly ambivalent assertion, that 1840s Manchester was a vile, filthy cesspit from which flows pure gold, thereby allowing the attainment of civilisation while converting man of all ranks into desperate savages. Above all, it is in the public spaces of cities - street, squares, piazzas, plazas and parks - that the best and the worst characteristics of urban life and society are created, observed and reproduced. These sites are the geographical focus of this book and they are interrogated drawing substantially on the ideas about public space promulgated by the French Marxist sociologist-philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Looking at history in a new light in this book means exploring the histories of shifting representations of space and ascertaining the implications for the production of urban public space and what is called here differential space.

Public space is the city synecdoche par excellence. It is the city sine qua non. In the 1930s Lewis Mumford stressed famously the centrality of public space for convivial urban life. In the 60s and 70s these ideas were affirmed by Jane Jacobs and Richard
Sennett respectively, who also warned of possibly fatal threats to public space and therefore public life. Seizing on the more unpalatable aspects of the city, a pessimistic strand in the public space debate resurfaced in the 1990s focusing on various threats to public space and its imminent demise. Proponents such as Davis (1990), Sorkin (1992) and Mitchell (1995) saw threats from the corporatisation, commodification and privatisation of public space. In the 2000s, Atkinson (2003) privileged, not the death of, but revenge on public space and Keller (2011) feared that diverse, inclusive public space is being suppressed by neoliberalised urban governance. Recurring shocks to public space from the 1990s, proved not to be fatal partly because it is impregnated with social meanings which are contested continually - a point stressed by Lefebvre. To misappropriate an inimitable quip from Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain): continual reports of the death of public space were exaggerated. The resilience of public space and resurgence of cities as places to live and as candidates for academic scrutiny, is reflected in a blossoming of writing about cities in the last decade (see for example Eade and Mele 2002; Hall et al 2008; Bridge and Watson 2010; LeGates and Stout 2011; Feireiss and Hamm 2015).

Bodily presence in public space, particularly what might be called monumental civic space with inherent social meaning, has if anything grown in importance for people wishing to assert a variety of human and civil rights. Communities of interest wishing to express concerns and anxieties about a range of issues have taken to the streets in multitudinous gatherings often orchestrated and documented through the lens of the mobile telephone camera and social media. Since 2011 mass demonstrations in the public space of: Tahrir Square Cairo, Mong Kok Hong Kong, Gezi Park Istanbul, St Paul’s Courtyard London, Bolotnaya Square Moscow, Times Square New York and Place de la République Paris and many more sites of resistance, demonstrate that millions of people around the world, whether living in democracies or not, believe that reports of public space death were a tad premature. What these marches, rallies, demonstrations and longer term occupations elucidate is the deceptively complex nature of public space. Here it is worth noting that in this book public urban space is not understood in purely physical terms. It is regarded as being produced by social interaction striated with power structures and influenced strongly by the political economy of the productive moment. Public space is always a work in progress and is never in any meaningful sense a finished product. Public space is constituted partly by bricks, stone, concrete, steel and glass, but crucially it is to use Lefebvre’s term, produced and reproduced continually through social struggle.

This substantial introduction to the book provides an overview of the substantive topic of urban public space, followed by an elaboration of the theoretical framework in which the empirical research is grounded. Lefebvre’s spatial triad is explicated and the interpretations used in this book explained. In addition, the importance of Lefebvre’s ideas regarding abstract space, differential space and counter-projects are clarified. Following this the rationale for the choice of the case study cities is elucidated and brief city profiles presented, before the structure of the book is summarised. Lefebvre problematised urban space, insisting it was not simply a neutral container, provoking its reconceptualisation as both material product and social process. In all due deference to Lefebvre, the general research approach in the book seeks of necessity to move ‘beyond Lefebvre’ (Merrifield 2011) in an attempt to integrate his differential space and right to the city ideas. The book seeks to extend and contextualise Lefebvre’s ideas in the
contingencies of the early 21st century city, focusing ultimately on the spatial processes which produce and reproduce differential space. Therefore, the research does not seek to reproduce what might be called a ‘traditional’ Lefebvrian analysis which counterposes repressive official representations of space, against somehow more authentic quotidian, spaces of representation. Empirically, the research is located in (Gastown) Vancouver, (downtown) Lowell, MA and (Castlefield) Manchester, England: three cities with significant similarities and differences which are explored further in the methodological section below.

The two principal research objectives are double loaded and entwined. On the one hand, the exploratory empirical research is pursued through a Lefebvrian theoretical lens, on the other theory is tested through the analyses of empirical data. Methodologically the research design was constituted by the following elements (elaborated below). Firstly, a comparative international case study which involved cognisance of the familiar dangers of case study research, particularly regarding validity (Yin 2013). Secondly, a mixed methods approach was used for the collection and construction of a range of relevant data. Mixed methods research has matured into a recognised approach (Creswell and Clark 2010; Bryman 2012). Its formalised origins are acknowledged to lie in the triangulation idea in Norman Denzin's (1970) seminal text which argues that research which explores complex social phenomena requires a range of methods and data to construct the most comprehensive and cohesive understandings. Thirdly, archival methods and data formed the foundation of the empirical research, supplemented and complemented by interviews, email exchanges and visual data. All the face to face interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed. Emails were exchanged before and after each interview. Qualitative analyses only were used.

The overarching methodological framework for the empirical research is international comparative urban analysis and the book follows the tradition of comparing cities as simultaneously bounded and relational entities (Ward 2010). Urban studies may be regarded as an intrinsically comparative endeavour, in which researchers seek to explain distinctive outcomes in two or more cities through explicit comparison with reference to appropriate theory (Robinson 2012). Of course this is not straightforward or easy either theoretically or empirically (Dear 2005). Following Pickvance (1995: 36) urban comparative analysis is regarded as “the collection of data on two or more situations” followed by efforts “to make sense of them by use of one or more explanatory models. Early comparative urban research from the 1960s tended to understand cities as bounded territorial containers. Consequently, individualising comparison sees the research goal as highlighting similarities and differences between cities as a means of grasping the peculiarities of each case but also as a way of illustrating the exclamatory power of certain theoretical approaches (Brenner 2001: 138). Later researchers were inclined to comprehend cities relationally as constituted in and through relations stretching across politicised space beyond a particular case study city (Ward 2010: 481).”. Rather than seeing the city as an isolated discrete phenomenon, an individualising and relational approach to comparative urban research is taken here.

The dangers of 'presentism' in urban comparative research are well recognised (King 1991) and many urban researchers share with Lefebvre a recognition of the importance of history. Rather than the 400 year longue durée of Janet Abu-Lughod (Brenner 2001),...
the historical frame in this book is the history of living memory, from the late 1960s to the 2000s. This timeframe coincides with the European and North American shift from a broad Keynesian political economy consensus to one that is distinctly neoliberal. During that time, in response to international industrial restructuring and recurrent public spending crises, a plethora of public policy interventions have been instituted to cope with the social, economic and physical consequences. Academic debates therefore resound with an abundance of different terms for these intervention strategies: beautification, urban renewal, urban regeneration, urban revitalisation and urban renaissance. There are subtle and not so subtle differences of approach elaborated in Leary (2013a, see also Couch et al 2011) that will not rehearsed again here.

