Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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Acknowledgements

Over the course of the past five years I have often thought about writing this section, an expression of thanks to the many people who have helped me achieve what is undoubtedly the greatest achievement of my life. Throughout all the fear and anxiety that has, at times, threatened to de-rail my academic journey, there have been a number of people who have provided me with the direction, inspiration and belief required to conquer this seemingly insurmountable task.

To start, I must thank my primary supervisor, Professor Stephen Tomsen. Throughout the last five years you have gone beyond the call of duty in providing me with much needed direction and support. Without your constant presence, I have no doubt I would not be writing these acknowledgements. You have introduced me to the world of academia and provided me with invaluable professional experience that will hopefully contribute to a long and prosperous career. Thanks must also go to my secondary supervisors, Professor David Rowe and Dr Michael Salter for their ongoing support and contributions towards this thesis. Your critique and comment have been a significant factor in lifting this thesis to the level required for completion. Thanks also to Professor Deborah Stevenson for agreeing to take me on board with the City After Dark project and the staff at the Institute for Culture and Society and the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at UWS for their support and provision over the past five years.

On a personal level there is a long list of people who have kept me sane and focused throughout this experience: to my parents, Rhonda and Kevin Wadds, I simply would not be here today without your encouragement, guidance, love and support. Words cannot adequately convey how much everything you have done has meant to me, not only over the past five years, but throughout my entire life. The debt I owe you will take a lifetime to repay...I know it can’t have been easy, but I hope that this achievement has made you proud.

To my brothers, Simon and Nathan, and their families, Prudence, Lucas, Hamish and Kate, you have been such a steadying force in my life. Spending time with you and watching your...
families grow has been a joy and privilege and a welcome relief from the frequent stresses of my research, so thank you. Love you guys.

To my extended family: Nan, Matt, Scott; Uncle Peter and Aunty Elizabeth, Andrew and Kat; Aunty Lyn and Tash- thank you for your constant interest and support. To Aunty Diane- your excitement, support and encouragement has meant the world and your guidance and words of wisdom have helped me along my academic journey, so thank you.

To a long list of friends and colleagues: Ant and Nat; Keith and Rach (and Chloe); Aaron, Aurellie and the whole Wood Clan, particularly Brian and Kris; Bryn, my loyal fieldwork companion- thanks mate, it was an experience; Stevey; Kizza; Amber and Dan; Alex, Matty and the Galilee crew; Peter Miller, Amy Pennay, Nic Droste and all the POINTED and ACED staff; the Mighty Congo’s; and all those who participated in my research, either by doing interviews or accompanying me on the many nights out across Sydney. You have all played a huge role in my life and your friendships mean the world to me. Thanks for putting up and standing by me throughout this tumultuous period...I think it’s time for a new ping-pong table.

To my second family: Jeff, Margaret, Dave and Josh Smith, you have been as much of a part of this process as anyone. I cannot thank you enough for your love, support and friendship (and hot meals!). I feel as though I am part of the furniture now and it has been great to have a refuge from the stresses of this period. Thank you so much!

Finally, I have saved the biggest thanks to last. To Shell, I must have re-written this section fifteen times trying to find the right words to thank you for all that you have done for me over the past (almost) seven years. Again, and it is cliché to say, but words cannot express my gratitude to you for your love and support. You have been the steadying influence in my life that has brought me to this point. Without you by my side, I don’t think I would have made it through year one. You have inspired me with your words and actions and kept me on track when I have felt like it was impossible. I owe you so much for your constancy, love and selflessness. I fully plan on spending the rest of my life repaying all that you have given me.

If I have missed anyone, I am truly sorry.
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Abstract

Since colonial times, night-time leisure and drinking have been major and contradictory sources of official and legal concern in Sydney. This thesis focuses on the historical and social conditions, cultural meanings and regulatory controls that have shaped both public and private forms of policing in Sydney’s night-time economy (NTE). In so doing, it reflects more broadly on changes in the nature of contemporary ‘policing’ and how aspects of neoliberalism and the ideal of the ‘24-hour city’ have shaped policing, security and night-time leisure. This research also analyses the effectiveness of policies and regulations governing policing and private security in the NTE in the context of media, political and public debates about regulation, and the gendered and highly masculine aspects of much of this work.

The primary empirical basis of this thesis is a study of nightlife comprising observational fieldwork and in-depth semi-structured interviews. This research focuses on four specific active nightlife sites in Sydney in order to provide detailed observations of nightlife and was conducted between 2008 and 2013. Interviews with a range of key informants give insights regarding the occupational cultures and the collective outlooks and concerns of both the policing and private security sectors. These interviews are dedicated to advancing a deeper understanding of subjective aspects and understandings of safety, security and regulation in the NTE. This thesis also considers data from historical accounts of early New South Wales (NSW), policy debates, media accounts, and officially sourced quantitative evidence.

Throughout this thesis inner Sydney after dark is presented as a place of both real and imagined risk, a ‘frontier’ (Melbin 1978) where apparent freedom and transgression are closely linked, and where regulation of leisure and collective drinking has been diffused throughout an expanding network of state and private actors. Here, Sydney’s contemporary NTE is understood as the product of an intersection of both local and global transformations, as policing comes to incorporate more and more ‘private’ personnel empowered to regulate ‘public’ drinking and nightlife. There are obvious contradictions in ‘policing’ an expanded NTE that is often linked to social disorder, but
which also provides a significant source of income for the state economy and private sector interests.

Government and political ambivalence regarding the role and value of alcohol and associated leisure is reflected in the development and adoption of strategies regarding the policing and regulation of nightlife. The frequent influence of the media has made the application of stable regulation more difficult, and it has also limited policing strategy. In this occupational domain, the role of both public and private policing bodies is ambiguous and in constant flux.

Whereas private security meet some concerns regarding the disorder associated with a profitable NTE, a perceived lack of regulation and control of the industry can set off public alarm. At the same time, public police do not have the capacity to monitor all nightlife space and placate concern and fear of after-dark violence and incivility. Hence, NSW Police have resorted to a focus on high-visibility, ‘problem-oriented’ strategies, that may alienate nightlife revellers and other members of the local community rather than increase public confidence in their ability to effectively regulate problematic behaviour.

There is also an underlying tension between the expression of traditional occupational masculinity among police and private security and the erosion of these identities by reform and regulation in Sydney’s NTE. Nightlife policing and ‘doorwork’ are highly gendered and frequently shaped by the desire to project positive masculine imagery in group and public settings. Despite the shared experience of work shaped by the expansion and contradictions of the NTE, the relationship between public police and private security is left wanting in addressing disorder. This frequently dysfunctional relationship remains as a major challenge to the effective governance of the city after dark.
Chapter One: Introduction

**Introduction**

*Kings Cross- 24/1/09: 11.30pm*

Atop the escalator is your first glimpse of the neon highway that is Darlinghurst Road, the main artery of the notorious Kings Cross entertainment precinct. Two large billboards at the exit to the train station warn night-goers of the potential harms associated with binge drinking and drug consumption, a sentiment almost entirely lost on a crowd of consumers converging on the most popular site of mass intoxication Sydney has to offer...

...It’s 4am. Throngs of inebriated revellers litter the gutters of Darlinghurst Road, their faces portraying a mix of confusion, exhaustion and discomfort. It’s been a long night, and for all the wrong reasons. I have just finished being interrogated by police officers after a female patron at the bar I was drinking at was king-hit by a bouncer the size of a small car. The ensuing melee between the now hospitalised female patron’s male friends and venue security didn’t last long before Kings Cross police officers intervened, but what it lacked in length it made up for in ferocity. As an eye-witness to the whole affair you would think the police would be interested in my account of the incident; instead I was met with contempt by a series of officers who considered me just another drunken lout (excerpt from field notes).

As the above fieldwork excerpts suggest, Sydney’s city after dark is a site of intense conflict and tension. In this urban space, there is a contradiction between hedonistic consumerism and state regulation that frequently results in clashes between revellers and both police and security staff. The situation in Sydney’s night time economy (NTE) is a mirror of a global urban problem (see Hobbs *et al* 2003; Roberts *et al* 2006; Winlow and Hall 2006; Rigakos 2008). Indeed, much has been written about the transgressive,
violent and disorderly nature of nightlife and the licensed environment in the post-industrial city (Shepherd and Brickley 1996; Tomsen 1997; Presdee 2000; Chatterton 2002; Monaghan 2002; Hobbs et al 2003; 2005a; 2005b; Measham and Brain 2005; Jayne et al 2006; Hayward and Hobbs 2007; Eldridge and Roberts 2008). Illicit drug consumption, binge-drinking, interpersonal violence and social disorder feature frequently in nightlife hotspots and often shape public perceptions of safety and security in the city after dark. The politicisation of law and order has ensured that these crimes have become issues of increasing electoral significance in contemporary New South Wales (NSW). Accordingly, the news media are often engaged in political agenda setting while also acting as a facility through which politicians focus public attention towards matters of political (electoral) significance and promote the efficacy of party policies (McCombs and Shaw 1972; Page, Shapiro and Dempsey 1987; Jewkes 2004; Greer 2007a; Graber 2011). This thesis will demonstrate that concern about nightlife seems close to the form of a ‘moral panic’ (Cohen 1972) where distorted and negative impressions replicate and lead simple ‘commonsense’ discussions of nightlife, safety and security.

It will also be argued that police officers and an increasing number of private security staff combine to form a largely dysfunctional policing alliance in these sites of night leisure. Here, public ambivalence about the role of doorstaff in nightlife settings is tempered by the acknowledgement that public policing organisations do not have the resources or operational capacity to provide an adequate and sustained presence in the NTE. Accordingly, public police are increasingly dedicated to “image work” (Mawby 2002), a strategy that seeks to placate community anxieties through large scale and highly publicised ‘blitzes’. Unfortunately, these operations are largely symbolic and fail to provide adequate long-term solutions to issues of safety and security in nightlife spaces. It is this relationship between the two prominent policing “segments” (see Bucher and Strauss 1961; Reich et al 1973; Hudson 2007) in Sydney’s city after dark that will be the focus of this thesis.
Nightlife, Transgression and Security

Nightlife has always been associated with danger, risk and concerns for personal safety. The absence of light and the recession of normative rhythms of day-time social activity has meant that night-time has often had ascribed to it an atmosphere of transgression, a “frontier” (Melbin 1978; 1987) occupied by questionable characters engaged in disreputable activities. However, the role and structure of nightlife in the post-industrial city has been fundamentally altered by the technological, socio-political and economic forces associated with the advent and decline of industrial production. These changes have transformed not only the context of social interaction and leisure in modern times, but also the nature of the state’s role in key service provision and governance (Jessop 1997; 2002). This thesis will be focussing in particular on transformations in the nature of contemporary policing at night.

Historically, routines of behaviour after dark were severely restricted by the absence of light (Melbin 1978; 1987). However, technological developments in mass-produced public lighting at the beginning of the 19th century led to a reimagining of the city and an expansion of possibilities. Hours that were previously inaccessible to industrial production were made available by the development of lighting technology, greatly increasing the utility of the night. Melbin (1978: 14-15) stressed this point when he stated:

*Night’s riches [was] time itself. This form of natural wealth lured entrepreneurs to exploit the region for the profit opportunities it offered, and much of the dark’s organized activity was evoked because of access to more time...It is like an additive to the engine of production. As entrepreneurs were earlier drawn to newly accessible wealth in the land, they were now attracted to the promise of fortunes in the night.*
With the advent of lighting technology, night-time could feasibly be viewed as a promising if undeveloped resource or even a new economic ‘frontier’ that was ripe for exploitation by industrialism and capitalism. The economic potential of industrial capitalism was expanded upon during the early 19th century through extended operating hours of factories, wharfs, packing and storehouses, leading to the evolution of multiple work “shifts” (Melbin 1978).

These developments further fuelled the industrial revolution in many nations and fundamentally altered the condition of cities at night throughout the developed world. Stable and efficient lighting enabled greater production, which in turn increased demand for working populations in rapidly expanding cities. As time progressed, lighting also made the night available as a setting for leisure and consumption, a process that would transform the landscape of the city after dark. Most importantly, the extension of permanent “red light”, heavy drinking and vice-prone entertainment districts with a veiling semi-darkness extended this old link between morally unconstrained leisure and the urban night (Mackey 1987; Hubbard 1998b). Expanded issues of public safety, security, criminal leisure and police corruption followed on from these changes. In the 19th and 20th century these concerns were most dramatically signalled by the mixed anxiety and allure of “sin cities” such as Paris, New York, and pre-war Berlin and Shanghai, with a flourishing “immoral” night-time sphere (De Leeuw 1934; 1943). These problems of urban night leisure, security and policing have again resurfaced in a new historical phase in urban development at the tail-end of industrial capitalism.

In the last two decades, with many nations restructuring as post-industrial societies, there has again been a re-imagining of the night based on economic and socio-political reform. With the decline of heavy industry, many states have focused on the potential of expanded market and leisure consumption as a means of driving economic growth and social change (Lovatt and O’Connor 1995; Zukin 1991; 1995; Hannigan 1998; Hobbs et al 2003). Central to these transformations has been the emergence of neoliberal discourse and the construction of what is now known as the ‘NTE’. These processes have
shaped the planning, imaging and form of cities such as London, Manchester, Newcastle and Dublin that all make claim to a ‘global’ cosmopolitan or culturally significant status. Sydney is the Australian city where this title has been most fervently pursued.

The NTE refers to the range of leisure activities and experiences associated with collective night-time sociability and entertainment (Bianchini 1994; Lovatt and O’Connor 1995; Hannigan 1998; Hobbs et al 2003; Rowe et al 2008). The construction of the city at night as a ‘night-time economy’ emerged in Western Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s against the backdrop of an emerging neoliberal discourse that was driven by the advance of market logic. This was a time when many cities in developed economies were suffering from the decline of heavy industry (Lovatt and O’Connor 1995; Hobbs et al 2003). Without industrial production many city spaces were left derelict and, subsequently, provided little economic utility to local state and national governments. A new and innovative approach was required to re-activate and reinvigorate the local economies of these depressed city-centres, factory districts and waterfronts.

The dissolution of highly-structured routines of work and leisure towards the end of the 20th century provided urban planners with an opportunity to create more fluid and liberal urban spaces (Lash and Urry 1987; 1994). The increasing socio-economic importance of the leisure, tourism and services sector also encouraged the idea that night-time leisure represented an under-utilised resource. Indeed, it was believed that changing employment patterns, combined with increasing disposable income, would facilitate economic transition from production to consumption-based economies that would be driven by entrepreneurial private enterprise (Heath and Stickland 1997). This transition, combined with the desire to overcome negative perceptions of public safety and security in city-centres, and to encourage forms of night-time sociability modelled on continental Europe’s ostensibly “cosmopolitan” nightlife, led a range of British and European cities to foster the NTE as central to their urban revitalisation programmes (Lovatt 1994; Lovatt and O’Connor 1995; Bianchini 1995; Hobbs et al 2003; Tierney 2006; Roberts 2009). Conceptions of the “24- hour city” provoked more inclusive and
expansive consideration of the entire city centre, developing the city after dark into a brand that could improve city image and attract significant inward investment (Lovatt and O’Connor 1995; Heath and Stickland 1997). As a result of these transformative forces, nightlife has again been reconceived, reimaged and promoted as central to the experience and utility of the modern city. In this regard, contemporary nightlife is a product, commodified and advertised as a site of liminal freedoms removed from restrictive day-centric routines. Cities now openly compete for status as ‘nightlife destinations’ and ‘global cities’ with elaborate night culture which has marked repercussions for urban governance and even greater implications for state revenue.

These changes were consistent with the emergent neoliberal discourse that was being driven from the 1970s on by the policies of Thatcher and Reagan and were becoming prominent around the same time as post-industrial decline began to affect many Western nations (see Harvey 2007 for an overview). Indeed, these policies played a central role in accelerating the decline in manufacturing and industrial production that had been the economic backbone of many industrial nations since the early 1800s. Neoliberalism advocated a central focus on free-markets, marketisation, individual self-reliance, privatisation and cuts to welfare and service provision by the state (Amin and Malmberg 1994; Jessop 1997; 2002 Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002; Harvey 2005). Under the direction of neoliberalism, state institutions have been “hollowed out” (Newburn 2001; Jessop 1997; 2002) and have assumed greater audit and regulatory capacities at the expense of public service delivery (Harvey 2007). Neoliberal discourse places considerable focus on shoring up revenue sources and is frequently typified by short term and inconsistent policy-making in which considerations of social well-being are subordinated to fundamental guarantees of private profit (Jessop 1997; 2002; Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002; Harvey 2007). In retrospect, the planning and implementation of strategies and policies concerning night-time revitalisation, certainly in Sydney, seem to have followed this neoliberal pathway, often at the expense of coherent public policy. Under these circumstances, it has been vital to reconcile the needs of public safety and security with the limited resources and capabilities of public
policing and private security in dealing with collective drinking and the associated threat of public disorder and violence.

In Sydney and elsewhere, utopian conceptions of ‘cosmopolitan’ NTEs based on civilised, inclusive, and culturally diverse sociality have run in tandem with deregulation of liquor licensing and a major expansion of public night-time drinking. Subsequently, many deliberately stimulated urban NTEs have come to be dominated by problematic alcohol-leisure (Hadfield et al 2001; 2009; Measham and Brain 2005; Hayward and Hobbs 2007; Eldridge and Roberts 2008). Hadfield et al (2001: 1) reflected upon the failures of the NTE concept in achieving its ‘civilising’ process when they bluntly stated that the 24-hour city has come to be dominated by the violent and unruly “mass volume vertical drinker” whose belligerent behaviour leaves urban nightlife precincts awash with litter, vomit and urine, a sight that is far from the vision imagined by early NTE advocates and city planners. Further complicating issues of nightlife disorder is the fact that tax revenue from alcohol and gambling has rested behind the expansion of the NTE in many cities. In both the United Kingdom and Australia, policy-makers and planners have been attracted to liberalised alcohol licensing and policy due to the liquor industry’s ability to generate considerable revenue streams (Chatterton 2002; Hobbs et al 2003; Hayward and Hobbs 2007). This reality has had both public and private impacts. Most notably, it has led to an increase in the number and density of licensed venues in nightlife hotspots.

Research has frequently acknowledged the link between this liberalisation of alcohol licensing and sharp rises in assaultive crime and disorder (Homel and Tomsen 1993; Briscoe and Donnelly 2001; Gorman et al 2001; Chikritzhs and Stockwell 2002; Hall and Winlow 2005; Donnelly et al 2006; Hayward and Hobbs 2007), as well as setting off a spike in night-time accident and emergency admissions (Tatlow et al 2000; Hayward and Hobbs 2007), and influencing public perceptions of safety. Media coverage of nightlife violence and disorder further perpetuates a sense of patron vulnerability that belies statistical evidence as to the likelihood of victimisation. This relationship is particularly apparent in relation to crimes of a violent and sexual nature (Lundman 2003; Ditton
Contradictions between liquor industry demands, public planning needs, expanding night-time drinking leisure and policing and safety requirements have surfaced as a result of these competing pressures that exist within the NTE. In NSW, all these pressures exist and are apparent when analysing the condition of Sydney nightlife. Accordingly, recent growth of night-time drinking-related leisure has occurred against a backdrop of very uneven and divided planning, frequently without adequate policing, security and regulatory frameworks.

Good evidence also confirms that the after-dark hours host a significant volume of criminal activity including interpersonal and violent crime. Alcohol has a central place in the level of crime that exists in the NTE (for an overview issues relating to alcohol consumption and issues of incivility, violence and disorder see Graham and Homel 2008). According to a study conducted by Collins and Lapsley (2008), the estimated indirect cost of alcohol to the community in Australia is approximately $15 billion per annum, which includes costs associated with crime, violence, treatment costs, loss of productivity and premature death. Sydney, as Australia’s largest and most populous city, is positioned at the epicentre of public anxiety and political debate concerning the regulation of this highly contentious commodity. While the consumption of alcohol has different individual, collective and situational effects, there is strong evidence of its generally frequent ‘criminogenic’ character in night leisure. High alcohol consumption has been shown to reduce an individual’s cognitive and verbal capacity to resolve conflict, thereby increasing the likelihood of involvement in aggravated verbal exchange and physical violence (Buss et al 1995; Borges et al 2006; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007; National Health and Medical Research Council 2009). In research conducted by Buss et al (1995), alcohol was identified as a key factor in approximately three quarters of assaults and offensive behaviour on the street.

Compounding these concerns is the suggestion that public policing institutions alone do not have the capacity or resources to properly regulate this problematic occupational domain. Consequently, public policing, in line with neoliberal policies of minimising
state-based service provision, is increasingly supplemented and/or assumed by private security in an attempt to moderate governmental expenditure and regulate this risky terrain. The dramatic growth in the private security sector in relation to the NTE, has meant that door staff and venue security (‘bouncers’) are now the primary security providers in most cities after dark (Hobbs *et al* 2003; Prenzler, Sarre and Earle 2008; Rigakos 2008). In fact, a researcher studying nightlife in Halifax, Canada (Rigakos 2008) suggests that in nightlife spaces private security personnel outnumber police by ten to one. A similar estimate is given by Hobbs *et al* (2003) for the situation of night-time policing in Manchester and other British cities. This process of expanding private security has been one of the most significant developments for contemporary research on urban crime and safety and debates about the nature of the surveillance and regulation of city space. Australian developments have also signalled the importance of this transition although many aspects of the local changes are still yet to be examined and researched in detail.

The role of private security has undergone profound change and reform in the post-industrial city, alongside significant changes in the nature of policing (Shearing and Stenning 1983; Johnston 1992; 1999; 2003; Bayley and Shearing 1996; Loader 1997; 2000; Newburn 2001; Jones and Newburn 2002; Prenzler and Sarre 2002; Wakefield 2003). From its origins as a largely unsupervised and poorly trained group of men engaged in private guard duties, the private security industry has developed into a more complex, diversified and unevenly regulated industry. This occupational transformation has occurred within a relatively brief period of time and has been riven with difficulties. Many problems have surfaced throughout the industry’s new expansion in the urban night realm with involvements in criminal activity and the lack of sufficient regulation governing the use of force by industry employees. These flaws have often been the catalyst for occupational reform in the private security industry. In fact, ‘bouncer violence’ has often been a key negative marker of what critics of expanded night-time economies see as exemplifying the new dangers of their further growth.
Most notable in Australia was the 2004 death of former Australian cricketer, David Hookes, who was fatally assaulted by a security guard at a Melbourne nightspot (Schwarz 2006). His death sparked widespread outrage concerning the lack of regulation governing private security and generated pressure in Victoria and other states to revise legislation and policy regarding the industry. Similar Sydney-based incidents involving doormen and venue controllers have contributed to significant public concern about poor regulation of nightlife and the transference of roles that traditionally fell with state-employed public police. High profile incidents in Sydney have included the shooting of a guard involved in illicit drug dealing at the Blackmarket nightclub in 1997 (Brown and Kennedy 1997), the death of Peter Dalamangas at Sydney’s Star City Casino in 1998 (Goodsir, Gilmore and Crittle 1998; Clennell 1998a; 1998b), the 2004 bashing of Rodrigo Grveno outside a popular Sydney nightclub (Wallace 2004), and the more recent killing of Wilson Duque Castillo following an altercation with venue security in Kings Cross in 2010 (Coote 2011; Fife-Yeomans 2011; O’Malley 2011).

Since the 1990s, Sydney night revellers have witnessed a significant deregulation of opening hours and an increase in the number of licensed venues and locations. Alongside concerns about corruption, NSW Police were in part sidelined (with the temporary abolition of licensing officers) and then re-involved in new ways to placate public anxieties about violence and disorder associated with public nightlife (Fleming 2008). The public and media furore over the 2011 group security guard bashing of a young male patron in the very briefly closed ‘upmarket’ Ivy nightclub (Howden, Olding and Hall 2011; Olding et al 2011), reflects how full venue closure is a very unusual circumstance with the underlying logic of generally expanded access to drink and increased taxable consumption. Despite the heady mix of community and media debate, state government and Sydney City Council initiatives in tandem with liquor industry lobbyists have worked to defuse criticism and shore up the image of expanded night-time alco-leisure. Private market expansion and the protection of excise income remain paramount concerns for these public stakeholders.
It will be suggested in this thesis that the fragmentation of policy and direction between NSW governments, liquor industry bodies, security providers, health officials, and local planners and authorities has created a patchwork of interests and objectives that has left Sydney’s public police in a situation where they must appear, but very often fail, to balance the mobilised interests of industry, night users, vulnerable groups and local residents. With limited resources to meet the pressures of this task, police have favoured the adoption of high profile, media directed and highly symbolic campaigns against night crime with often unproven effects on levels of offending and perceptions of public safety. The following section will outline and identify the structure and purpose of this thesis.

**Thesis Outline**

Drinking and leisure practices have played a considerable role in shaping the nature of policing in Sydney from the very onset of the city’s colonial history. This vexed relationship is largely due to the common association between the policing of licensed and unlicensed venues and related major opportunities for corruption. ‘Sly grog’ sales, dealing of illicit drugs, prostitution and other aspects of a hidden ‘black economy’ such as the market for stolen goods and even criminal services, have all been associated with licensed and unlicensed venues that police have been required to deal with. These problems have been an ongoing issue throughout the evolution of NSW Police and shaped the foundation for significant transformations in the way in which policing has been practised in contemporary Sydney. This thesis will address this issue by considering the cultural, economic and social conditions, discursive practices and regulatory controls that have shaped both public and private forms of policing in the NTE of Sydney.

As Garland noted in *The Culture of Control* (2001), in order to understand fully contemporary crime controls we must inquire thoroughly into the historical conditions which led to their emergence. Chapter Two of this thesis examines histories of alcohol, disreputable leisure and moral ambivalence towards this behaviour in early Sydney in
order to understand features of contemporary nightlife and the associated problematic consumption practices in Sydney. This long-term view is particularly pertinent in the case of drinking cultures in Australia. Many commentators have suggested that heavy drinking is an intrinsic part of the Australian national character (Ward 1974; Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009). While the validity of this statement is certainly debatable, excessive alcohol consumption has played, and continues to play, a major role in Sydney nightlife.

In a similar way, Chapter Three studies the historical trajectory of key transformations in the organisation and nature of policing in NSW with a focus on policing and security in the nightlife of contemporary Sydney. It explores structural and ideological change within the NSW Police, including some examples of the ‘institutionalised corruption’ that has been associated with the policing of night-time public drinking. This chapter also examines what has been termed the “pluralisation” of policing (Bayley and Shearing 1996; Loader 2000; Jones and Newburn 2006) in contemporary society with regard to the expansion of private security firms and personnel, and the impact that this process has had on modern policing practices and strategies in the night-time economy.

Chapter Four provides a more detailed account of the literature concerning night-time economies and some of the realities of this economy in contemporary Sydney. It reviews a range of urban and cultural commentaries concerning the development of NTEs around the world. Sydney’s NTE is analysed as a product of mostly typical post-Fordist urban and social change closely tied to neoliberal policies of private wealth creation and the liberalisation of markets. These processes are discussed in relation to the local problems that they have created for urban governance, security and policing. This chapter also introduces the case study analysis of Sydney. By drawing from insights of fieldwork completed between December 2008 and April 2010, this chapter will examine in detail six prominent inner-city nightlife precincts and reflect on their position in Sydney’s nightlife scene.
To extend this enquiry further, Chapter Five analyses representations of nightlife, policing and security from two of Sydney’s major newspapers: *The Sydney Morning Herald* broadsheet\(^1\) and the tabloid *Daily Telegraph*. Items and articles taken from 1998-2012 are the basis of an archival analysis that examines content and unpacks discussions and visual depictions regarding key themes in the media discourse surrounding security, policing and nightlife. It examines the prominence and significance of media representations of private security (‘bouncers’) following three major, high-profile, NTE incidents in Sydney: the aforementioned death of Peter Dalamangas at Star City Casino in 1998, the death of Wilson Duque Castillo following an altercation with venue security at a Kings Cross nightclub in 2010, and the bashing of Nicholas Barsoum at the Ivy entertainment complex in 2011. Although not occurring in NSW, the death of David Hookes in 2004 is examined as a conspicuous example of the media’s power in agenda setting. These cases are analysed and discussed in relation to their value for heuristic understanding of discourse surrounding violence and security and its impact on public and political perceptions of ‘bouncers’. The chapter also reflects on the ways in which the NSW Police have been represented in their own efforts to police nightlife, and the ways in which they have engaged with the media in an attempt to improve their public image and to “manufacture” public confidence (see also Lee 2011; Lee and McGovern 2013). As an acute example of this new focus on “image work” (Mawby 2002), media depictions of *Operation Unite*, a nation-wide policing ‘blitz’ targeting alcohol-related violence and disorder, are examined in detail.