Globalised neoliberalism as it may be called centres on the world wide diffusion of a particular ideological and practical approach to urban government, governance and public space. It involves the swing from a social welfare based political economy, to one characterised by public-private partnerships, market dominance and an entrepreneurial city ethos (Harvey 1989a; Leary 2008; Leary and McCarthy 2013). There is not space here to pursue an elaboration of the neoliberal debate but for useful discussions regarding its impact on public space and post-industrial city transformation see (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Raco 2005; Lovering 2007; Harvey 2007). Occasionally, the term neoliberalism is misconstrued in the North American polity and academy. Liberal in this sense does not mean the politics of the political left or libertarian. Neoliberalism refers to a political ideology which favours reduced or minimal state intervention in markets and an expanded role for the private sector. Its roots lie in the 19th century Manchester laissez faire ideology referred to below. This version of Liberalism also opposed the North Atlantic enslavement trade, supported freedom of the press and women’s rights. Post World War Two (WW2) neoliberalism is based heavily on the ideas of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman.

**Conceptualising Urban Public Space**

Public space is valued for a number of different reasons across a spectrum from the political to the ludic. Permanence is an obvious material characteristic of cities but temporary physical structures also endow it with important social meanings. It is not just physical structures which can be temporary of course. Social interaction although constitutive of public space is inherently transitory. Its ephemeral nature does not though detract from its potential power, particularly when the social interaction is dedicated to collective politicised expression. Indeed, it is often the sudden shock of a short lived politicised appropriation of public space which carries great power. Distinctly collective political acts in public space may be seen as the ‘highest’ activation of democratic rights. Such politicised activism in urban public space forms an important part of the empirical research in this book. However, in addition to being sites of formalised political expression and places of work, cities are sites of enjoyment, revelry and sheer fun and have been since ancient times. Fairs, festivals, carnivals, street parties, block parties and a host of informal sporting and leisure or ludic events also characterise urban public space (Stevens 2007). These kinds of city sites form the other main empirical research strand.

We live in an age when for many commentators, if it is not dead public space is terminally ill and if it was a species extinction is beckoning. I endeavour in this book to
look through, between, past and under the apparently omnipotent forces seeking to destroy and degrade genuine urban public space. In doing so I provide concrete examples, some from unexpected quarters and trajectories, which demonstrate we can and should have a certain degree of optimism regarding the future of our cities (Lees 2004; Franck and Stevens 2006; Hou 2010). Conjuring as Robert Park put it in the opening quotation of this chapter a, vision of a new and better world, requires pondering the questions, from where might these visions originate and how might they be represented and implemented. I also build on previous research where I stress the importance of civil society, civic values, spatial coalitions and what Lefebvre calls counter-projects, while not ignoring big institutional structures and ideologies, particularly where they coalesce in neoliberalism (Leary 2009; 2013b).

In thinking through the complexities of urban public space it will be useful to consider two events, both highly germane to the main themes of this book, which happened in London at the front and back of the year 2014. On the night of 31 December at the River Thames in central London something strange and lugubrious occurred. On that night 100,000 ordinary city inhabitants and visitors were charged an entry fee to walk the classic public space of London's streets and experience the New Year's Eve fireworks display close up. A public space entry fee became necessary through a £10 charge levied by London mayor, Boris Johnson. He contended the fee was essential in order to ensure public safety. Putting aside whether it was really necessary, the question that arises from a Lefebvrian standpoint is how should this emolument and its implications be conceptualised? Urban public space with entirely free and inclusive access in which people have rights to all manner self- and politicised expression, may be regarded as Lefebvrian differential space - the diverse space of use value. When the public space London's streets was enclosed, policed to restrict access, and a charge levied, that space was transformed in retrograde fashion into abstract space –the space of homogenised exchange value. It is space often brought into being through the operation of market forces in a neo-capitalist economy. Paradoxically, Johnson is the leader of London's foremost elected, civic institution, the Greater London Authority.

In January 2014 in entirely contradictory fashion, Johnson announced his support for the retention of the informal skateboard park located in the undercroft of the Southbank Centre alongside the River Thames. The skateboard park is a site, not just of skateboarding, but of urban biking and high quality graffiti art. It has been use in these ways for several decades, but was threatened with removal if a redevelopment proposal by the Southbank Centre went ahead. The £120 million scheme would see the area transformed into upmarket shops and restaurants. It is important to realise that the urban space in question is not what might be called classic public space in the ownership and control of a local authority. Rather, it is space in the ownership and control of a quasi public-private entity. Paradoxically, the Southbank Centre is a registered, not-for-profit charitable trust. It is considered by many to be Britain's foremost civic, cultural institution. Johnson and other civic leaders opined that the skateboard park was: a marvellous cultural asset, a precious and much loved community space, a vital feature of the River Thames, helping make London a great city and vibrant shared public space. Access to the space is entirely free and inclusive, open to anybody 24 hours a day, seven days a week and prized for its use value. It is classic differential space which the Southbank Centre wanted to transform into marketised, exchange value abstract space. After an 18 month struggle of resistance, led by the Long
Live Southbank Campaign, the skateboarders won an impressive, against the odds victory, securing the long term informal leisure use for the site.

Patently, this book is not about London, but the two examples of mayor Johnson’s spatial interventions exemplify several important conceptual strands running through this book. Urban public space can acquire the characteristics of differential space, treasured by some for its everyday use value, which can be enjoyed without the need for financially based consumption; in that sense it is antithetical to the exchange value of what Henri Lefebvre calls abstract space. Public space is cherished by many people as a pulsating theatre of spectacular cultural action. It is a place of ludic value. It is a place of diverse encounter and cultural interaction. It is a community asset helping secure social cohesion. Through social interaction, everyday material space takes on particular meanings. Through time, public space may come to occupy an important place in the social memory of a society. It may be regarded as part of a society’s cultural heritage. Beyond this, it is a site of politised expression and action. For many people public space rights connote democracy. All the more shocking than that in a stable democracy such as Britain, these rights can be subjugated seemingly at the whim of one local politician. Corralling public space and charging a fee for entry into an everyday city streets serves to privatise and homogenise space if only momentarily. Social diversity is reduced along the lines of social class, ethnicity and age for obvious socio-economic reasons.

What emerges then is the realisation of the complexities inherent in the processes which render public space inclusive or exclusive. Boris Johnson is a politician firmly on the political right. He claims to be a libertarian and in favour of individual freedoms and reduced state interference in everyday life. The Southbank Centre is a multi-million pound quasi public institution with a remit to foster inclusive cultural activity. London’s skateboarders and graffiti artists are mainly young people from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds. Long Live Southbank is a not-for-profit single objective campaign, funded by individual donations giving it only limited resources. Although this particular fight to defend the skateboard park from property development destruction was won in 18 months, the defence of differential space struggle had been ongoing for 40 years since the inception of the skateboard park. It is obvious that the campaign to defend the skateboard park was not just constituted by young skateboarders but by a broad coalition of interests.

Public space should be regarded as a more complex, socially constructed entity than one characterised either by public-private or a freedom-control dichotomies. Space in private ownership can and does exhibit genuine qualities of publicness. Urban space in public ownership can at times be overly controlled to the point of suffocation. I suggest public space should be conceptualised as being constituted by five interrelated attributes shown in figure 1.1. Relationships between the five axes and the extent of publicness of privateness are self-evident. Spaces with characteristics clustered towards the left side of the axes will tend to be what we regard as genuine, inclusive public space. In the case of the London fireworks for example, restricting access, charging a fee and thereby creating a space of exchange value pushed the cordoned off, streets and bridges towards quasi private space. On the other hand, the privately owned land of the skateboard park with its free access, freedom of performance and high use value rendered it quasi public space. All cities are characterised by public space, but the
important point to realise is that such space always exhibits degrees of publicness and
degrees of privateness. This manner of conceptualising public space is of fundamental
for a rounded appreciation of the case study empirical research presented in this book.