Chapters Six and Seven present the findings of a qualitative study with twenty-nine Sydney-based security employees and members of the NSW Police with an active role within the regulation of Sydney’s NTE. Chapter Six examines interviews conducted with doorstaff and managers from various Sydney-based private security companies. Similarly, Chapter Seven analyses police officers’ perceptions of police policy and strategy, police views on work in Sydney’s NTE, and relations with private security personnel. Both chapters feature discussions concerning occupational change through

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\(^1\) While *The Sydney Morning Herald* changed from broadsheet to tabloid in early 2013, it was the only broadsheet newspaper dedicated to covering Sydney news for the duration of the media analysis.
the eyes of the interviewees and an examination of the particular masculine characteristics that are expressed by both groups. Alongside this analysis will be an investigation of a discourse of ‘nostalgia’ about an imagined collective past in relation to security and public violence that is characteristic among both police and security staff.

**Rationale and Significance**

While the night-time economy has received significant academic attention since the early-1990s (Lovatt 1994; Bianchini 1995; Landry et al 1995; Hannigan 1998; Chatterton and Hollands 2002; Hobbs et al 2003; 2005; Rowe et al 2008; Rigakos 2008), the bulk of literature examining security and policing in nightlife spaces has come from the United Kingdom. Most of this literature has focused exclusively on individuals within the private security industry, exploring matters of their gender identity, violence and low occupational status (Lister at al 2000; Winlow 2001; Hobbs et al 2002; 2003; 2005a; 2007; Monaghan 2002; 2003; 2004; 2008; Hadfield 2008; O’Brien et al 2008). The relationship between public and private forms of policing in the NTE has not been a focus of this literature. While providing ethnographic insight into new forms of private policing and security, these British studies are situated in a distinct environment that had weak, or non-existent, regulatory controls. Australian states and cities have had a more elaborate, though still imperfect, recent history of regulation of the private security sector (Sarre and Prenzler 2011). Australian police have had a vexed relationship with private security regulation by virtue of their direct control of the licensing system for this form of work. It is also the case that much of the material concerned with the specifics of doorwork and private security as ‘bouncing’ can also produce an overwhelmingly aggressive and violent portrayal of the industry. These analyses, which may be true for the specific contexts under which those research projects were undertaken, fail to capture the complexity of the daily work patterns in a local industry that has experienced considerable reform and occupational transformation.
Although landmark studies into the private security industry have been undertaken in Australia by researchers such as Prenzler and Sarre (1998; 2005; 2011), and Prenzler, Sarre and Earle (2008) these have focused on broader analyses of the private security industry as a whole, not specifically on the nature of specialised roles within the industry including those situated within the NTE. While assessing the 2007/08 reforms within the private security sector, this literature has not investigated the specific impacts of these new regulatory mechanisms on occupational cultures and practices among segments of employees in the industry, leaving a significant research gap that needs to be explored in the Australian context. This thesis enters new territory with a detailed dual focus on the public and private policing of nightlife in Sydney and the dialectical relations between these two realms of work. This study is also the first full analysis of the systems of control regulating the use of public and private spaces located within Sydney’s NTE. As such, it introduces new information to the areas of policing and security in the NTE and offers a significant contribution to studies of public and private policing by providing a source from which comparison can be made with similar research from the United Kingdom and North America.

Overview of Research Design and Methods

This empirical project is a mixed methods study based on a combination of participant observation fieldwork, media analysis and semi-structured, in-depth, interviews. The research focused on four specific nightlife sites in Sydney in order to provide a detailed representation of the professional and personal cultures associated with the policing and security sectors operating in the NTE of Sydney. The broad case study in this research is the actual city of Sydney. More specifically, this study focuses on four distinct sites of Sydney’s most recognised nightlife precincts, these being: 1. The old established ‘red light’ area of Kings Cross; 2. The mix of pubs and newer nightclubs in the George Street/The Rocks area of central Sydney; 3. Nightlife in the former wharf districts of Darling Harbour/Pyrmont to the west of the CBD; and 4. Oxford Street in East Sydney.
Case studies are acknowledged as an effective way to deal with multiple data sets due to their capacity to combine varying sources and techniques into an intelligible form (Yin 2003; Berg 2004). This form of data “triangulation” is typically believed to be a strategy for improving the validity of research findings (Webb et al. 1966; Miles and Huberman 1984; Berg 2001) as well as serving to locate critical themes in a research project (Creswell and Miller 2000). As Miles and Huberman (1984:235) stated “...triangulation is supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or, at least, don't contradict it". Similarly, Berg (2001:5) describes the importance of triangulation, stating that it helps provide “a better, more substantial picture of reality, a richer more complex array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements”.

The following four sections will describe the four arms of the study:

a. Fieldwork

This thesis reflects a flexible research philosophy that does not prefer or privilege either quantitative or qualitative data. However, a major use of qualitative sources and approaches seems best suited to a study of nightlife and security culture because it favours rich, authentic accounts of social actors and “characters” through the “artful” production of complex narratives and descriptive illustrations (see Atkinson 1990). Furthermore, this analysis acknowledges and follows on from the important use of ethnographic work in the rich UK NTE literature (Winlow 2001; Winlow et al. 2001; Winlow and Hall 2006; Hobbs et al. 2003, Monaghan 2002; 2003; 2004; 2008) and a small number of other similar or classic studies from international and local scholars such as Tomsen’s (1997) ethnographic study of masculine violence, masculinity and policing in Sydney drinking venues during the late 1980s. All of these studies provide the level of depth and quality that has attracted me towards this method. The vivid and powerful accounts that can be garnered through employment of ethnographic research move
beyond superficial accounts of social issues and explore elements that can often be neglected in less intensive analyses.

Ethnographic fieldwork in the form of participant observation was conducted in each of these sites in the 18 month period between December 2008 and May 2010. Following Denzin’s (1978) hypothesis that research is most effective when a particular social phenomenon is examined under a variety of conditions, including space and time, each site was observed across the spectrum of temporal segments associated with the NTE: early evening economy (6pm – 9pm), evening economy (9pm – 11pm), night-time economy (11pm – 2am) and the late-night economy (2am – 6am). While observations were conducted on occasion on week-nights, the bulk of fieldwork was conducted on the much busier Friday and Saturday nights. Field notes were recorded following observation periods that ranged in length between two and nine hours. In order to gain insight into the real cultures of nightlife, fieldwork was covert and very flexible in nature. The initial stages of participant observation research involved spending significant time in each of the study sites in order to understand the differing night-time cultures and practices that exist in each location. Particular note was made of incidents and activities involving doorstaff as well as police. Field notes were written in narrative form as an ethnographic monograph, allowing for a rich textual account of Sydney nightlife and its policing and governance. These field notes were systematically and reflexively examined and re-examined both during the writing-up phase and later on as part of an inductive strategy of analysis. Identification of emergent themes led to the development of a coding scheme that informed subsequent fieldwork sessions.²

b. Qualitative interviews

The researcher conducted twenty-nine semi-structured, in-depth interviews with both members of the NSW Police engaged in night-time related work activity and people

² All field notes were stored in computer-based text files that were readily available for further analysis as required (Weaver and Atkinson 1994).
employed in door work and security management. Added to these formal interviews, were a number of informal conversations with ex-‘bouncers’ and police officers who reflected upon the histories of their respective occupations in relation to Sydney nightlife. While these ‘meetings’ were often held over ‘a couple of beers’ and regularly trailed off into bouts of exaggerated story-telling, they were frequently useful (and always entertaining) in unraveling (at least anecdotally) the dark history of Sydney nightlife that is usually difficult to access. Police officers formally interviewed ranged in age and experience from probationary constables fresh out of the NSW Police Academy to seasoned veterans with fifteen to twenty plus years’ experience working in key nightlife hotspots in Sydney. Similarly, members of the private security industry ranged from casual ‘P-Platers’ with just over a year of experience in doorwork to full-time security managers who had worked through the ranks both on the doors and, later, in managerial roles running commercial security operations. The process of recruiting interviewees for this research project was highly problematic. These difficulties in recruitment, caused by the ‘closed’ nature of both occupational cultures (discussed in further detail in Chapters Six and Seven), ensured that a mix of purposive and opportunistic sampling methods were employed. In both cases, and as noted by ethnographers in previous research (Whyte 1943; Bourgois 1995; 2003), access to industry gatekeepers was of critical importance to the success of this research. Not only did they introduce potential research participants, they also vouched for me as a trustworthy person and researcher and facilitated relationships that helped develop rapport with interviewees. These relationships played a major role in enhancing the quality of interview data for, as Vidich (1955: 354) noted decades ago, “the images which respondents have of [the researcher]...have a decisive influence on the character of the data collected”.

The interviews were subjected to thematic and discourse analysis. Minichello et al (1999) posit that a discourse analysis seeks to address the underlying or symbolic meaning of texts. Similarly, Paltridge (2006) states that discourse analysis is a view of language in use; that is, how, through the use of language, people achieve certain communicative goals, perform certain communicative acts, participate in certain
communicative events and present themselves to others. Discourse analysis also investigates how texts contribute to the constitution of social reality by “making meaning” (Phillips and Hardy 2002). This process of investigating the ‘constitution of social reality’ across a diverse set of media is precisely the aim of this project.

c. The NTE survey

This thesis also refers to the results of a survey questionnaire concerning experiences of nightlife among a large cohort of Sydney night-revellers and residents. The latter was conducted as part of the City After Dark research project that this thesis study is embedded within and featured a range of questions about nightlife that elicited closed responses and more open, qualitative views on Sydney nightlife. The online survey was conducted over a ten month period between the 25th of July, 2009 and the 14th of May, 2010. The survey was advertised widely in the local press and through community organisations to ensure a cross-section of respondents in terms of gender, class/status, age, race/ethnicity, sexuality and locality. A total of 315 surveys were completed. Of the 244 participants who stated their gender, 46% were male and 54% were female. In addition, among the survey respondents: 95% were permanent residents of Australia, 14% identified themselves as either gay or lesbian, 83% had an Anglo-European ethnic/cultural background, 59% worked full time, 19% did not hold a tertiary qualification, and 39% had an estimated annual income in excess of $60,000.

d. Media analysis

Another major source examined was media content from two of Sydney’s newspapers—The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph. The principal function of the media analysis was to ascertain the nature and representation of Sydney’s NTE and also to investigate discourses that relate to the regulation and policing of this domain. The underlying approach of quantitative content analysis involves the application of a coding schema to texts in order to count instances of given categories or themes within the data set (Riffe et al 2008). In this case, basic counting and assessment of article
numbers, frequency, prominence among text and imagery was employed to gain critical insight into the salience of particular media themes concerning the condition of Sydney nightlife and its policing. Media items were subjected to content analysis in tandem with the focus on the discursive construction of meaning (Minichello et al 1999; Philips and Hardy 2002; Fairclough 2003; Richardson 2007).

Qualitative and quantitative data was gathered and analysed simultaneously and reflexively, and, as ongoing analysis revealed relevant findings, these were fed back into the research process (for a detailed discussion of this method see: Miles and Huberman 1984; Berg 2001). For example, the fieldwork component of this research, which involved detailed visits and immersion into night-time activities at the four key research sites, also served to inform questions later employed during interviews, ensuring that the questions were relevant and grounded in the situated occupational terrain of security in the NTE.

This thesis considers policy debates, media accounts, historical evidence and refers to officially sourced quantitative evidence. Nevertheless, it has a concerted qualitative stress that is deliberately intended to arrive at an understanding of the private police (and to a lesser extent, state police) consciousness of safety, security and regulation in the NTE. Here, the latter is not seen as aspects of a null and void ‘false consciousness’, but as partly open windows on the lived experience of working in the NTE and its social and cultural forms. The following chapter will explore the histories of drinking and disreputable leisure that have featured and continue to feature as a central component of social life in NSW.
Chapter Two: Drinking and Disreputable Leisure: From Moral Ambivalence to Market Liberalisation

Introduction

Throughout the history of NSW there has been significant moral and political ambivalence surrounding the consumption of alcohol and the leisure practices with which it is often associated. In different eras, binge, heavy-episodic, or “determined” (see Measham and Brain 2005) drinking, and other problematic consumption practices, have been more accepted practices in Australian culture. At other times, such practices and leisure activities have been seen as disreputable, morally depraved, and the cause of a wide range of social harms. This oscillation of sentiment towards the consumption of alcohol has often reflected the political and social climate of the times in which such perceptions were held. For example, periods of high consumption have often coincided with times of economic prosperity, limited financial responsibility and, historically, with highly masculine populations engaged in blue-collar work (Ward 1974; Grabosky 1977; Sturma 1983). On the other hand, periods of lower alcohol consumption rates have often been shaped by the ascension of anti-liquor political movements (i.e. The Temperance Movement), an increased sense of familial responsibility throughout the working class, periods of economic depression, and the popularisation of middle-class values to the forefront of public consciousness (Dingle 1980; Sturma 1983; Room 1988, Midford 2005).

These varying sentiments have had considerable impact upon public policy responses over time. In the early 19th and early 20th centuries there were marked fluctuations in local and national responses to the issue of alcohol and the problematic behaviour with which it is frequently related. From corporal punishment for drunkenness in early
colonial times to increased taxation, ‘lock-outs’ and more detailed legislation and regulation regarding licensing of venues in contemporary times, alcohol-related policy has had a notable influence upon the popular leisure patterns of Australian society.

Throughout all this time alcohol has played a central role in the economic prosperity of NSW. Government taxation of alcohol has, at its peak, contributed up to almost 34% of state revenue (Lewis 1992). Today, alongside money raised from gaming, which predominately occurs within licensed premises, alcohol continues to play a pre-eminent role in the economic condition of the state economy. The reliance on income from alcohol and, more recently, gaming,\(^3\) has ensured that stringent regulation of drinking and nightlife has been strongly resisted by both industry and state concerns. This political ambivalence, as will be discussed throughout this thesis, has had a major outcome on the coherence and strength of state policy relating to alcohol and nightlife.

The few early anti-alcohol movements that have occurred throughout Australian history have largely been driven by middle-class anxieties and the moral symbolism of crusading against vice. Sturma (1983: 141), in his historical account of crime and social life in early NSW, noted that:

> Perceptions of intemperance as the colony’s greatest social evil did not...rest simply on its alleged prevalence or on moral principle. Opponents of drunkenness were more inclined to emphasize its social costs in terms of the colony’s economic progress, public health and criminality. In these respects, drunkenness appeared to threaten the community. At the same time, the temperance cause played a largely symbolic role in reinforcing the respectability of its adherents.

\(^3\) Income from gaming comes predominantly from poker machines which feature in most pubs and clubs throughout NSW and also from the Casino in Sydney.
It seems that highlighting the problem of disrespectability among ‘criminally’ and ‘morally depraved’ convict and working-class populations of Sydney and early NSW empowered middle-class figures who were assuming new leading political roles. However, it must be noted that while much of the social and political debate surrounding alcohol-related violence and disorder was harnessed to a particular middle-class discourse, there were legitimate complaints about alcohol-related domestic and family violence which featured as part of the Temperance Movement and were real concerns in working-class communities.

However, with every shift implemented by the varying agencies of government over the course of Australian history, it seems that one fact remains: the people of Sydney have persisted in the practice of drinking. When Governor King prevented a large shipment of liquor from being landed in Sydney in 1800 there was a marked rise in illicit brewing (Dillon 1985; Dingle 1980). Similarly, the introduction of six o’clock closing times for licensed venues in 1916, an initiative of Temperance societies across Australia and strongly associated with social demands caused by World War One, saw the creation of the “six o’clock swill” in which patrons of the more simply designed venues would rapidly consume as many drinks as possible before closing time (Phillips 1980; Fitzgerald and Jordon 2009; Chikritzhs 2009; Luckins 2008). Similarly, in the last decade, increased taxation on ready-to-drink alcohol beverages, commonly referred to as “alcopops” and noted for their marketing appeal to young female drinkers, resulted in increased sales of straight liquor in those areas in which the tax was introduced (Kerr 2008). This social resistance to restrictive alcohol policy has been a major brake on regulatory change and efficacy.

By presenting detailed analysis of critical periods in Sydney’s history concerning alcohol consumption habits and related policy, this chapter will emphasise how the contemporary NTE of Sydney has been shaped by a range of issues and concerns that continue to influence the regulation of drinking, vice and ‘disreputable leisure’ in its urban nightlife spaces. The chapter explores the history of alcoholic consumption and
leisure patterns as they relate specifically to society and culture in Sydney, with a focus on the relationship between alcohol and disorder as it has occurred throughout Sydney’s history from its early colonial origins up until the emergence of the NTE concept in the 1990s. It will also examine the contribution that alcohol has made towards the state economy of NSW and the moral ambivalence within Australian culture that has, until recently, both endorsed heavy collective drinking and associated disorder as part of an Australian ‘way of life’ and rejected its status as a stain on the moral fabric of the country. It will be suggested that this ambivalence has played a significant role in the continuation of disorderly drinking.

While primarily focusing on NSW, and in particular Sydney, such an account cannot remove itself from a broader analysis of the ‘Australian identity’ as it relates to popular leisure patterns. It must be acknowledged here that not all alcoholic consumption is perceived or defined as disreputable. Many people have consumed alcohol in a manner that bears no disruptive harm to others. Further, in many cases one’s choice of drink has been a source of social status and demarcation for those involved. Historically, ‘civilised’ consumption has been associated with fine wines and expensive spirits. However, this chapter, while acknowledging this diverse history, is aimed at engaging in an analysis of more problematic leisure patterns and how these are framed.

It must be noted here that, while literature about early Australian history may exaggerate the cultural and social norms and practices of the day, critical references can still be found that shed light on the actual realities of the past. Many of the romanticised depictions of early colonial life in Sydney have enduring legacies that have influenced popular contemporary perceptions of what constitutes the local character. To this end, Fitzgerald and Jordan (2009:7-8) aptly state that:
The claim that our level of alcohol consumption is a unique feature of our national identity is a myth. Of course, the function of many myths is not to describe reality—myths construct images not of who we are but who we want to be.

This chapter will explore the history of alcohol and drinking as it relates to Australian life and culture. In doing so, this “myth” and its influence will be explored. This history is critical to an understanding of contemporary nightlife cultures that are heavily based around alco-leisure. The persistence of problem drinking in Sydney has had a notable bearing on the overall nature and method of policing public leisure in NSW and is thus of material significance to this research.

**The Blight of Society: Alcohol, Binge Drinking and Disreputable Leisure in Britain and Early NSW**

This section will analyse material concerned with early forms of disreputable leisure and public drinking in colonial NSW. By looking at the historical antecedents of the formation of the penal settlement in Sydney, it will highlight the social, cultural and political influences that came to shape the early environment of NSW. Following this introduction, the section will draw attention to the way in which alcohol and (heavy) public drinking have come to feature as a major characteristic in Australian perceptions of masculinity and national identity.

Historians agree that the social and political climate of Britain in the 18th century is an important reference point when analysing crime and disorder in colonial Sydney (Dillon 1985; Grabosky 1977; Lewis 1992). From its inception, Sydney was a wholly British colony and, therefore, subject to British law and administration. The colonisation of Australia occurred when England was in a state of major social and political flux (Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009). The British government of the time was struggling to maintain control of a society that had fallen into a “chasm” of immorality (Dillon 1985:...
and was fighting to limit the damage from a wave of criminality that was sweeping the nation (Emsley 1987; Reynolds 1998; Nicholls 2003; Harris 2004). As was outlined by Lemmings and Walker (2009), the 18th century was a time of significant ‘moral panic’ (Cohen 1972) regarding the criminal and moral state of Britain and, in particular, London.

The rise of capitalism had disrupted traditional life and processes of urbanisation were associated with migration from rural areas into newly industrialised cities. The social and economic changes of industrialisation generated a significant increase in crime in increasingly overcrowded city areas, and a clash of cultures between the ‘monied’ and the new working class. White (2003:39) suggested that these new urban working-class populations “brought with them cultural norms and expectations that, when fused with the conditions of urban wage labour, appeared unruly and threatening to their employers”. Porter (1990:9) stated that these eighteenth century Englishmen “excused their vices as virtues and indulged them without brio. They liked being thought blood-minded roughnecks”. This self-prescribed national identity was driving an image of England as a ‘tough’ nation that enjoyed many ‘vices’ seen as disreputable by other European nations. Drinking and violence was a central feature of this British national character (Porter 1990). While a large set of society did not see these traits as problematic, others, including the British government and sections of the upper class, viewed violence, disorder and belligerent intoxication as cause for significant concern. Such anxiety gave purchase to arguments connected to the rise of a centralised, state-run police force in 1829 and the implementation of a number of restrictive laws that focused specifically on the control of working-class life.

Further compounding concerns about criminality in Britain was the loss of the American colonies that had formerly accommodated a significant number of British convicts. Grabosky (1977: 4) asserts that the returned convicts had contributed to a heightened sense of fear of criminal victimisation and “had aroused the anxieties and antagonisms of the dominant sections of British society”. Around this same time significant
amendments had been made to alcohol-related policy. The new policy directives, encouraged by King William of Orange in the late seventeenth century, promoted the market liberalisation of alcohol that broke the monopoly that the London Distillers Guild held over the production of spirits (Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009; Lewis 1992). Lewis (1992: 5) stated that this shift, which dramatically increased the amount of spirits that were available in Britain, had “a deeply disturbing effect on the social fabric of early modern Europe”. The spectacular increase in the production of spirits in the United Kingdom not only had a pernicious impact on the state of health throughout all classes of British society, but it also had a dramatic impact on the social state of British life. Regarding the poor state of public health in Britain in the 18th century, a report from the Royal College of Physicians in 1726 stated that:

*We have...observed, for some years past, the fatal effects of the frequent use of several sorts of distilled Spiritous Liquors upon great numbers of both Sexes, rendering them diseased, not fit for business, poor, a burthen to themselves and neighbours and too often the cause of weak, feeble and distempered children, who must be...a charge to their country.* (Quoted in Royal College of Physicians Report 1987:1)

Similarly, White (2003:39) stated that:

*To these workers, binge drinking fulfilled the expectations of a culture that maintained strong residual ties to norms of social expenditure. To their employers and to the state, ever more estranged from such norms, labouring-class drinking appeared to be yet another instance of their inveterate idleness.*

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4 Following this Act, distillers of gin increased their production levels from four million gallons in 1694 to more than twenty million gallons in 1750.
During the “gin craze” of the early-to mid-eighteenth century, the burden that alcohol and alcoholic addiction placed on the British government became clear (Nicholls 2003; White 2003; Warner et al 2001). The state not only had significant health concerns relating to the addicted, but also the burden of a less productive work force and having to deal with the displaced children of families suffering from addiction. The lead up and early phases of industrial capitalism did not succeed in fostering the middle-class ideals of thrift and restraint among the working class. Instead, much working-class income was spent on drinking and associated vice. Consequently, the regulation of drinking and working-class leisure became a central political issue, as Nicholls (2003:128) highlights:

As the consumption of gin rocketed among the urban poor, new kinds of questions began to be asked not just of intoxication but also of the structures of social control and the relationship between class, consciousness, and identity. In...the gin epidemic, drink became on the one hand a political problem: who, in the mass of societies of modern, urban culture, should drink what? Where should drink be consumed? How should it be regulated?

Adding to this social and political concern was the impact that the wave of alcohol had on rates and perceptions of criminality. In 1751, in the depths of the gin craze, Henry Fielding published An Inquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase in Robbers in which he identified the staggering gin consumption rates among the urban poor as the most significant causal factor in the increase of violent crime in the city of London. However, as aptly stated by Nicholls (2003:128),“these habits, which are regrettable and effete in the wealthy, only become dangerous in their lower-class manifestations”. This quotation highlights early elitist, ‘civilising’, sentiment regarding drinking and associated behaviour. It also presents a discourse of morality/ immorality surrounding the leisure patterns of the working and ‘dangerous’ classes. The very public gin craze and its association with the urban poor and working classes provided a vehicle through which the ‘morally superior’ middle and ruling classes could reinforce class boundaries and strengthen the punitive measures concerned with public intoxication and related
disorder. Here, there was not only a stratification of classes but also a stratification of alcohol and leisure practices. While gin was associated with the ‘dangerous’ classes, wine, brandy and beer (ale) were largely regarded as the tipple of the middle and upper classes. Gin was seen as an uncivilised intoxicant which turned citizens into crazed and dangerous addicts who threatened social order and economic stability. Beer, wine and brandy were, conversely, seen as refined drinks, with beer in particular being seen as a drink of the British patriot and signifier of a productive, morally aware, citizen (Nicholls 2003). Ironically, this is the very drink that has become the key focus of contemporary moral panic about violence and “lager louts” in the United Kingdom (Plant 1991; Measham and Brain 2005). Throughout the discourse of morality and immorality in relation to the consumption of alcohol there was a very strong association between the leisure practices of the ‘dangerous’ classes and public disorder.

The most popular leisure practices of the urban poor- group sports, gambling and drinking- were largely public in nature. The more gentrified consumer generally drank in private, away from the gaze of the population and reach of the law. This division of class leisure practice is reflected in the work of William Hogarth (see Figure 1, below), who portrayed two different scenes which accurately convey the perceived differences in class leisure patterns.
In Hogarth’s engravings, which were produced to promote the newly recommended *Gin Act* of 1751, the contradiction in class-based leisure is made unmistakably apparent. In Gin Lane, vice and criminality abound. The poor, disorderly crowd, addled by gin, wreak havoc on the street and their own bodies. Here, alcoholic addiction drives social degradation, with only three businesses thriving under such base conditions: the gin shop, poignantly named Kilman, where the unruly mob belligerently brawl; the pawnbroker, where citizens sell their material possessions (presumably to feed their addiction); and the undertaker, whose business thrives in such an environment. At the forefront of the picture is a drunken mother, riddled with sores, presumably symptomatic of a sexually transmitted disease, who drops her infant child in a display of negligence. This depiction is again representative of an environment in which responsibility and morality give way to addiction, disorder and depravity. In stark contrast, however, Beer Street is portrayed as a civilised and festive environment in which legitimate business thrives and the pawnbroker struggles. The people of Beer Street are ordered and share healthy relations with one another.
Reflective of the moral concern that permeated the British social hierarchy, Hogarth’s imagery was captured in the implementation of restrictive legislation concerning the trading of gin and other ‘hazardous’ liquors. Between 1700 and 1771 there were eleven interventions by the British state as it battled to maintain strong profits from the production and trade of distilled spirits while attempting to minimise the dangerous effects attributed to consumption (Warner et al 2001). This battle was made all the more difficult by the fact that, by 1730, one quarter of all government taxation revenue in Britain came from the drinks trade (White 2003: 38). Three major Gin Acts were introduced in 1729, 1736 and 1751 in an attempt to curb the “gin craze” (Warner et al 2001). Skinner (2007) contends that the introduction of these Acts (notably the Gin Act of 1736) was met with significant social protest and, indeed, resulted in an increase in violent street crime and, in defiance of the unpopular new legislative introduction, higher levels of gin consumption. Following the introduction of monetary rewards to informers who tipped off authorities regarding the unlicensed sale of ‘grog’, “hardly a day passed in which an informer was not attacked on the streets of London” (2007: 3). Whether or not these claims are wholly, or even partially valid is contestable. However, what is certain is that there was a grounded perception pervading much of British society, especially throughout the middle and upper classes, that crime and disorder was at an all-time high, and that alcohol and the dangerous working class were the cause.

As a result of this ‘crime wave’ and subsequent civic concern, the British criminal justice system was stressed to breaking point. New space was urgently required to house the large number of recidivist criminals along with the growing numbers being incarcerated for petty crimes. Transportation of convicts provided the ideal vehicle to alleviate these pressures and so, in the 1780s, after all other options were deemed less viable, NSW was chosen as the site on which a new (penal) colony was to be established. While the benefits of transportation generally outweighed the financial inconvenience it caused, it did present the British with many problems relating to the governance of the colony. Perhaps most obviously was the sheer distance between the Home Office in London and the new settlement in Sydney. The perilously long journey of six months had a considerable impact on the rate and efficiency of communication between those in
charge of the new settlement and those ratifying colonial directives in London. For obvious reasons, this distance left a great deal of the governance of early NSW to the discretion of the governor of the time. While matters of economy and finance were monitored with great detail by the Home Office in London, other concerns that had less bearing on the monetary wellbeing of the Empire, such as matters of ‘policing’ and discipline, were far less rigorously scrutinized (Grabosky 1977). As a result, punitive policies fluctuated markedly and were often based on the temperament of the local governor. This instability had a significant impact on the environment of early NSW as will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

However, alongside this problem of communication, and far more critical for a study of this nature, was the fact that the First Fleet imported far more than physical commodities and personnel into Sydney on January 26, 1788. Along with the eleven ships of the Fleet came many of the cultural-criminal dispositions of the passengers that it carried, as well as the sharp class divisions between the ruling elite and the criminalised poor and working classes. This reality had a noteworthy effect on the shape and environment of the colony given the class, gender and ‘character’ of the bulk of those transported to Sydney.

Official records indicate that 716 of the 1035 (69.2%) (see Table 1, below) people transported aboard the First Fleet were convicts. Generally drawn from the lower and working classes\(^5\) of England and Ireland, a stratum not known for respecting authority figures,\(^6\) the predominantly male (812/1035 or 78.5%) convicts presented a considerable problem for the small number of military personnel who were charged with their management and supervision. Grabosky (1977: 8) noted that the British class structure

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\(^5\) Sturma (1983:1) noted that British perceptions of the colony included the assumption that these criminal populations were removed from the working classes and made up their own distinct class, what they called the “criminal class”. This class of criminally-minded beings lived entirely off the proceeds to crime and presented a significant threat to social order.