Academic, journalistic and professional writing about cities has grown at a dizzying rate
in the last few decades, following predictions in the 1980s that cities were about to
wither away as new technologies create a new breed of dispersed ruralised, modern
connected home worker. On the contrary, cities strengthened their grip on society, both
in extent and intensity. New classifications in urban studies emerged to explain
apparent city transformations. Cities acquired a plethora of prefixes such as: world,
global, ordinary, post-industrial, postmodern, shrinking, imagined, crisis ridden,
rustbelt and creative. Their ambivalence did not diminish either but for academia, the
media and politicians, the dark side of cities, their apparently insoluble problems and of
course the threats to public space dominate literatures and debates. Informed criticism
and recognition of difficulties are of course vital for healthy such societies and for
achieving improvements, including of public spaces.

That said, this book is written against the grain of the slew of negativity and debilitating
pessimism which characterise the majority of the public space debate in the
Anglophone world. It is also written against the grain of approaches to public space
analysis which focus on its physical attributes and their manipulation through
design, while recognising that much good can be achieved through sensitivity in public
space design interventions. The book does not dispute previous research findings per se
but rather seeks to enrich the appreciation of a critical historical period in the evolution
of city post-industrial transformations. And although this book was not conceived as
applied public policy research, it did of necessity require a close, critical engagement
with various urban policy and planning initiatives. Neither does the book seek to
provide micro prescriptions for the improvement of public space, something done over
several decades with considerable élan by the likes of Jan Gehl (2011).

Therefore, this book is concerned centrally therefore with an exploratory investigation
of what Lefebvre calls the production of space. The book was stimulated by a number of
academics and writers. Marshall Berman’s (2006) exuberant, evocative exploration of
New York’s Times Square was particularly inspiring. A key conceptual thread in the
book is the contention that understandings of public space should privilege a nuanced
appreciation of its inherent complexity and the importance of recognising degrees of
publicness and the differing social meanings (Light and Smith 1998). Similarly, the
binary public-private space divide is eschewed here following in particular
(Madanipour 2003; Low and Smith 2006). The approach in this book sits readily within
a more optimistic, but no less critically insightful, strand of the public space debate
epitomised by the work of (Amin and Thrift 2002; Holland et al 2007; Madanipour et al
2013; Tonkiss 2013; Parkinson 2014).

City Profiles: Vancouver, Lowell and Manchester

Although the three cities have been the subject of a variety of comparative urban
research studies case study permutations many times in the recent past, it would
appear this is the first research where they constitute the empirical case study focus.
The rationale for the choice of case study cities is provided in the methodology section.
Here I provide thumbnail profiles of each city, pointing to certain characteristics that will become central to the analysis and discussion. The intention is not to provide detailed histories or city descriptions; there are many easily available texts which achieve that eminently well. It is not the purpose either to document the economic growth and decline of the cities but pointers are provided to appropriate sources. The cities have some obvious differences but several striking similarities and these are explored further in the methodological discussion. They may be regarded as what Hodos (2011) calls second cities, that is, not capital, world, global or megacities. In this respect, they have something in common with the vast majority of cities in the world.

**Vancouver: Townsite, Gas, Alhambra**

Vancouver is the largest city in the Canadian province of British Columbia, located 140 miles (225 km) north of Seattle, Washington. Vancouver nestles at the foot of the North Shore mountain range overlooked by Grouse Mountain and has long been famed for its stunning physical, coastal location with the waters of the Georgia Strait, False Creek and Burrard Inlet endowing it with postcard beauty (figure 1.2). It is the youngest of the three cities, but with a population of about 604,000 in 2011 it is the largest. The city region or Greater Vancouver accommodated 2.4 million inhabitants in 2011. Its location resulted from natural factors such as an abundance of high quality timber, vast fisheries' stocks and sheltered deep water anchorage. It also stemmed from the imperial expansionist ambitions of the late 19th century British government, hence the derivation of the name from the British naval captain George Vancouver (figure 1.3). Rough logging encampments along the Burrard Inlet coast were consolidated into a township after the arrival of an Englishman, ‘Gassy’ Jack Deighton, so called because of his affable, loquacious character. He is said to have stepped ashore in 1867, with his first nation wife and a large barrel of whiskey before persuading thirsty loggers to build him a pub. They did so within one day and the makeshift wooden structure became known as the Globe Saloon. It stood at a crossroads by a large, maple tree which later gave its name to Maple Tree Square. In honour of Gassy Jack’s cultural contribution to early community life, the township was named Gastown in 1867.

Before Jack arrived, in 1858 the Crown Colony of British Columbia, was appended to the British Empire and in 1870 Gastown was surveyed by the colonial government A larger townsite was laid out in the familiar grid pattern of British colonial settlements (see the visual representations of Vancouver space in Macdonald 1992; Hayes 2007). Wide principal streets with narrow alleys running between were a notable feature of the planned layout. In honour of the Earl of Granville, then the British Colonial Secretary, the townsite was renamed Granville Townsite (sometimes called Old Townsite in the 1960s). A small two cell gaol is said to have been erected conveniently close to the Globe Saloon. It was the potential for the creation of a deep water port which resulted in the township being selected as the terminus for the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway in 1884. When the railway arrived in 1886, the Granville Townsite was renamed Vancouver and incorporated as a city (Davis 2011). Ironically, in June of that year, a devastating fire destroyed most of the wooden buildings that constituted the settlement. Such was the economic potential of the area that it was not long before the township was rebuilt, time constructed of brick and stone. On completion of the transcontinental Canadian railway, hundreds of workers of Chinese descent were granted a piece of marshy land by the Canadian Pacific Railway located next to Gastown.
They were soon joined by compatriot workers from other industries and the unemployed. Some of the buildings erected mimicked aspects of Chinese architectural styles and the area, centred on what became Pender Street would later become Chinatown (Kalman and Ward 2012).

Although based firmly on extractive and processing industries, by the 1920s Vancouver's economy diversified into a variety of manufacturing industries, particularly iron and steel and later commerce, including insurance and banking (Mansbridge 2015). Gastown located originally on the Burrard Inlet waterfront, found itself occupying an inland position as stretches of marshy coastline were reclaimed and developed mainly for railway infrastructure. Wholesale and retail merchandising grew in the late 19th century, when gold rush prospectors heading for the Fraser River and Klondike would stop off in Vancouver for provisions. A store was opened at the intersection of Abbott and Cordova Streets in Gastown by Charles Woodward, creating the first Woodward's in 1892. To service the seasonal and itinerant mainly male workforce a plethora of cheap hotels and rooming houses, usually with bars and restaurants on the ground floor sprung up all over Gastown in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. One of these was the Alhambra Hotel, which came to occupy the site of Gassy Jack's pub after it burned down in the Great Fire. Some say this hotel was built on the site of the first gaol. Other notable hotels included the Stanley, New Fountain and the marvellous flat iron Europe Hotel. Vancouver's growth and decline are well documented (see; Nicol 1978; Vormann; 2015 and Hardwick 1974 for the impact on Gastown). Over the decades the commercial centre of Vancouver shifted westwards, so that in the post-WW2 era Gastown occupied a location to the east of downtown and to the west of the economically and socially problematic area of Downtown Eastside.