\(^6\) Indeed, Grabosky (1977:6/8) noted that a significant number of the convicts transported to Australia in the first few decades of settlement were Irish and incarcerated for “crimes of protest against British rule” (1977:6).
was always going to present problems relating to the general levels of respect for those in positions of authority. Indeed, the persistence of protest was part of what Lewis (1992:4) describes as the “Anglo-Celtic cultural baggage” that was shipped to the new colony. Russell Ward (1974: 2), one of the most prominent historians to write about Australian national character, reinforces this claim when he lists hate for “officiousness and authority” as one of the iconic characteristics of “the Australian Legend”, much of which is based on these early Sydney arrivals.

Alongside this negativity towards those in positions of authority were issues of disreputable leisure, notably the propensity for heavy drinking. One anecdote strongly reflects this relationship with alcohol and suggests the extraordinary lengths that were taken to ensure that there was enough drink on board a ship destined for Sydney from Portsmouth in England. Dillon (1985:30) tells of 153 “scantily clad convict women” who were denied extra clothing while the males aboard were instead granted extra alcohol for the long journey. Indeed, from the moment the First Fleet sailed into Sydney Cove in 1788, alcohol has featured heavily in the social, moral and political consciousness surrounding public leisure in NSW. Lewis (1992: 5) states that “the ‘transplanted Britons’...who colonised Sydney, were well practised in the art of heavy drinking”. Accordingly, records taken from cargo manifests of the First Fleet noted that 2,258 gallons (8,546 litres) of rum were carried into Sydney Cove (Dillon 1985: 30). This propensity for drunkenness was particularly evident when it came to naval life and, given that the new colony was at the far reaches of Britain’s oceanic empire, had a significant impact on the importation of disreputable leisure practices. Indeed, for Fitzgerald and Jordon (2009: 12) rum was entrenched in naval culture, a fact that ensured that the selection of Arthur Phillip, a “staunch navy man”, as the first governor of the new colony, would have a major influence on the continuation and encouragement of liberal drinking patterns in the early stages of the new colony.

Within two weeks of the first landing at Sydney Cove the new settlers (including convicts) had their first night of drunken debauchery in which violence and disorder,
including counts of sexual assault, occurred (Campbell 1933; Dingle 1980; Reynolds 1991; Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009). This night set the scene for what was to come in the new colony. Dingle (1980: 228) reflects upon the drinking habits of the early colonists and convicts of NSW when he states:

*Aborigines had no knowledge of alcoholic fermentation and so by 1788 Australia had long been the world’s only ‘dry’ continent. All the evidence of the first thirty years of settlement indicates that white Australians were intent on making up for lost time as rapidly as possible.*

The formative years of settlement witnessed marked fluctuations in alcohol-related policy, which were primarily dependent upon the direction of the different governors. Because little alcohol was produced in NSW until the early-to-mid 19th century, importation was the main means by which stores were at first provisioned. The distance between Australia and the rest of the world ensured that supply shipments from Britain were irregular, creating major opportunities for profit (Dingle 1980). Indeed, alcohol consumption levels were frequently based on levels of availability. Dingle (1980:229) states that annual *per capita* consumption levels varied significantly in the period between 1788 and 1800, from less than a gallon to almost eight gallons depending on the arrival of shipments from Bengal, the Cape and elsewhere. It would seem that when alcohol was available in NSW it was drunk in large quantity.

Owing to this strong demand for alcohol in Sydney, importation of spirits was a highly profitable business. Indeed, Governor King, the third governor of NSW (1800-1806), complained that “so great was the fame of the propensity of the inhabitants of this colony to the immoderate use of spirits, and the certainty of getting any amount of payment in Government bills, that I believe all nations of the earth agreed to inundate the colony with spirits” (cited in Dingle 1980:229). Reflective of the demand for alcohol, W.S Campbell (1933) estimates that between settlement in 1788 and 1800, 26,974
41 gallons of spirits and 8,896 gallons of wine were imported into NSW. However, from 1800 onwards, during King’s time as governor, these figures dramatically increased. In 1800, 45,000 gallons of spirits and 24,000 gallons of wine were imported into Sydney and, by 1811, the yearly importation of alcohol had risen to over 77,000 gallons of spirits and over 21,000 gallons of wine (Wilkinson 1997). Highlighting the degree to which alcohol was seen as a significant “social problem”, Dillon (1985:30) notes that between September 1800 and December 1801 Governor King “saw 59,294 gallons of spirits arrive in ships (269,550.5 litres), but on account of the serious problems caused by liquor, he permitted only 26,974 to be landed (122,623.8 litres). The balance he sent away (emphasis in original)”. While ostensibly acknowledging the need to moderate levels of alcohol consumption in Sydney, state governments have always relied heavily on the taxation on alcohol. In the early days of colonial settlement, as throughout the history of NSW, revenue taken from the importation, sale and manufacture of alcohol has made a considerable contribution to the state budget. In fact, Butlin (1994:91) suggests that up until the 1850s, customs and excise taxation on alcohol was the “major source” of revenue in the colony. This claim is substantiated by evidence collated by Lewis (1992) showing that, by the 1860s, taxation of alcohol contributed 34% of total revenue for NSW. This number was undoubtedly raised by the growth in local beer production, which had increased significantly with the establishment in Sydney of Tooth’s Brewery in 1835 and, later, of Tooheys Brewery in 1875. Indeed, according to statistics presented by Wilkinson (1997), beer overtook spirits to become the most consumed drink in NSW between 1829 and 1886.

A number of contributing factors have combined to create, sustain, and encourage intoxicated leisure in Sydney and early NSW. As previously mentioned, the British and Irish people, who made up the bulk of the white populations who settled Sydney, had a long history of heavy drinking. Alcohol, at home as abroad, was seen as a release from the trials of life. To a certain extent, heavy drinking was a form of social protest against
the middle-and upper-class values of discipline and restraint. In this respect, disorder related to collective public drinking can be seen as a social process experienced and valued by participants as both pleasurable and partly liberating. With their lives regulated by the penal system and its harsh disciplinary measures, large contingents of the population of early NSW chose to indulge heavily in drunken pursuits. These practices were particularly evident in new Sydney locations for public drinking, vice and prostitution such as the Rocks District, located on the foreshore of Sydney Harbour, where the press frequently reported (in the 1820s) stories of women dying of drunkenness (Powell 1988: 405).

Environmental factors also played a role in encouraging the heavy consumption of alcohol in colonial NSW. Conrad (1985:15) states that “from the very outset the dominant desire of the first Australians was to soften their environment rather than respond to its challenge”. Similarly, Evatt (1965:13) stated that “the conditions of the colony contributed as much to its vice and degradation as the character of the colonists”. The harsh and hot labour conditions of early colonial life, the rigidity of penal discipline, lack of friends and family, the knowledge that ‘home’ was at the opposite end of the world, and the lack of social distractions, have all been proposed as conditions that promoted drinking as a social and psychological release from life in early NSW.

Another reason that heavy drinking and disreputable leisure abounded in NSW was that drinking was a predominantly male activity and there was a significant gender imbalance in the colony (Grabosky 1977). According to statistics acquired from the Historical Records of Australia; NSW Colonial Secretary (see Table 1, below) the population of Sydney in 1788 was 1035, 78.5% of whom were male. By 1800 the population of 5,217 was 72.4% male. Twenty years later in 1820, the population of 28,024 was 70% male. Even as the population grew rapidly in the 1830s and 1840s, the proportion of males never dipped below 60%. Of this gender imbalance Grabosky (1977: 8) states that:
The scarcity of females and the general austerity of life in an outpost at the end of the earth led Sydney’s early residents to seek other diversions. One of the most characteristic forms of disorderly behaviour during the early days was drunkenness. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, consumption of spirits had become a colonial institution.

Table 1: NSW Population 1788-1845 by selected demographic aspects.

Source: Historical Records of Australia; N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, Returns of the Colony (cited in Grabosky 1977:9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N.S.W Population</th>
<th>% Male</th>
<th>% Convict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>4100</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>5217</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>6950</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>10,096</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>13,116</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>28,024</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>38,890</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>44,588</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>71,304</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>127,468</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>187,918</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only did this gender imbalance leave males without significant financial responsibility, thereby freeing up time for drunken pursuits, it also contributed to a highly masculine environment. Competition among men in colonial Australia pervaded most aspects of social life. From sporting pursuits to working life, a male, especially a working-class male, often built his social status around his ability to compete successfully with other males. This competition routinely materialised in the setting of
the public house through competition for bragging rights as to who could hold the most alcohol. Drinking was an acknowledged characteristic of Australian men, and failure to engage in this accepted behaviour was often met with ridicule and disdain from the ‘hardened’ men who dominated Sydney’s population.

While criminal statistics from the formative years of settlement in Sydney are difficult to obtain, records from the mid-19th century confirm that drunkenness was a significant social problem. Indeed, such was the official concern about levels of drunkenness and vice among the convict classes of Sydney that a new Act was legislated in 1825 in an attempt to civilise convict leisure. Entitled ‘An Act to prevent the Harbouring of Runaway Convicts, and the encouraging of Convict Tippling or Gambling (1825)’, it made it an offence to receive a convict into a private dwelling for the purposes of drinking or gambling, both of which were seen to contribute to the general criminogenic disposition of the convict class (Grabosky 1977). However, such legislation seemed to have little impact on rates of working-class intoxication. Following what Dingle (1980: 229) called the “heaviest period of sustained spirit drinking in Australian history” (the 1830s), criminal statistics from 1841 show that, prior to the depression that followed later in the decade, drunkenness accounted for 60.4% of all arrests in Sydney and 51.5% of all arrests in NSW (Statistics sourced from Sturma 1983:143). It would be later stated by a British Select Committee in 1838 that the transportation of convicts as part of the British penal system was a failure of the highest order that not only failed to reform criminals, but also created societies “most thoroughly depraved, as respects both the character and degree of their vicious tendencies” and that there existed in Australia “a state of morality worse than that of any other community in the world” (Sturma 1983:1). The exaggerated nature of the language used by the author to describe the condition of NSW is likely to be more reflective of the sensitivity and moral concern about public intoxication and ‘moral degradation’ that the British had held since the gin craze. This resentment would undoubtedly have been further fuelled by elite disapproval of the nature of the colony’s inhabitants.
However, as experienced in Britain prior to settlement in Sydney, class position in early NSW determined official perceptions of social utility and, therefore, influenced the ways in which class drinking practices were responded to by the state. The drinking patterns of the new colonial elite were no doubt as excessive as those of working-class citizens and convicts in the public houses of Sydney, yet class difference was the defining factor in making the habit of public drinking socially disreputable. It seems that, while the upper and middle classes still indulged in drunken exploits (Dillon 1985; Lewis 1992; Porter 1985), their respectable professional and social contribution to greater society enabled them to avoid condemnation. The endeavours of the lower classes, however, were seen as less valuable and, subsequently, their drinking leisure was treated as more problematic.

The gender imbalance of Sydney was further exacerbated during the mid-19th century when gold was discovered in Bathurst, NSW (Powell 1988; Room 1988). Large numbers of male prospectors came to Sydney as a staging point in their search for fortune. Drunkenness on the diggings and in the city features heavily in narratives of this gold rush period (Room 1988: 414). Powell (1988:406) states that “this influx of newcomers, mostly males, led to a discarding of the accepted norms of behaviour”. However, he also suggests that this environment developed a powerful fraternal force that shaped the social and cultural environment of much of the 19th century (Powell 1988:403). In this period (and continuing in contemporary Australia) mateship featured as a central characteristic of Australian life. Indeed, a number of historical commentators have acknowledged this tradition of mateship and male solidarity as contributing factors in this social preoccupation with drinking, and, subsequently, the prevalence of drunkenness (Ward 1974; Grabosky 1977; Lewis 1992; Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009). Two traditions that characterise the relationship between mateship and drinking, and that can most certainly still be seen in nightlife precincts in contemporary Sydney, were that of “shouting” and “work and burst” (Lewis 1992; Ward 1974).
The practice of shouting involves a group of two or more people with each person taking turns buying the others in the group a ‘round’ of drinks. Not only does this tradition ensure that the group is kept together over the course of the drinking session, it also is seen as a way of reinforcing egalitarian values amongst a group of friends, negating social or financial standing. Sargent (1979: 25) states that Australian “shouting” culture is not only an affirmation of mateship among those in a drinking round, but also a test of “manliness”. Failure to act in accordance with a shout dramatically increases the risk of ostracism or exclusion. This centrality of group drinking in (mainly male) social relations rests behind the assertion by Sturma (1983:141) that, in early NSW, “not to drink is [was] considered a crime”.

Work and burst, on the other hand, was, in essence, what contemporary society would label a ‘bender’: an intense, sustained, period of binge or heavy episodic drinking. In early NSW, labour was hard and often required considerable travel. Alongside these difficulties, wages were very low and labourers, particularly those working in the ‘bush’, had little reason to save, with scarce hope of owning land and minimal, if not non-existent, familial responsibility (Ward 1974). Following extended periods of work, labourers would engage in a “spree” of drinking and debauchery in ‘sly grog’ shops or public houses in which they would exhaust their earnings (Ward 1974). This work and spending pattern was also evident in seasonal rural work in the wool industry and mass gold prospecting from the 1850s onwards and, although referred to in different language, is certainly evident in the drinking cultures of contemporary Sydney.

Problems associated with highly masculine environments were made more visible in NSW because of the dominance of the pub or hotel as the site of travel rests and social and leisurely engagement. The coming of the gold rushes in the mid-19th century highlighted this issue as large numbers of male prospectors travelled the country in search of their fortunes. Indeed, it has been stated that the economic prosperity of the gold rush period may have reignited Sydney-sider’s love of drink following the period of economic depression that had reduced drinking rates during the early 1840s (Grabosky
So great was the increase in levels public drinking and drunkenness in the early 1850s that a Select Committee on Intemperance was appointed by the Legislative Council to attempt to curb Sydney’s love affair with alcohol. The Committee did little in the way of reducing rates of drinking. It has been stated that by the 1880s Sydney “...was Hogarthian in its cheerful brutality. It was an uncouth metropolis of some 280,000 people who managed to support 3,200 public houses, to say nothing of the hundreds of lesser grog shops” (Conway 1971: 25). The pub to person ratio using these statistics is 1:87.5, meaning that there was one licensed public house per 87.5 people.

Dingle (1980: 238) acknowledged the impact that limited leisure options had on the prevalence of drinking in early NSW. Given the statistics regarding the number of public houses in Sydney, it would be fair to say that drinking saturated the leisure market and was atop the list of affordable social activities. As a result, drinking was most prevalent in periods of economic prosperity, including the 1830s, 1850s, 1870s, 1880s, 1950s and 1960s (Dingle 1980; Room, 1988). This point is also highlighted by slumps in consumption rates during periods of economic hardship and depression (1840s, 1890s and 1930s) (Dingle, 1980:234). Sturma (1983: 142) further confirms this reality in noting that “arrests for drunkenness both numerically and proportionately reached their lowest level in 1844, when wages fell to their lowest rate during the period”.

Further compounding the issues of drunkenness was the common association between the consumption of alcohol, crime and disorder, something that had been strongly reinforced during the gin craze in Britain prior to settlement in Sydney. Perhaps indicative of the anxiety that the British officialdom had for their Southern colony, and of their general views regarding the ‘criminal’ classes that inhabited it, the first Governor of NSW, Arthur Phillip, was instructed to “rigorously observe certain laws...(specifically around) blasphemy, profaneness, incest, adultery, polygamy, profanation of the Lord’s Day, swearing and drunkenness” (Dillon 1985:30). However, Governor Phillip’s lack of success in curbing rates of intoxication and associated disorder is evident as the Governor of NSW in the 1840s, George Gipps, described drunkenness as “the fruitful
parent of every species of crime” in the colony. Another view of colonial NSW draws out the political and public concerns surrounding drunkenness and its associated social and physical harms:

_Drunkenness was not only a social nuisance, an affront to the changing norms of public decorum, it was also associated significantly in the minds of opinion makers and social reformers with some of the most pressing problems of social life. Drunkenness distracted from work, it was associated with violence in some cases, or more generally with the ongoing problem of poverty and the creation of dependent populations (Finnane 1996: 97)._ 

While this section has examined levels of drinking in early Sydney, it must be stated that many of the representations of the early Australian male, and their propensity for drunken pursuits, are largely imagined and certainly exaggerated (Powell 1988; Midford 2005). As the title of Ward’s (1974) famous work on Australian national and cultural identity suggests, many of Australia’s iconic characteristics are based on “legend”. The nature of this “legend” ensures amplification and exaggeration. This hyperbole is particularly accurate in the case of the ‘unmatched’ ability to consume alcohol that is often portrayed as a cornerstone of Australian masculinities. To adopt Benedict Anderson’s (1983) phrase, Australians are largely an “imagined community” who have constructed their national identity through the overstatement of historical representations of what it was, or is, to be Australian. Lewis (1992) and Dingle (1980) deconstruct the myth that Australians were unrivalled in their alcohol consumption in the early colonial period by providing a comparative study of _per capita_ alcohol consumption levels. Lewis (1992:7) concludes that, in comparison to other nations, including the United States, Ireland, France and Sweden, Australians’ (and in particular, New South Welshmen’s) consumption levels were less than portrayed in popular writings at the time. Indeed, according to the comparative study, even in Australia’s heaviest decade of alcohol consumption, the 1830s, when _per capita_ consumption rate was at 20.3 litres of alcohol _per annum_, Australians still drank far less than Americans
Having said this, Dingle (1980) asserts that perhaps the reason behind the comparatively low per annum consumption statistics is that a large number of Australians drank only intermittently, but, when they did get the chance, did so with brutal excess (Dingle 1980; see also Trollope 1876). It does seem that binge drinking was a particularly marked characteristic of local consumption. These early forms of binge drinking and ‘immoral’ leisure practices have certainly continued to feature heavily in 20th and 21st century Sydney, which will be discussed further in later sections of this chapter.

Restrictive Policy: From Temperance to Market Liberalisation

As the previous sections discussed, periods with a high level of drinking in early NSW have generally been commensurate with the mobilisation of anti-liquor movements and an increase in middle-class anxieties concerning intoxication. Together, these forces have influenced public policy concerning alcohol and its related social practices, and have been responsible for periods of significant reduction in rates of consumption in NSW. This section will trace the emergence and influence of these public concerns, as well as of the narratives that they introduced into local public and political discourse up until the middle of the 1990s.

Although the highly masculine environments of colonial Sydney were associated with high rates of drunkenness, a number of NSW governors made significant efforts to curb intoxication through increased taxation, licensing and restrictions on the importation of alcohol. While these strategies had varying degrees of success, one of the most influential factors in determining rates of alcoholic consumption in the 18th and 19th centuries was, as noted earlier, the state of the economy. Periods of economic prosperity such as the 1830s and the gold rush period of the 1850s saw the highest rates of consumption in Australian history (Dingle 1980). Conversely, consumption rates have been lowest in times of economic depression (Dingle 1980; Sturma 1983). However, at
the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, real changes in the population structure of Sydney also began to influence popular drinking practices.

Importantly, this period experienced a levelling out of gender ratios and the rise of the suburban family unit (Room 1988; Lewis 1992). In direct contrast to the highly masculine environments of early colonial times, the late 1800s were strongly influenced by an increase in familial responsibility and the subsequent pressure on family expenditure. By the 1890s owner occupation accounted for well over half of all Australian housing (Lewis 1992). Alongside these significant changes, urbanisation and industrialisation had introduced new rhythms of work to the population of Sydney. These new routines of daily activity tempered levels of heavy drinking. This adjustment coincided with shifts away from ‘frivolous’ expenditure on the leisurely pursuits of intoxication and indicated the emergence of a new culture that was devoted to the idea of material security (Sargent 1979; Midford 2005). The influence of women in this process cannot be overstated. Lewis (1992: 11) states that “[a]gainst the man’s world of booze and two-up and...the...world of mateship rose the feminised world of suburban living- settled, family centred, conformist and, above all, respectable”. Further, Room (1988) observes that, under the roof of the suburban family home, women’s rules governed and, consequently, had a considerable influence on male social behaviour.

Around this same time the Temperance Movement, a long time advocacy coalition for the removal of alcohol from greater society,⁷ was gaining popular support and began to influence state policy and, consequently, social practice. Room (1988:415) argues that:

*Drinking and temperance were deeply involved in the struggle over the dominant cultural style- both because of the negative symbolism of the drunken as wastrel and because of the real costs of drinking to the drinker’s family’s fortunes. The*

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⁷ Lewis (1992:49) notes that the NSW Temperance Society was first formed in 1833 and was committed to anti-drink campaigns that sought to create abstinent societies free of the scourge of alcohol.
Temperance movement was one of the instruments of change, along with the women’s movement and — on a different front — the labour movement.

The combination of these elements that arose around the time that the Temperance Movement was gaining significant support provided an ideal environment in which extensive policy and legislative reform could be made. The wave of moral concerns surrounding drinking, drunkenness and other vice reflected the British middle-class values held prior to, and during, the nascent stages of Australian settlement. The strong religious contingent associated with the Temperance Movement ensured that drinking and associated vice, particularly gambling and prostitution, were depicted as morally flawed, disreputable and disruptive to social order and prosperity. It also stressed that alcohol and drunkenness were incompatible with a successful and prosperous family unit. While religion was not necessarily at the forefront of the Australian consciousness, the objectives and principal interests of the Temperance Movement did align with others, notably the Labour Movement and Women’s Movements (Room 1988). In particular, the Women’s Movement’s focus on equality of the sexes and women’s suffrage increased the status and, subsequently, influence of women in greater society. Naturally, in relation to the family unit, this process ‘tempered’ frivolous male expenditure of family income. However, perhaps the most influential factor in the rise of Temperance was the fact that in the early 20th century the world went to war.

The coming of World War One in 1914 prompted a range of state-based concerns regarding how best to order the lives of very large numbers of working-class males who were being recruited into military service or were regarded as possible future recruits. These concerns provided further impetus for the introduction of restrictive alcohol-and vice-related policy in NSW. The nation was called upon to support the war effort and drunkenness was associated with idleness and was a distraction from productivity in relation to the war effort. Alcohol was also seen as a threat to the order of enlisted soldiers. Indeed, in 1916, a riot in Liverpool and Casula, NSW, saw soldiers break into a number of hotels in Liverpool and Sydney and impressed on the authorities the urgent
need for state intervention regarding licensing (Scott 1941). The dramatic rise in patriotism and civic responsibility surrounding the war had a significant impact on the progression of the Temperance cause. The rise in patriotism and temperance campaigning has also been attributed to Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister between 1916 and 1922. George championed temperance in Britain in an effort to assist the war effort, famously declaring that the British Empire was “fighting Germany, Austria and drink and the greatest of these deadly foes is drink” (Longmate 1968: 266, cited in Phillips 1980).

Fuelling the popularity of this movement, George had persuaded King George V of England to abstain from alcohol for the duration of the war as a symbol of his devotion to the cause. While this feat did not have a great impact in Britain, it had a marked effect in Australia, where a social movement supporting abstinence arose under the decree of ‘Follow the King!’ (Phillips 1980). As a result of this elite and some popular support, and concerted political pressure from the Temperance Movement, restricted trading hours were introduced in most states in Australia. In 1916, NSW introduced six-o’clock closing for all licensed hotels across the state (Caldwell 1972; Phillips 1980; Luckins 2007; 2008). These changes coincided with official concern about the nationwide political divisiveness of rival views about the new nation’s participation in the war and the matter of conscription.

Much has been written about the introduction of early closing times in Australia and one point that is common in most arguments is that, while the closure of licensed venues no doubt influenced the levels of overall consumption, it had a number of unforeseen impacts; in particular, the promotion of a problematic drinking practice, and almost daily urban drinking binge, known widely as the “six o’clock swill” (Caldwell 1972; Larkin 1980; Phillips 1980; Luckins 2007; 2008; Chikritzhs 2009; Fitzgerald and Jordon 2009). This period in Australian history provides perhaps the most distinct example of

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8 Early closing was introduced in South Australia in 1915, NSW, Victoria and Tasmania in 1916, and Queensland in 1923 (Phillips 1980).
ambivalence concerning alcohol-related leisure practices. While the restrictive measures were designed to encourage a more moderate society by reducing alcohol availability in newly remodelled public bars across the state, they did little to prevent intoxication and, indeed, may have promoted more ‘uncivilised’ and disreputable drinking practices than had previously been the case (Phillips 1980; Chikritzhs 2009). Indeed, Luckins (2008) argues that the introduction of early closing times in bars across Australia fundamentally altered the social function of hotels. Whereas previously hotels had been seen as the epicentre of social and leisurely engagement, the introduction of restricted trading promoted a singular focus on intoxication. Chikritzhs (2009:307) states that, “contrary to expectations, the most wide-ranging effect of six o’clock closing was to create a single hour of frenzied drinking”.

**Figure 2: Typical views from outside and inside Sydney hotels during 6 o’clock closing.**

Source: Left to Right: Justice and Police Museum; Laurie Richards Collection, Museum Victoria.

The large crowds drawn to hotels during six o’clock closing forced publicans to alter the layout of their venue to cope with the nightly rush, and these changes have left a lasting mark on the contemporary design of pubs and clubs in Sydney. Old hotels with tiny bars, which had been adequate for as much as a century, “now had to be disembowelled to make room for the herds pressing for a place at the bar” (Phillips 1980: 250) (see Figure
2). Anything that interfered with the fast and efficient dispensing of drink was thrown out, frequently including many of the more social elements of the bar, including billiard tables and dart boards (Phillips 1980). The pub was no longer the social centre for leisurely drinking and recreation but was designed for crowds and easy cleaning after the six o’clock swill. Tiles were introduced as standard wall covering inside hotels because they could be hosed out at the end of a busy night, leading to an atmosphere that was no longer homely and inviting but sterile and cold (Phillips 1980) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: New design - the impact of six o’clock closing on the barroom environment.

Limited seating and tiles became standard within the hotels of Sydney.

Source: Justice and Police Museum

The introduction of early closing, by limiting the commercial opportunities of licensees, not only transformed the pub physically, but played a critical role in shaping the commercial direction of the Australian pub into the future. Publicans and licensees now saw the financial benefits of promoting an environment that stimulated rapid consumption of alcohol. Perhaps the most common alteration was the removal of seating from the hotel floor. As can be seen in the above photos, bench seating was often placed along walls to maximise space for drinkers. These new strategies were the first steps in what contemporary society has labelled ‘vertical drinking’. In ‘vertical
drinking’ bars, little to no seating is provided for patrons, with the underlying logic that seated drinkers consume at a slower rate than those who are standing. Naturally, the faster the patron drinks the more money a venue can make from alcohol sales. These strategies have come to feature prominently in current concerns relating to night-time drinking and related disorder.

Early closing also provided considerable opportunities for crime and corruption. The rise of criminal enterprise around this time was an indication of the popular resistance to restricted trading. The dramatic increase in sly-grogging and after-hours trading that flourished following the introduction of early closing is perhaps the most conspicuous example of this defiance (Luckins 2008). While ostensibly these changes seemed to move Sydney away from its history of dubious leisure and vice, there was a dark side to the rise of Temperance and the subsequent prohibitions that took place in Sydney that become more obvious in the years following the Great War. Restricted trading of alcohol and prohibitions regarding street prostitution, gambling, and the sale of cocaine in pharmacies, led to a marked rise in illicit trading of alcohol and drugs, as well as the organisation of illegal gambling and prostitution rackets in Sydney (Writer 2001; Luckins 2008; Girling-Butcher 2010). The processes of suburbanisation that drew populations away from the city centre created slums in many areas of Sydney, particularly East Sydney and Darlinghurst, where criminality and vice were common (Girling-Butcher 2010). The formation of ‘razor’ gangs, named for their carriage of small, concealable blades used as weapons, were further steps in the emergence of organised crime in Sydney. Led by Tilly Devine and Kate Leigh, two women who exploited a legal loophole preventing men from profiting from the work of prostitutes, these gangs became increasingly wealthy in the early stages of the 20th century (Writer 2001; Girling-Butcher 2010). Running sly-grog shops (see Figure 4, below), brothels, illegal gaming dens and drug-dealing markets, the razor gangs satisfied Sydney’s strong demand for ‘sinful’ leisure that was outlawed under the government regulations guided by temperance. This period clearly demonstrates popular ambivalence regarding alcohol and vice and the resentment that a large portion of Sydney’s population felt about the “violation of [their] familiar customs” (Luckins 2008: 295).
Furthermore, there was strong public rejection of the puritanical and religious rhetoric that was associated with the Temperance Movement that was so influential in shaping public policy. Room (1988: 416) argues that Australians, in the post-war period, became very conscious of external perceptions of themselves. The negative connection between the Temperance Movement and “wowserism” ensured that people rejected very restrictive alcohol-related policies and continued to drink (Room 2010). Like popular public sentiment following the introduction of the Gin Acts in 18th century Britain, it seems that the introduction of restrictive policy and legislation in NSW sparked substantial counter-reaction and public protest that was most visible through increased alcohol consumption rates. This protest was most obviously the case in the 1920s before the Great Depression.