**Lowell: Espionage, Acre, Pianos**

Lowell is located about 30 miles (48 km) north west of Boston and is the smallest of the three cities, having an estimated population of 109,000 in 2013. The population peaked at 113,000 in 1920, but declined in the 1930s, 50s, 60s and 80s. The city is considered to fall within the Greater Boston area, home to 4,684,000 people in 2013. Lowell has a unique place in US history. In the mid-19th century, it became the country's first and largest planned textile manufacturing centre. It has huge significance as the birthplace of the US industrial revolution. Lowell is named after Francis Cabot Lowell. He was one of a group of wealthy businessmen based in Boston, later dubbed the Boston Associates. In 1810 he embarked on a tour of Britain with his family, ostensibly for health reasons. During the tour, he visited many cotton mills, including those in Manchester (Dublin 1992). This sojourn was prompted not by touristic curiosity but by a desire to garner intelligence about Britain's textile technologies. Plans and designs for textile machinery were closely guarded secrets and their export banned by the British government. Apparently, as a result of his industrial espionage Lowell was able to memorise the configuration of the machinery he observed. On his return to Massachusetts, he and an engineer called Paul Moody were able to manufacture replica machines. The horrendous living and working conditions of the working classes in British industrial cities appalled Lowell, provoking him to consider alternatives. In search of alternatives to the infamous Manchester model, his 1810 visit included a trip to Scotland where he visited a number of planned model industrial settlements. These were factory 'villages' built by philanthropist mill owners, such as Robert Owen at New
Lanark, wishing to create physically and morally healthy environments for their workers. Lowell did not wish to recreate Manchester in Massachusetts although ironically another textile town, Manchester, New Hampshire was founded nearby.

Lowell, like Vancouver owes its existence to water. Not the water of an inlet, but a river. Early in the 19th century the Boston Associates were searching for a suitable location to establish textile factories based on water power and build a town to service their capital investment. They had previously established textile mills along the Charles River in Waltham MA but soon exhausted the water power available there. In 1821 they decided a section of the Merrimack River close to the small farming town of East Chelmsford would be the ideal location. Pronounced rapids at a bend of the river meant the 30 feet drop of water over a relatively short distance would provide ample water power for a huge concentration of textile production capacity. In a sense, the Boston Associates were production of spaced visionaries who imagined an industrial complex and associated town on a grand scale. Earlier in the late 18th century, a waterway called the Pawtucket Canal had been constructed so that river based transport of timber could bypass the dangerous rapids. The company which built the canal was called The Proprietors of Locks and Canals on the Merrimack River (L&C) and it was this company the Boston Associates bought in 1821.

L&C capitalised the construction of the power canals, the first factories, textile machinery and workers’ accommodation and construction started in 1822, the year Lowell was founded officially. Although Francis Cabot Lowell died in 1817 the new town was named in his honour. Shortly after this in 1836 Lowell was incorporated as a city. Lowell’s first chief hydraulic engineer was Englishman, James B Francis who contributed significantly to the emerging science of measuring water power. In recognition of his importance to the Company, in 1832 L&C built a residence for the chief engineer; an elegant mansion located on Worthen Street. In a few short years 11 mill complexes, a huge machine shop factory, housing and civic and commercial buildings sprung up (see the visual representations of space in Dublin 1992; Marion 2014a and the historical postcard collection in Lowell Historical Society 2005).

Eventually, the original power canal system was extended into a network of 5.6 miles (figure 1.4). Quickly too, Lowell was connected to Boston by railway. Huge profits were garnered in the early decades as the capitalist entrepreneurs exploited their US monopoly position.

It was the second chief engineer George W Whistler, who was to give the city its most famous son. James Whistler was born in Lowell in 1834 and became one of the most celebrated painters in US history. His painting style was controversial for his provocative use of colour, particularly black, hence the name of his most famous painting is Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1: Portrait of the Artist’s Mother, more commonly known as Whistler’s Mother. He was born and raised in the chief engineer’s house. Early in the 20th century, the historic importance of the house was recognised by the Lowell Art Association, founded in 1878. It acquired the property in 1908 and converted it into the Whistler House Museum of Art decades before the mill buildings would acquire heritage value. In addition in 1868 one of the world's first city-based institutions dedicated to local history was established – the Lowell Historical Society.
Following the paternalistic ideas of Francis Lowell, for the first few decades of production, all the textile workers were the young daughters of Yankee farmers who quickly became known as Factory Girls or Mill Girls. They were boarded in large company dormitories or boarding houses where strict rules of behaviour and etiquette were imposed, but provision made for the health, education and genteel social development of the girls. For example, the girls attended lectures, plays, exhibitions and eventually published their own literary magazine, the *Lowell Offering*. Lucy Larcom is perhaps the most famous Mill Girl who transcended her labouring status with regular pieces in the *Lowell Offering*, eventually achieving the renown as an accomplished writer. Lowell became a tourist attraction by the mid-19th century with a procession of dignitaries, journalists, writers and politicians all making their way there. They invariably offered high praise, in comparison with the savage criticism levelled at mill towns in Britain, such as Manchester. Charles Dickens was perhaps the most famous visitor. In 1842 after noting the cleanliness of the streets and workers’ dwelling and the health of the Mill Girls, he drew attention to the morally and socially uplifting power of the piano placed in each boarding house. When *he* heard about Lowell’s company boarding houses and pianos Karl Marx was sceptical that any paternalistic good intentions were being lavished on the Mill Girls by the capitalist mill owners (Ryan 1991). In *Capital Volume II* he criticises the boarding house provision for extracting excessive monopoly rent from the Mill Girls and converting necessary accommodation into a commodity. He criticises the pianos as cynical devices to ensure the Mill Girls remained subject to the bourgeois discipline of the factory environs even during their leisure time.

When it came to the supply of labour for building the canals and factories, as in Britain, Irish immigrants provided a ready and cheap source. They were initially allocated one acre of land, named rather prosaically The Acre, to the west of what would become the city centre, where a crude tented settlement grew up, spreading quickly until it became a city district. After the first few decades, the unprecedented profits generated by Lowell’s factories began to decline as other mill towns were established in Massachusetts and elsewhere. Factory bosses reduced costs by cutting workers’ wages, rather than reduce dividends. This tactic led to serious industrial disputes and Mill Girl strikes. In response, over the following decades the mill owners recruited cheaper labour with a variety of national and ethnic identities: French-Canadians, Greeks, Polish, Jews and Portuguese. Over time, they established ethnic neighbourhoods in various parts of the city. Progressively throughout the 20th century Lowell attracted other migrant groups from Africa, South America and the Far East.

Despite the best paternalistic efforts of the Boston Associates, Lowell became known as the Manchester of America. Alas economic success did not last, and there are many accounts of the rise and demise of the place that became known as Spindle City (Eno 1976; Weible 1991; Gittell 1992; Minchin 2013). By the time Jean Louis ‘Jack’ Kerouac, Lowell’s other internationally famous son, was a young man in the 1940s Lowell’s economy was shattered. He was born in 1922 in a French Canadian section of the city. His first novel *The Town and the City* published in 1950 suffered ferocious criticism but was dubbed ‘The Great Lowell Novel” by *Lowell Sun* journalist Charles Sampas. Kerouac wrote the novel while living in the Queens borough of New York and like many in the depressed post-war Lowell economy, felt obliged to leave the city in search of a better life (figure 1.5). Certainly, this predicament was a cruel about face for a city that for a
century attracted thousands of workers from distant lands, themselves seeking their own Nirvana. In addition to the personal decisions of individuals, there is no better testament to the sad degeneration of Lowell and the modernist rejection of its histories than the demolition in the 1960s of the Merrimack Mills complex. Also demolished were the associated boarding houses on Dutton Street, often called the Dutton Street Row Houses (Stanton 2006). It was ironically the first of Lowell’s textile factories to be built, being completed in 1822.

Manchester: Muck, Brass, Culture

Manchester is acknowledged widely as the world’s first modern industrial. From the 18th century industrial production was dominated by textiles, particularly cotton, earning the city the nickname Cottonopolis (Kidd 2006). For a time like Lowell it became a major industrial tourist attraction. The physician William Stukeley in 1725 called it the “largest, most rich, populous and busy village in England” (in Bradshaw 1986: 10). In similar fashion and at about the same time, Daniel Defoe added that Manchester is “one of the greatest, if not really the greatest may village in England” (Ibid: 11). One hundred years later the visitors had anything positive to say about the city. Charles Dickens visited several times and was in no doubt that what he had seen “has disgusted and astonished me the on all measure” (Ibid: 5). Breaking step from the vilifiers, Benjamin Disraeli declared Manchester as great a human exploit as Athens, in his novel Coningsby. Manchester is situated 30 miles (48 km) east of Liverpool and, lies at the foot of the southern slope of a range of hills (the Pennines) as Engels observed famously in his stinging critique, The Condition of the Working Class in England. His meticulous empirical research enabled Karl Marx to formulate his damning analysis of capitalism. Marx and Engels sat together day after day at the same window table in Manchester’s Chetham’s Library, founded in 1653, where they articulated the revolutionary ideas that would emerge as The Communist Manifesto.

Notably, the population peaked in 1931 at 766,300. It declined drastically after WW2 but rose in recent decades, 514,500 being the estimate for 2013. Greater Manchester in 2011 accommodated 2.7 million inhabitants. Manchester is by far the oldest of the three cities. It was founded in 79 AD when a fort was constructed by the Roman military in an area that would later be called Castlefield. They built the fort for defensive reasons on a red sandstone bluff at the confluence of the Rivers Irwell and Medlock. It was located strategically to guard the east-west routes across Roman England. Centuries later canals and railways followed the same routes. Castlefield is located at the south western edge of the city centre and covers an area of about 150 acres (61 hectares). Having once housed 50,000 workers, by the 1980s they had been dispersed leaving the area characterised almost entirely by industry.

The startling growth from the 17th century of Manchester’s population, industry and economy has been told many times (Briggs 1963; Kidd 2006). Manchester from the 1800s was more than just a cotton-based manufacturing town. The “overworked sobriquet Cottonopolis” masked its importance for: coal mining, coal gas production, engineering, chemical industry innovation and technological advances (Kidd 2006: 22). Johnson and Nephew Wire Works Ltd provided the barbed wire which enclosed the American Wild West, bringing an end to the era of the cowboy. The world’s first Rolls Royce car was built in Manchester and one of the first factories for the manufacture of
aircraft by the AVRO Company was located in Manchester. Steam locomotives were sent from Manchester to India, South America, Africa and Australia. This concentration of industry gave Manchester a world wide reputation for dirt and money stimulating the proverb, where there's muck there's brass. The burgeoning industrial metropolis was awesome to flabbergasted visitors prompting Briggs (1963) to declare Manchester the 19th century the shock city of the modern age. It was the industrial epicentre of Empire and the workshop of the world. It was a commercial centre for banking, insurance and commodities trading. It was a nationally significant medical and scientific research centre of the highest quality.

It was also a place of radical Liberal politics. Intense industrialisation and urbanisation created a political ferment in the 19th century, centred on strident demands for social equity and political enfranchisement. Loathing of government import tariff policy led to the development of the 19th century economic laissez faire ideology of the ‘Manchester School’. Public protests and demonstrations were commonplace led by radicals such as Richard Cobden and John Bright and suffragettes such as the Manchester born, Emmeline Pankhurst. This truly Liberal city built the impressive Free Trade Hall in 1856 to commemorate its opposition to oppressive government, specifically the Peterloo massacre of 1819. The hall, located on the edge of Castlefield subsequently became the home of the world's first municipal orchestra, the Hallé.

Watercourses influenced greatly the city’s industrial growth and Castlefield’s post-industrial reimagining. Britain’s first true entirely excavated canal, the Bridgewater, completed in 1765, brought coal from mines at Worsley and terminated at Castlefield. The oddly named Rochdale Canal, completed in 1804, linked Manchester with raw material sources and markets in Yorkshire, it too terminated in Castlefield. The ‘Great Ditch’, the Manchester Ship Canal, opened officially by Queen Victoria in 1894 was crucial for Manchester’s industrial prominence. It never reached Manchester, terminating at ‘Manchester Docks’ which somewhat perversely were located in the neighbouring city of Salford. When the Manchester Ship Canal Company bought the Bridgewater Canal Company in 1887 the cheque for £1,700,000 was the largest ever cashed. The smaller Pomona Dock, named for the trade with the Italian city, was constructed in Manchester on the western extremity of Castlefield.

In similar fashion to Vancouver and Lowell, although for different reasons, an ethnically and religiously diverse population characterises the city. This diversity is due in part to the many vessels that arrived at the docks crewed by sailors from the British Colonies. There in the booming industrial metropolis that many of them settled and raised families. Manchester achieved city status before Vancouver but after Lowell when Queen Victoria used her royal prerogative in 1853. Many of its factories and warehouses exuded exuberant Italianate architectural motifs, symbolic textile palaces (see Parkinson-Bailey 2000; Hylton 2003; Makepeace 2004 for many visual representations of Manchester space). The equally dramatic story of the city’s post-WW2 industrial decline has been the subject of considerable research (Girodano and Twomey 2002).

Manchester is known throughout the world as the home of Coronation Street, (or Corrie as it is popularly known) the world’s first TV soap opera which started in 1960, though it is in ‘Weatherfield’. Strangely, Old Trafford the home of Manchester United the
world's most famous football club is in neighbouring Trafford Borough. Intriguingly, the name Manchester is shrouded in myth and mystery. Whitaker claims with some justification it was also called Mancunium and Mamucium in the Roman Itinerary, meaning breast shaped hill and that both were based on the Celtic name for the Castlefield area, Mancenion (Whitaker 1771: 2-5). Hence the first of the pre-Raphaelite painter, Ford Maddox Brown's murals in the Town Hall is called, *The Romans Building a Fort at Mancenion*: rather than Castlefield or Mancunium - a puzzle to many visitors. It was in Castlefield in 1830 that the world's first locomotive hauled intercity passenger railway terminus opened at Liverpool Road Station: a name that no doubt raises ironic smiles in that rival city 30 miles to the west. This renders the world's first railway station Georgian, a point grasped easily when viewing the elegant frontage (figure 1.6). Sadly, Liverpudlians demolished their historic terminus, Crown Street Station in 1973. All manner of goods and produce moved through the elaborate Castlefield transport interchange including: grain, sugar, wheat, potatoes, timber, chemicals and slate but above all cotton.