The influence of the Temperance Movement, seen through the continuation of early closing times in NSW, lasted until the 1950s. Particular efforts to invigorate Sydney nightlife were made by the liquor and hotel industry body (via the United Liquor Victuallers Association (ULVA)) around the sesquicentennial celebrations of European
settlement in 1938 (Lewis 1992). From this time, alcohol consumption levels were on the rise and calls for expanded trading hours were increasing in strength. Yet the political and social volatility of the Great Depression in late 1920s and 1930s Sydney, and the urgency of mobilisation and the implementation of rations to meet the challenge of sudden war in the early 1940s, meant no general change in restrictions. Following the conclusion of the Second World War in 1945 there was a more overt and fundamental shift in widely held perceptions of drinking and alcohol. Alcohol began to be seen as an ordinary commodity, not requiring close control (Lewis 1992: 72). Stronger popular and industry lobbying reflected consumer demand for a liberalisation of restrictive trading policy.

The coming of World War II and its aftermath also had a considerable bearing on the re-emergence of vice in Sydney. From 1942, Sydney was frequently inundated with thousands of ‘cashed-up’ American servicemen on leave from the war. Given their pay was much higher than that of their Australian counterparts, the American soldiers often had large sums of money and very little time to spend it. Girling-Butcher (2010: 13) noted that “among their priorities were gambling, drinking and sex, all of which could be obtained on the black market”. Restricted trading and wartime rationing of alcohol further promoted the illicit alcohol trade through sly-grogging. With such limited alcohol supply in Sydney, demand quickly outstripped supply and many publicans looked to earn extra money by illegally selling alcohol (Girling-Butcher 2010).

According to Room (1988) and Grabosky (1977), arrest rates for drunkenness skyrocketed following the Second World War. Indeed, drunkenness factored in 55% of cases presented to NSW courts in 1948 (Grabosky 1977: 133). Nevertheless, the changes made following World War II sounded the death knell of popular support for the Temperance Movement and its initiatives. Significant amendments were made regarding alcohol and licensing policy in NSW. Due to the demand created by returning servicemen, the McKell government, after securing passage of the Liquor Amendment Act 1946, withdrew the freeze on the number of ‘clubs’ in NSW (introduced in the
Carruthers government’s *Liquor Amendment Act 1905* and increased the number of registered clubs allowed to operate in NSW. This measure, in particular, foreshadowed the coming expansion in the number of ex-service personnel, or Returned and Serviced League (RSL), clubs after the Second World War (Wilkinson 1997). Over the following years, the Cahill government continued its liberalisation of alcohol-related policing.

Part of this process involved the establishment of a Royal Commission into the liquor laws in 1952 run by Justice A.V. Maxwell. Following the proceedings, Justice Maxwell ruled that early closing of venues was creating a negative environment in which people were encouraged to drink quickly and without restraint, and so he recommended extended trading beyond 9pm as long as meals were served at the venue and a break was taken in the afternoon (Lewis 1992; Kirkby 2005). This was all part of a new push to promote ‘civilised drinking’ among most citizens rather than merely limiting their access to drink. Another historic Royal Commission, this time held in Victoria and presided over by P. D. Phillips, decreed around this time that trading hours and number of licensed premises did not affect overall consumption rates (Lewis 1992). This ruling, and the prevailing sentiment permeating greater society, was enough to encourage widespread change in policy and legislation that shifted the approach to alcohol from restrictive towards liberalised policies that encouraged industry growth and diversity.

Subsequently, in October 1954, the Cahill government succeeded in obtaining passage of a bill to hold a referendum on closing hours in NSW. The referendum sought the abolition of 6pm closing in favour of extended trading up to 10pm (Lewis 1992). In a further display of the policy shift, the Cahill government, in the last month of 1954, obtained passage of another bill, which became *the Liquor Amendment Act 1954*, removing the limit on the number of issuable club licences (Wilkinson 1997). Two years later the Cahill government provided further impetus for the expansion of clubs in NSW when it obtained passage of the *Gaming and Betting (Poker Machines) Act 1956*, which allowed clubs to install poker machines (Wilkinson 1997). The introduction of poker machines into licensed clubs extended what has become a very problematic relationship between drinking and gambling in Sydney. This relationship would feature prominently in the further expansion of organised crime in Sydney nightlife hotspots and the
institutionalisation of corruption in NSW politics and policing. These processes will be discussed further in the following chapter.

In the 1950s, and continuing until the 1970s, there were also fundamental changes in the social and cultural landscapes of post-war Australia that were driven by historic changes in global and local economies and a new wave of ‘multicultural’ immigration. High levels of employment and economic prosperity afforded populations the financial stability to enjoy more varied leisure pursuits. This freedom, combined with a new wave of cosmopolitanism enhanced by increased immigration of European populations to Sydney (Lewis 1992), advanced the liberalisation of alcohol-related state policy. One of the major remaining restrictions regarding liquor licensing was a ban on Sunday trading. Subsequently, the Liberal government elected to NSW in 1965, under the direction of Premier Robert Askin, decided to hold a referendum in an attempt to lift the restrictions and open up Sunday to the licensed trade. Askin himself was a keen drinker and gambler who openly frequented dubious nightspots in Sydney (Hickie 1985). The referendum was conducted in 1969 but failed to pass (Wilkinson 1997). While Askin was not successful in opening up Sundays to trade, he paved the way for future changes. Eventually, in 1975, as a result of continued government and industry lobbying, restaurants, hotels, theatres and clubs were all granted extended trading rights under new revisions made to the Liquor Act. These changes were championed by Liberal Minister of Justice, John Maddison, with the specific aim of creating “a more civilised atmosphere befitting intelligent men and women in an adult advancing society” (quoted in Lewis, 1992: 91).

Such socially liberal sentiments gathered support from the expanding tertiary educated new middle class which, in the 1960s and 1970s, questioned all aspects of state and police control of social life, as well as personal and sexual morality. At the same time, three concurrent changes were shaping Sydney nightlife. Firstly, Kings Cross emerged as Sydney’s notorious red-light ‘party’ district with significant links with expanding illicit vice. Secondly, an increasingly influential gay community was emerging in Sydney and
stimulating demand for new forms of nightlife; and, thirdly, women became increasingly active as drinkers following the second wave of the Feminist Movement in Sydney. While Kings Cross was not a new scene for night-leisure, it was during the 1960s and 1970s that it evolved into Sydney’s most prominent, and perhaps notorious, nightlife hotspot with a dubious reputation for vice and drinking. As will be discussed in the following chapter in greater detail, the incredible profits offered for sly-grogging during restricted trading in the era of temperance had enabled immense profits for a new breed of criminals in Sydney. Kings Cross was the Sydney site in which organised crime most visibly flourished. With increasingly influential links to corrupt senior members of the NSW Police and state politicians, criminal enterprise became entrenched in ‘the Cross’, running illegal gaming dens, prostitution rackets, as well as supplying an increasingly lucrative illegal drug market (Hickie 1985; Birmingham 2000).

Alongside the expansion of Kings Cross, the rise to prominence of Sydney’s gay community created strong demand for new forms of nightlife in Sydney, the influence of which could be seen most prominently in the development of Oxford Street in east Sydney (Faro and Wotherspoon 2000) and which, to this day, retains a strong connection to Sydney’s GLBT (Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender) community. At the same time, both these precincts (Kings Cross and Oxford Street) featured in a new focus on international tourism which viewed nightlife as a valuable commodity and attraction in newly competitive global tourism markets. This focus led to a number of major government projects designed to create vibrant, dynamic and inclusive entertainment precincts. Under the leadership of Premier Neville Wran, NSW invested significantly in the expansion of leisure precincts such as Darling Harbour in Sydney. This transition, predominantly premised on the development and expansion of leisure-related industries (the majority being alcohol-related), was championed as an aspect of regeneration strategies employed by urban planners to reinvigorate formerly industrial cityscapes and old wharfs that had become derelict following the decline of heavy industry. This growth meant that new wealth streams could be generated following the social and economic transformations associated with the shift from industrial to post-industrial societies around the world - a process that left many urban precincts bare and
without economic utility (Hobbs et al. 2000; Jayne et al. 2006). In Sydney, the remnants of industrialisation can be seen in the harbour side locations of Darling Harbour/Pyrmont that housed many unused warehouses and remains of a once prosperous shipping trade.

As previously mentioned, following the second wave of the Women’s Movement in the 1960s, women also became far more active as nightlife consumers. The introduction of more females into the nightlife dynamic further promoted expansion of nightlife forms, becoming more inclusive and cosmopolitan in the process. The old world of the male-dominated pub, where a female’s only place was behind the bar (Kirkby and Luckins 2006), became a thing of the past. In more recent times, the increasing prominence of females in nightlife settings has brought a new set of concerns to the forefront of social and political debates, while simultaneously signalling the success of efforts to make nightlife settings more inclusive through liberalisation. However, this process will be discussed in more detail in Chapters Four and Five.

With the increasing demand for more varied and inclusive Sydney nightlife, calls for further liberalisation continued throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. In 1979, after significant efforts from both the NSW state government and the liquor industry, Premier Wran obtained passage of the Liquor Amendment Act 1979 which provided for Sunday trading (Wilkinson 1997). During this time a great deal of emphasis was placed on the failed initiatives employed during the temperance era, and the negative influence they had on drinking environments (Chikritzhs 2009). Calls for deregulation of the industry gained widespread support in many states because of the economic value that alcohol-related industries and economies generated for the Australian states in a time of economic decline from manufacturing and heavy industry. Market deregulation and a liberalisation of alcohol-related policy was touted as a solution to the problems of disreputable leisure practices, as it was believed that increased options for nightlife recreation and leisure would allow for nightlife patrons to enjoy themselves, and thus
drink in a more civilised manner in line with Eurocentric ideals of cosmopolitanism (Graham and Homel 2008).

Still more opportunities for drinking were provided by the Greiner government, which gained office in 1988. Nicholas Greiner was the first NSW premier to fully embrace neoliberalism and was thoroughly immersed in free-market ideology and ideas about reduced public regulation of economic life. A year after its election, the Greiner government secured passage of the Liquor (Amendment) Act 1989 (Wilkinson 1997), which permitted hotels and bottle shops to trade between 5am and midnight, Monday to Saturday and between 10am and 10pm on Sundays. Furthermore, applications could also be made by larger “entertainment-orientated” hotels to trade until 3am or, if located in “tourist” areas, until 5am (Maher, Flaherty and Saunders 1994). This new legislation marked the beginning of the controversial late NTE in Sydney.

Towards the end of the 20th century, economic changes were also made a national level that bore significance to Sydney nightlife. Under the direction of Prime Minister John Howard, the Liberal government strongly pursued neoliberal policies promoting market competition. The National Competition Policy (NCP) had a particularly noteworthy effect on leisure markets in the way that it further naturalised the view that public regulation of alcohol restricted the economic potential of nightlife industries. Indeed, under Howard’s leadership, the concept of alcohol as an ‘ordinary commodity’ was officially stated in the NCP (Chikritzhs 2009). These changes preceded significant growth in numbers of licensed premises throughout not only NSW but, indeed, the entire country. They also coincided with the emergence of the NTE concept, a detailed examination of which will be undertaken in Chapter Four.
Conclusion

Throughout the history of Sydney, alcohol has featured prominently as a source of release for the general population and a source of great concern and contention for governing bodies. As this chapter has outlined, the influence of alcohol-related policy and consumption practices in the United Kingdom prior to settlement in Sydney had a profound influence on the early environment of NSW and the relationship that gender and social class have had to both drinking patterns and rival ways of viewing them. Indeed, it has been the aim of this chapter to analyse the influence that these early forms of disreputable leisure and drinking practices have had on contemporary cultures of consumption in Sydney. It has been argued that problematic cultures of consumption, imported from the United Kingdom on the First Fleet in 1788, have continued to flourish in Sydney due to varying degrees of moral and social ambivalence regarding the role alcohol and associated vice and disorder. This public and state ambivalence concerning drinking and disreputable leisure has ensured that public policy and regulation has fluctuated markedly throughout the history of NSW. State reliance on the significant revenues generated from the sale and production of alcohol has certainly influenced state prerogatives in relation to the regulation of drink.

This chapter has also outlined the ramifications that temperance and policies controlling licensing and vice have had on the condition of Sydney leisure. The rise of the Temperance Society and subsequent introductions of restrictive alcohol-related policy forever altered the landscape of the Australian hotel. The role, function and architecture of the licensed environment were reconceived following the introduction of six o’clock closing, creating a significant legacy in contemporary Sydney. The ‘pub’ transformed from being a social hub to a site solely concerned with heavy drinking practices and intoxication. These cultures of consumption have continued to thrive in contemporary Australian culture and, while closing times have now been extended to 24-hours in parts of Sydney, binge drinking is still very prominent in nightlife hotspots.
The prohibitions enacted during the early 20th century also established social and economic conditions that enabled organised crime to flourish and to become entrenched in the leisure markets of Sydney. The implications of this development have been far-reaching and have left an enduring mark on policing and governance in NSW. The policing of contemporary Sydney nightlife cannot be understood without the context of these associated histories. The next chapter will look at which state policing responses to drinking and associated leisure have contributed to a critical transformation of the nature of policing in NSW. This analysis will, in turn, set the scene for the following chapter (Four), which will map official responses to problems of alcohol-related crime and disorder by looking at ‘policing’ and policy initiatives that have been employed throughout the history of Sydney and NSW in an attempt to curtail problems of disreputable leisure, public disorder and vice.
Chapter Three: Transformations in Contemporary Policing and Security

Introduction

Policing in NSW has undergone profound change since colonial settlement in 1788. From its origins in the military, policing in Sydney has evolved into an increasingly pluralised occupation. However, certain overlapping features have been constant. The first element, and one which has now received official, media and academic attention, has been institutionalised corruption. The second, which has received less attention, has been the relationship between policing and the governance of alcohol-related leisure practices. This latter association has been a vital feature in the history of policing and police corruption in NSW and is worthy of a greater critical focus. While corruption has featured in many facets of policing, it has been chiefly through connection with drinking and the regulation of drinking venues that it has become more entrenched. While being both hard to define and to deal with, the corruption\(^9\) of NSW Police, and subsequent attempts at countering it, have been significant forces in shaping contemporary police practice. Although current NSW policing could not convincingly be described as corruption free, without the changes set off by government and judicial inquiry into police corruption NSW Police would undoubtedly be a different institution than it is today.