Castlefield can appear mystifying times. Certainly the early morning mist which enveloped the area in Roman times would have made it seem so and still does today (figure 1.7). Even the etymology of the name is uncertain and certainly misleading. It is thought by some to be a contraction of Castle-in-the-field. Whitaker (1771: 8-10) does not claim that he coined the name but he does claim there was an Anglo-Saxon castle on the site. Although Whitaker was a dedicated, knowledgeable scholar, he was at times fanciful and idiosyncratic in his assertions and his castle claim is rejected firmly by today's scholars (Nevell 2008: 17). Nevertheless the evocative name remains. Four behemoth viaducts were built in the 19th century and came to dominate Castlefield, becoming blackened with coal soot; appearing threatening before being perceived in the 1980s as attractive and historically important (figure 1.8). Britain's first canal warehouse straddling the Bridgewater Canal, with its iconic barge holes was demolished in 1960. Later what remained became objects of heritage adoration.

**Lefebvre's Spatial Triad: Explication and Interpretation**

Lefebvre saw urban space, often regarded as empty and geometric, as replete with social meaning and power relationships which he conceptualised in a spatial triad. Urban space is understood as both outcome and process. Although a neo-Marxist, Lefebvre departed company with Karl Marx regarding the significance of urban space. Lefebvre stressed the importance of urban space and its production for the maintenance of state regulated and implicated, neo-capitalist society, whereas Marx of course stressed the importance of capital accumulation and dialectical struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie supported by a complicit state. For Lefebvre (1991) although class politics is important, the focus is on the relative power of those who create official representations of space and who deploy them to produce and re-produce the built environment of public space. A defining feature of Lefebvre’s theories is the importance of power relationships and the linkages between the private sector and the state, for the reproduction of neo-capitalist society. David Harvey first brought Lefebvre's urban ideas to the attention of the Anglophone world in his 1973 book *Social Justice and the City*. 
It is evident that Lefebvre’s often repetitive and at times convoluted presentation of his spatial triad concept in his book *The Production of Space*, was interpreted by what might be called a first wave of urban theorists who engaged stoically with the ideas in the original French (Harvey 1973; Gottdiener 1985; Harvey 1989b; Soja 1989). While they had their own particular interpretations, first wave theorists tended not to use the production of space as a framework for empirical research. However, second wave urban researchers did use Lefebvre ideas as a springboard for empirical research, notably Allen and Pryke (1994), Fyfe (1996), McCann (1999) and Borden (2001). A third wave of writers tends to take a more intensely biographical approach (Elden 2004; Merrifield 2006 and latterly Stanek 2011). Although there are differences in emphasis, commentators tend to agree that the triad relates to material, represented and lived space, that is, perceived, conceived and imagined space. It is easy to see though how confusion can arise since Lefebvre refers to at least 50 different kinds of space and favours at times a desultory literary style. None of the above (apart from Borden) engages much, if at all with Lefebvre claims regarding the importance of differential space, for them the spatial triad takes precedence.

Although Lefebvre’s stimulating spatial ideas are at times complex and contradictory, there appears to be only one dismissive critique, Unwin’s (2000) well argued, if somewhat polemical challenge that Lefebvre’s ideas are a waste of space. Unwin is particularly scathing regarding the implications “for our empirical research practice”, finding little methodological or empirical merit in Lefebvre’s work (Ibid: 23). Others disagree in ways elaborated below. Lefebvre is one of the few great 20th century urban philosophers to engage directly with town planning and what we now call urban regeneration albeit that he was rarely complementary. Lefebvre’s production of space ideas remain highly relevant for the investigation of city transformation in general and issues of urban social justice in particular (Soja 2010; Harvey 2012). The utility of Lefebvre’s ideas for urban planning practice and research has been observed recently in mainstream planning literatures (see Pløger 2006; Healey 2007; Fincher and Iveson 2008; Metzger 2011). Although it should be said that the urban theory and urban planning worlds more generally have been perplexingly reluctant to give Lefebvre the theoretical attention his ground breaking insights deserve; evidenced by his absence from (Fainstein and Campbell 2011a and 2011b respectively). In applying a Lefebvrian theoretical framework to a historicised production of space investigation, the book seeks to avoid the danger of producing a caricature of those events which treats history as a form of political propaganda in a larger struggle. The spatial triad does have an intuitive simplicity and my approach sees its elements as follows:

- **spatial practice** has three major elements: 1) the physical, material city and its routine maintenance; 2) major urban redevelopment in the context of existing neo-capitalist and state power structures; 3) routines of daily life that conform with official representations of space. It is space directly perceptible through the senses - perceived space.

- **representations of space**: rational, intellectualised, official conceptions of urban areas for analytical, administrative and property development purposes. They are produced by technocrats: architects, engineers, urbanists and planners but also artists with a scientific bent. They are the dominant representations and may be in the form of the written word, for example in city-wide zoning plans
and strategy documents, or quasi-scientific visual representations of various kinds such as maps, master plans and design guides - conceived space.

- **spaces of representation**: has two major elements: 1) urban everyday space as directly lived by inhabitants and users in ways informed not so much by representations of space as by associated cultural memories, images and symbols imbued with cultural meaning; 2) emotional, artistic interpretations of city space by poets, writers and painters and others who create artistic representations of urban space. This kind of space overlays physical space and values places in ways that run counter to the dominant representations of space - imaginative and lived space.

Surprisingly perhaps, the term spaces of representation does not appear in Lefebvre (1991). Nicholson-Smith translated ‘les spaces de représentation’ as ‘representational spaces’. The term spaces of representation first appeared in Frank Bryant's 1976 translation of Lefebvre’s *The Survival of Capitalism* (Borden et al 2001: 25) and is regarded as preferable because the original translation makes the triad “more difficult to comprehend” (Shields 1999: 161). In addition to the triad, two other Lefebvrian spatial concepts are important for this book, they are:

- **abstract space**: the urban spaces of state regulated neo-capital characterised by their commodified exchange value and their tendency to homogenisation (Lefebvre 1991: 49-53)

- **differential space**: privileges inclusiveness and use value rather than the exchange value of abstract space. It is often transitory space which can arise from the inherent vulnerabilities of abstract space.

For Lefebvre the production of a new space can never be brought about by any one particular social group and must necessarily result from coalitions based on relationships between diverse groups which may include: ‘reactionaries’, 'liberals', ‘democrats' and ‘radicals’ (Ibid: 380-1). It should be no surprise therefore when space-related issues spur collaboration between quite different kinds of interests and actors. The empirical research presented below certainly points to the importance of a variety of coalitions that were vital for the production of urban space in the case study cities.

Lefebvre developed his ideas about abstract space while carrying out empirical research in the 1950s and 60s related to the new town of Mourenx in the South of France. It was built to accommodate workers in an industrial complex built close to the site of natural gas deposits. Space was homogenised here in various ways: land uses, such as residential, leisure and commercial were segregated, housing and streets were uniform regimented and bland and the population lacked diversity. Public space was homogenised also because according to Lefebvre it lacked animation through the performance of social relations in public (Lefebvre 1995). Life in Mourenx was boring in many ways, but particularly because the inhabitants seemed to lack the will to self-organise and resist, at least initially, the harm being done to them sociologically and psychologically by the new town (Stanek 2011: 106-119). Lefebvre was hostile to the state-led urbanism which brought Mourenx into being through the collaboration of productive enterprises, the financial sector, big monopolist companies and the state
Exploring how to Explore the Production of Urban Space

Several scholars in the urban studies and urban planning fields have recently employed a second wave Lefebvrian approach to empirical research, most notably (Hubbard et al 2003; Degen 2008; Carp 2009; Lehtovuori 2010; Buser 2012) but there is no consensus about the best approach and methods for researching the production of urban space. Certainly, Lefebvre (1991) does not provide an explicit research toolkit. However, he does leave several significant ontological, epistemological and practical clues that steer the empirical researcher in certain fruitful directions. Merrifield (1993: 522) thinks that Lefebvre's framework provides a flexible device which can illuminate the nature of space and its relations with a broader social whole. Taking the history of representations of space seriously was for Lefebvre paramount as the opening quotation of this book demonstrates. Soja sees in Lefebvre the potential for a method based on “trialectics” that stresses the interweaving of the three spatial elements (1996: 10) and the history of representations (Ibid: 164-5) and the history of representations (Ibid: 164-5). He also employed a Lefebvrian approach to the study of urban social justice (Soja 2010). Kofman and Lebas (1996: 8-10) argue that being Lefebvrian “is more a sensibility, rather than a closed system” and that many have found his theoretical insights difficult to apply due to the fluidity and openness of his thought. They are still able though to deduce a Lefebvrian approach to production of space research based on observation, investigation of concrete reality and historical analyses.

Borden (2001: 11-12) is the most explicit in divining in Lefebvre (1991) guidance for empirical research and postulates eight “clues” which although useful are more conceptual than concrete. He is quick to point out that these do not constitute a patented system but are an approximation of a method which nevertheless keeps the researcher on the right track. In formulating his research clues Borden seems inspired by Lefebvre’s claim that:  

The theoretical conception we are trying to work out in no way aspires to the status of a completed ‘totality’, and even less to that of a ‘system’ or ‘synthesis’. It implies discrimination between ‘factors’, elements or moments. To reiterate a fundamental theoretical and methodological principle, this approach aims both to reconnect elements that have been separated and to replace confusion by clear distinctions; to rejoin the severed and reanalyse the commingled. (Lefebvre 1991: 413)

These precepts inter alia proved effective in guiding the empirical research outlined in this book. Since this research is exploratory; rather than defining a rigid research design at the outset the approach and methods evolved through a process akin to grounded theory (Bryant and Charmaz 2010). That said; the research process was framed within two theoretical parameters which shaped the production of knowledge, firstly the spatial triad of Henri Lefebvre and secondly an approach to ontological, epistemological and methodological issues influenced by the precepts of constructionism and interpretism (Bryman 2012). Rather than being conceived in a single moment of inspiration, the international case study comparison evolved over a number of years.

Research Approach: Mixing and Networks
With typical acerbic humour Mark Twain seemed to relish an anti-reflexive research approach, advising Rudyard Kipling, “Get your facts first” and then “you can distort ‘em as much as you please.” (in Brooks 1969: 83). Getting the facts though can be epistemologically treacherous and Wacquant provides a useful interpretation of Pierre Bourdieu’s take on reflexivity focused on his plea for an epistemologically grounded reflexivity has certainly inflected the research underpinning this book. Bourdieu stressed that research reflexivity is not meant to encourage egocentricity but entreats researchers to be self-aware (Wacquant 1992: 46). Being born and raised in Manchester affected my position as researcher became it evident that I was a partial insider (Lyser 2001): partial because I have not lived or worked there for 30 years. Insider status results from my Mancunian identity, my identifiable Manchester accent and knowledge of the city, its people and places. Partial insider status extends also to the subject matter and some of the institutions in the research field. I worked in local government town planning for five years and am familiar with its bureaucratic structures and jargon. My Nigerian-British identity could have rendered me an outsider in the predominantly White worlds of local government (outside London), heritage conservation and archives but in face-to-face encounters I never felt this, quite the reverse. Additionally, I felt at home in these three multicultural cities.

Case study researchers are usually advised to choose cases rigorously based on objective selection criteria Yin (2013) but as Healey (2007: 291) argues, the selection is often based on the requirements for research validity and pragmatism. In thinking about how to extend the research after Manchester, Lowell was an obvious choice. Both cities were the first and for a while the paramount factory-based manufacturing centres in their respective countries. Both had significant textile industries. In both cities canals were important. Both cities had celebrity status, becoming tourist attractions, with condemnation and adulation peaking in the late 19th century. Over the decades they provoked continual comparison, with Manchester often being portrayed in an exceedingly bad light:

Celebrities, politicians, and foreign princes came to survey the Camelot for themselves. Lowell had to be everything that Manchester, England, that septic tank of child enslavement was not. (Yafa 2005: 99)

And while Manchester does not owe its raison d’être to industry, it was industry that brought it fabulous, though hideously unevenly distributed, wealth and worldwide fame, spiced with more than a touch of notoriety. There are obvious differences apart from the evident socio-economic and political dissimilarities. Lowell was laid out and planned from the start as a modern industrial city. Manchester grew haphazardly over the course of 2000 years. This had important implications for urban public space. In Lowell this was provided reasonably generously in the 19th century, whereas in Manchester it was not.

If Manchester and Lowell seem and obvious research couple, Vancouver which never endured the opprobrium heaped on the two industrial behemoths, appears to be out of a completely different mould and in some ways it is. I contend this strengthens the methodological approach, since any similarities in research findings serve to boost the applicability of the theoretical framework. It was a visit to Vancouver in 2010 which first triggered the idea that it might make an appropriate third case study. Physically, Gastown has several similarities with Lowell in urban form and the three case study
areas all have a variety of historic and other types of heritage legacies. It is often not appreciated looking at Vancouver today that its *raison d’être* was industry - it was an important industrial city until WW2. Industry remains an important employer. Water was fundamental to the industrial development of the city, hence Gastown's premier street, Water Street, used to be on the waterfront. Initial secondary research revealed quickly other similarities. Heritage revalorisation appeared to have stimulated a post-industrial reimagining of the three cities. This seemed to be facilitated by two other factors in common. In each city historic preservation interests appeared to play a key role in the production of space, as did various partnerships between levels of government and between the public and private sectors. Each city benefited from the designation of a historic protection zone in the case study areas. Notably, each city suffered the threat of and actual significant demolition of historic buildings, in the early part of the historical period with which the research is concerned. Ethnically and culturally the three cities are and have been places of diversity for over 100 years. Each city for significant periods since the 1970s was governed locally by centre-left political regimes.

There are important differences of course. Vancouver, in the 1960s, unlike the other two cities was governed by an extremely conservative centre-right political party. Manchester and Vancouver are really city regions that draw on a catchment of several million inhabitants. They both have major international airports. Partly because of this they have been able to attract visitors from all over the world to significant sporting and other cultural events, such as the Commonwealth and Olympic Games. Vancouver and Manchester are significant regional centres of commerce, insurance and banking and their downtown or city centre areas survived the out-of-town shopping, commercial and leisure threat, resulting in abundant and pulsating nightlife. There is no need to labour the differences tediously here, they will emerge and their significance become apparent in the dénouement of the empirical analysis.

In following clues and piecing together fragments of spatial production, I was reminded of the words of Detective Lester Freamon, a character in the popular TV police drama *The Wire* (Series One), "We’re building something here, Detective. We’re building it from scratch. All the pieces matter." Just as there are no agreed methods for researching the production of space, there is no ready made production of space archive waiting to be mined for revelatory data. Piecing together archival sources through the creation of what are called archival networks (Prior 2008) was a crucial element of the research strategy. Rather than simply being conceptualised as inanimate physical depositories, archival networks are seen as something more diffuse and animated: spaces of social memory (Ketelaar 2008). The networks therefore include archival data but also bundles of interactions between the academic literatures, the data, the archivists, interviewees’ transcripts (where historical events are narrated) and of course researcher archival interrogations and interpretations (Craven 2008). A purposive sampling approach was used to identify potentially relevant archives and appropriate interviewees on the basis of the substantive insights they might provide into the production of space. In the course of the research: 13 physical archival depositories were interrogated, 17 interviews were carried out of which four were by telephone, five significant email exchanges took place. In addition many online archives were accessed. In the list of sources at the back of the book an abbreviation identifies the relevant archive.
In the case of some of the interviewees there were potential dangers of requiring people to recall events from several decades ago. In practice their memories proved remarkably accurate and lucid, probably in part because are all still active in the field. However, a recognised strength of the mixed method approach is that it allows for corroboration of factual detail, a point made by Bryman (2012) and of course Denzin (1970). In addition oral history is accepted as a legitimate historical research approach. The archival research and interviews were carried out between 2007 and 2014. The archival data amassed are mostly from official institutional files and consist of a variety of types: official memoranda, official and unofficial minutes, formal and informal letters, public and private sector reports, briefing notes, hand written notes, policy documents, drawings, photographs, maps, architectural plans, leaflets, pamphlets, newspaper cuttings, flyers and other publicity materials. Some of these documents were marked ‘confidential’. All relevant archival documents and images were photographed digitally. Several thousand jpeg files were created to form a substantial archival dataset.

In the field of historical analysis Samuel notes that photographs cannot be treated as “transparent reflections of fact” (1996: 329). Hall (1997) reminds us too that photographs and other texts are representations on which we choose to impose meaning. And with this in mind photographs are regarded here as representations that always need to be interpreted. Lefebvre’s warning, that space “made to be read” rather than lived, that is, the photograph which gives the impression of transparent reality is a “trompe l’oeil” – is apposite here (1991: 143, emphasis in original). He also warns (pp75-76) that the surface appearance of public space, that which can be seen and photographed, is a trap which hides its complex production. That said my own photographs are presented here mainly for illustrative purposes rather than as analytical tools, they were all taken between 2006 and 2014. The intention is to use these images to communicate the feel of the case study areas, or provide what Latham (2003) calls texture. In carrying out the empirical research, the ontological acceptance of urban public space as a complex amalgam of the visual, sensory, physical and social was a fundamental guiding light.

**Structure of the Book**

The following six empirical research chapters consist of three pairs focused on production of space historicised investigations for each of the case study cities. For each city what is called the dominant academic narrative is outlined and used as a point of departure for the ensuing research. All six chapters reveal elided histories which, rather than overthrow entirely the dominant academic narratives, served to enrich our understandings of the production of space at the practical and theoretical levels. Each chapter provides empirical evidence to support the argument that the production and enhancement of urban public space is integral to the reimagining and post-industrial transformation of the city. Through careful original research, new knowledge is constructed on several levels, including the roles played in the unfolding production of space dramas by characters absent from the dominant narratives.

Chapter two provides brief historical context for Gastown explaining how the threat of demolition, galvanised historic preservation society interests into initiating the Gastown heritage revalorisation project, through the accretion of a spatial coalition of diverse interests. The chapter documents empirically how understandings and
representations of Gastown shifted in the late 1960s and early 70s from those infused with a modernist planning ideology of demolition and clean sweep redevelopment, to heritage inspired representations and post-industrial reimagining. A key beautification and revitalisation report produced and funded by a coalition of interests is shown to stimulate Vancouver's nascent liveability agenda, identifying specific locations for the production of new and enhanced public space. Chapter three presents empirically informed analyses of a number of production of urban public space projects initiated first as counter-projects and counter-spaces by a variety of community and historic preservation society interests. It demonstrates further that, Vancouver city council (VCC) proved receptive to the counter-projects and provided an overarching strategic spatial framework within which the projects on the ground were devised and implemented. This chapter also introduces the importance of the social animation of public space, whether it be through politicised collective action or ludic enjoyment. Changing representations of space through time are shown to have implications for spatial practice on the ground, based on differences in the way social behaviour in public space is understood and interpreted.

Chapter four shifts the geographical focus to downtown Lowell, Massachusetts, explaining the significance of the transformation of federal and local urban policy imperatives from that of demolition based urban renewal to heritage preservation, sensitivity to history and the valorisation of ethnic diversity. Reproducing the approach of the previous chapter, a number of public space interventions, initially emerging as counter-projects, conceived and delivered by a range of different spatial coalitions are analysed. The chapter also seeks to revisit the significance of LCC’s (LCC) contribution to the heritage led reimagining of urban space in the city. Having been elided in the dominant academic literature of Lowell’s heritage-led revival, the importance of the Lowell Heritage State Park for the establishment of the Lowell National Historical Park (LNHP) is explained. In Chapter five new research perspectives on the creation of LNHP are established, through the device of a truncated discourse analysis of a presidential statement in 1978. The chapter foregrounds contests over the naming of urban space and pinpoints relevant implications for the production of post-industrial Lowell. A range of alternative actors and agencies outside of the dominant narrative emerge in the empirical research which aims to describe and explain a number of major public space projects found once again to be conceived and delivered by a diverse coalition of interests. Another concept privileged in this chapter is that of indeterminate public space, which I argue encompasses the potential for the production of differential space.

Chapter six documents the emergence of the Liverpool Road Railway Station counter-project in Castelfield, Manchester and the alternative representations of urban space promulgated by historic preservation societies which underpinned it. Evidence is presented of the contested nature of historic space within the public sector and the movement of the counter-project into the policy mainstream is specified. Several unlikely and surprising coalitions of interests, which struggled to assert the revalorisation of historic industrial urban space, are uncovered through archival and interview research. Castelfield’s emergence from relative obscurity is illuminated using a variety of original data sources. In similar fashion to the previous two chapters, urban space in Castelfield is revealed to contradict any simplified public-private binary divide. Chapter seven takes a fresh look, through a Lefebvrian spatial lens, at the intervention in Castelfield of the Central Manchester Development Corporation (CMDC). The chapter
reveals for the first time the struggle within government to establish the urban development corporations based as they were on a radical, neoliberal infused reading of urban problems and appropriate governance structures. Intertextuality emerges as a key concept for understanding how official representations of space were influenced by the decade long spatial struggles of the historic preservation societies described in the preceding chapter. Conceptualisations of public space are exposed as vital for the strategic plans of CMDC, particularly the creation of new bridges and linear and civic public spaces. These spaces and a strong civic ethos are shown to be decisive for creating potentials for the production of differential space.

The last of the six case study research chapters constitutes the empirical and theoretical culmination of the book in two important ways. Firstly, chapter eight attempts to construct a meaningful association between differential space and the right to the city. In so doing it seeks to both flesh out Lefebvre’s sketchy differential space idea and contextualise it in the contingencies of the 21st century. Secondly, it is the visual culmination of the book delivered through a series of images which add an analytical twist to the explication of differential space. This chapter differs from the previous six in that research material from all three case study cities is presented in order to demonstrate the divergent origins and kinds of differential space, from ludic to politicised-democratic, that may be produced through similar processes involving civic society engagement, urban policy, planning and regeneration. The chapter explains how understandings of differential space must be embedded within the historical moments in which it is produced. Chapter nine allows space for empirical and theoretical reflection on the key findings of the research. Important similarities and differences in the case study empirical revelations are emphasised. Methodological conclusions allow the assessment of a Lefebvrian approach to understanding the creation of public space and city post-industrial transformation. In concluding the book returns to the importance of urban public space for convivial urbanity and for democratic cohesion in relatively open and tolerant societies. Differential space is seen and comprehended in a new light.
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