\(^9\) The term ‘police corruption’ has been used to describe many activities, including, but not restricted to: bribery; violence and brutality; extortion; fabrication and destruction of evidence; the sharing of restricted information; selective non-policing; and impartial or discriminatory policing. A singular, all-inclusive definition of the term is largely problematic due to the inherent complexity of the different contextual forms that ‘corruption’ can and has taken over the course of history (Newburn 1999). A broad, inclusive, definition of the term is provided by Roebuck and Barker (1974) and suggests that police corruption is loosely identified as deviant, dishonest, improper, unethical or criminal behaviour by a police officer. However, perhaps most importantly in seeking a definition of ‘police corruption’ is that it necessarily involves an abuse of the police position, that is, what is corrupted is the inherent trust that is invested in the police as an occupation (Newburn 1999) founded on the provision, in good faith, of a public service. In this sense, in the broadest sense, police corruption involves the exploitation or misuse of authority (Newburn 1999).
NSW Police\textsuperscript{10} is one of the largest police organisations in the English speaking world. Officially founded in 1862 under the provisions of the \textit{Police Regulation Act 1862}, NSW Police has 16,386 active police officers and, as of 2011, female sworn officers represent 26.8\% of all sworn officers and 34.4\% of all staff employed by NSW Police.\textsuperscript{11} Currently, NSW Police operate under the \textit{Police Act 1990} and the \textit{Police Regulations Act 2008}. NSW Police service the entire state of NSW, an area of around 801,430 square kilometres\textsuperscript{12} inhabited by around 7.3 million people, who comprise around one-third of Australia’s population.\textsuperscript{13}

Studies concerned with policing have acknowledged the importance of a historical understanding of the occupation to the comprehension of current organisational structures and work practices (Finnane 1987; 1996; Hogg and Brown 1998; Garland 2001; Newburn 2005; Zedner 2006). The historical sketch that will be presented in this chapter will focus its attention on the considerable influence that drinking and associated vice has had on policing practices. As outlined in Chapter Two, public disorder and the disreputable leisure practices of 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} century Britain had significant influence on the political, social and economic environment of early Sydney. The rise of industrial capitalism and urgent matters of urban order were paramount in debates over the role police could play in watching and shaping the behaviour of the working or “dangerous” classes (Silver 1965). The outcome of these political debates was the formation of the first \textit{modern} policing organisations. It is the argument of this chapter that the policing of disreputable drinking and associated leisure has played an integral part in promoting many of these changes in policing practice.

\textsuperscript{10} NSW Police has had numerous name changes over the course of the last thirty years, changing from NSW Police Force to NSW Police Service in 1987; changing from NSW Police Service to NSW Police in 2002; and changing back to NSW Police Force in 2007. For the purposes of this thesis, and to prevent any confusion, ‘NSW Police’ has been used consistently throughout this work to describe the NSW Police Force/Service.

\textsuperscript{11} Operational police numbers are accurate as of May 2013 and are sourced from the NSW Police website: \url{http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/267667/May_2013.pdf} information accessed 5 July, 2013.


\textsuperscript{13} Statistics sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on March 29, 2012.
The contemporary diffusion of state responsibility regarding law and order has muddied the definition of policing (Shearing and Stenning 1983; 1987; Johnston 1992; Bayley and Shearing 1996; Loader 1997; Jones and Newburn 1998). It is, therefore, of critical importance to differentiate conceptions of ‘the police’ from those of ‘policing’. Reiner (2000: 1-2) argues:

‘Police’ are not found in every society, and police organizations and personnel can have a variety of shifting forms. ‘Policing’, however... may be carried out by a number of different processes and institutional arrangements.

Rawlings (1995) and Reiner (2000) emphasise the importance of moving away from the post-Peelian, narrow definition of ‘policing’ as the set of activities concerned with modern, state-based, police services towards a more developed understanding of ‘policing’ as an aspect of social control. Pasquino (1991) stated that, in the 18th century, the definition of the ‘police’ role was far broader than contemporary versions (see also Johnston 1992). The function of policing was to regulate “everything which in the life of this society...goes unregulated, everything which can be said ...to lack order and form” (Pasquino 1991: 111). As time has passed, this definition has been increasingly channelled through its association with the criminal justice system.

‘Policing’ implies a set of practices that aim to preserve the security of a particular social order through surveillance and threat of sanction (Reiner 1999; 2000). This definition provides scope for a broader understanding of an increasingly fragmented occupation. Policing is largely regarded as the concern of state-based agents of law, order and crime prevention. This association is due to the state’s general dominance in issues of law and order since the advent of the modern police in 1829 (Rawlings, 2002). However, recent developments suggest that policing is reverting to previous forms that existed prior to the watershed police reforms of the early 19th century (Stenson 2001; Zedner 2006).
Central to these changes has been an increasing diffusion of policing tasks between public and private agencies.

While Chapter Two described the histories of drinking and disorderly leisure in Sydney, this chapter will observe the history of state-based ‘policing’ and the influence of alcohol and vice in both the structural development and contemporary function of police in order to offer greater insight into processes of transformation in public, quasi-public and privatised policing agencies. This history will involve an analysis of a number of key aspects of policing in NSW. From the Rum Corps and early attempts by the state to establish an organised police force to contemporary attempts at professionalisation, bureaucratisation and restructuring in the neoliberal state, this chapter examines what role alcohol, drinking and vice have played in this process. However, before doing so, it is important to provide a brief background to these changes and discuss the emergence of the first modern police force in Britain during the 19th century.

**The Evolution of the Modern Police**

The nature and organisation of policing in its modern form is founded on the industrialisation of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The dramatically increased populations of newly industrialised cities produced considerable strain on urban infrastructure and social conditions. Lack of housing, jobs, health services and food stocks meant that issues of disease, vagrancy and unemployment were prevalent in these new urban locations (Rawlings 2002; Lee 2007). With such squalid social conditions, riots and mass protests were common and presented a threat to the emerging industrial economy (Emsley 1987; Silver 1965). Crime rates in urban areas, particularly relating to theft and property offences, are believed to have risen substantially around this time (Reynolds 1998; Rawlings 2002). Whether these increases in crime were real or sometimes simply perceived is immaterial as policy was, and still is, “driven by opinion” (Rawlings 2002: 107). According to Silver (1965), these conditions produced an insecurity that pervaded elite class consciousness. Particularly prevalent
was the idea that the “dangerous classes” presented a threat to the social and working lives of the ideal respectable and disciplined workers of the new class system. An expanded and centrally organised police force was seen as a means through which a more stable and productive economic order could be established and sustained. One of the main ways through which poor, working class, populations were regulated in Britain was the introduction of further laws that governed issues of morality (Rawlings 2002). Through the greater policing and prosecution of offences such as vagrancy, drunkenness, idleness and breaking the Sabbath, the labouring classes’ rebelliousness could be suppressed and the political and economic status quo maintained (Emsley 1987; Reynolds 1998; Rawlings 2002).

In the 1700s relations between the working class and the various early forms of British police were severely strained (Rawlings 2002), with many believing that their surveillance and informing role was simply an extension of the repressive ruling class. Accordingly, by the mid-to-late-18th century there had been significant discussion regarding the role of police in the British Isles (Finnane 1996; Reynolds 1998; Reiner 2000; Rawlings 2002). Political debate was primarily concerned with the foundation of a permanent ‘police force’ that would replace the localised constabularies that had previously been the primary agents of law and order in London and other major cities throughout Britain. Indeed, Rawlings (2002: 107) presented a quote from Rev. Madan (1785) that captured the sentiment of ‘civilised’ society in England around this time. This commentator stated:

*Our gangs of thieves are grown too numerous, and the individuals which compose them too desperate and dangerous to be controuled by the comparatively feeble power of the private magistrate, or of the common parochial constable...*(N)other but active magistrates, who devote their whole time to the one single object of the police-and bands of stout, able, and resolute officers, whose only business is to execute the warrants of those magistrates-can insure any tolerable quiet to the metropolis and its environs.*
A further catalyst of change, the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 saw 300,000 potentially “disreputable men” return to England (Reynolds 1998: 104). The combination of industrial migration and the end of the war exacerbated population problems in London. Already strained by the influx of labouring populations, industry was unable to accommodate many of the newly returned soldiers. Issues of idleness, vagrancy and public disorder that were often associated with unemployment became an even more pressing concern for the British Government (Reynolds 1998). Class-based power relations were placed under increased stress. Such pervasive anxieties not only legitimised the presence of a permanent police force in urban centres but greater regulation of social life more generally (Silver 1965; Sturma 1983; Finnane 1996). The formation of the modern police, or ‘new police’, was framed around a number of critical, strategic, functions of government relating to these concerns and class relations.

Sturma (1983: 163) stated that, in England, “Reform of the police...did not result so much from public animosity as from elite fears concerning a breakdown in public order”. By introducing a permanent and centralised police force it was believed that order could be established and the profitability of the industrial sector ensured. The state-based appearance of independence and neutrality in the new police also ideally fitted the bourgeois liberal model of the separation of powers and the rule of law. This ideological position was particularly attractive given that, prior to the introduction of such major legislation as the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829, the propertied classes were often charged with the overt protection of their own private interests.

However, the new process of police reform was not supported by all of the British gentry. Rural landowners, who had long held power over the ‘policing’ of their personal interests, were strongly opposed to the proposed police reforms because they saw them as constituting a serious threat to their power and authority (Rock 1977). New centralised and routine policing would assume a very different form from the intensely personal power relations and forms of direct social control that characterised rule by the gentry. Furthermore, the new authority given to police as state agents was perceived as
a direct threat to the cherished liberty of landowners from autocratic rule. As a result of these concerns, and of popular protest by the working class (Storch 1975), significant reform was delayed in the British Parliament. Protest against the formation of a new police force had prevented the reforms from being introduced as early as 1785, when Pitt’s proposed Police Bill was rejected on the grounds that it represented ‘continental despotism’ which contradicted ideals central to English liberty. According to Ignatieff (1979: 443), “the idea of such a force seemed pregnant with danger for the ‘liberties of Englishmen’” and so was passionately rejected, often violently, by the urban poor well before, and after, the reforms in 1829.

What turned the tide and instigated major police reform in 1829? As discussed above, processes of industrialisation had transformed the economic and political landscape of Britain by firmly establishing city life as the heartbeat of economic power. As such, the urban capitalist classes were afforded immense influence in matters of politics. Their inherent fear of the urban “dangerous classes”, and the potential threat they posed to the industrial order through communal protest, assured that policing reforms were frequently at the forefront of the political agenda. However, reforms could not appear to enforce class divisions openly. Any such connection would fuel public unrest and further threaten economic stability and industrial order. Fundamental shifts in ideology commensurate with the emergence of the liberal state in the late 18\textsuperscript{th}/early 19\textsuperscript{th} century provided the ideal vehicle through which police reforms could be justified.

Liberal ideology challenged many former class divisions that arose in British history. Liberalism was founded on an ideological model of equality that denied the social and class based distinctions and inequalities that had existed at this time. In relation to criminal justice, this system was premised on the neutrality and impartiality of the law. Liberals such as Henry Fielding and Patrick Colquhoun saw police reform as a means
through which a more socially neutral instrument of law and order could be introduced, thereby reducing class divisions.\textsuperscript{14}

From a neo-Marxist perspective of the sort that has shaped many contemporary understandings, this goal was primarily achieved through the manipulation of the social contract and ideology in what Gramsci labelled the process of ‘hegemony’. This is a term meaning ‘rule by ideas’ and was defined by Gramsci (1971: 12) in the 1920s as “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group”. He believed that through the manipulation of ideology, the ruling class could legitimate their social position and gain consent for increasingly pervasive and restrictive forms of governance. Accordingly, through ideology the capitalist classes create an environment in which the working classes believe that it serves their interest to forgo personal liberties in the interest of greater society. These 19\textsuperscript{th} century debates (theorised by Gramsci in the following century) and their related social environment had a significant bearing on the shape and evolution of policing in NSW and will now be discussed.

\textbf{Early Forms of Policing in NSW}

The beginnings of organised policing in NSW were often far removed from the ideal liberal model. Early police in Sydney and greater NSW were frequently associated with corruption, drunkenness and dereliction of duty (O’Malley 1983; Sturma 1983). These characteristics played a central role in shaping police-community relations and the structural development of the police, and ‘policing’ more broadly, in NSW:

\textsuperscript{14} Emsley (1991) noted that without the influence of Home Secretary Robert Peel, both as a primary champion of police reform and as a ‘consummate politician’ (Emsley 1987: 23), the reforms would not have eventuated. The reforms had been previously rejected by the British Parliamentary Select Committee in 1822. Emsley (1991) credited Peel’s keen political mind as crucial in mobilising parliamentary support which finally resulted in the ratification of the watershed changes. Peel used statistical evidence of crime to reinforce perceptions of increased criminality and convince the British parliament to pass legislation permitting the formation of the Metropolitan Police in 1829.
Policing in Australia began in a discreditable fashion, and it could be argued that it was only in the last part of the twentieth century that the police began to recover from a colonial and convict legacy... (Prenzler and Sarre 2002:59)

Finnane (1996: 11) notes that, upon settlement in 1788, the British colonists did not bring with them any concept of a ‘police force’, instead “what did arrive was some consciousness of the role of the constable”. The position and role of the guarding constable was the simple oversight of matters concerning law and order in the colony. Direction came from the magistracy (effectively, local Justices of the Peace) of their local area. O’Malley (1983: 53) suggests that, in colonial Sydney, this constabulary assumed remarkable power over social and political life. The relationship between policing and alcohol was always fundamental in colonial Sydney. Due to the high levels of public intoxication, control of spirits stores and their distribution guaranteed enormous power and potential for profit. The following section will explore the relationship between Sydney’s first recognised military garrison and ‘policing’ body, the NSW Corps, and alcohol. It will trace the emergence of the Corps as a key figure in Sydney’s spirits trade and the power and influence that this position afforded them.

The formation of the NSW Corps, which assumed substantial control over the ‘policing’ and management of the colony in 1795 (Prenzler and Sarre 2002), would leave a lasting impression on perceptions and practices of the police in NSW. Arriving with the Second Fleet in 1790, the NSW Corps comprised officers who were not in favour in the British Army. A description of the Corps made by Governor Hunter (cited in Evatt 1965:17) was that, although the Corps consisted of highly specialised members of King George III’s army, its members were “those who have been considered disgraceful in other regiments of His Majesty’s service”. Many of the Corps had been engaged in illicit activities prior to their service in NSW (Evatt 1965; Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009). A post on the other side of the world was, for those who had a choice, an ideal opportunity to turn their fortunes around (Karskens and Waterhouse 2010). For those who were forced, it was the ultimate hardship and cause of considerable embarrassment. Either
way, initial sentiment regarding work in the new Southern colony certainly influenced the manner in which Corps members assumed their new deployment.

Led by Major Francis Grose, who arrived in 1792 and assumed the role of Lieutenant-Governor of NSW, and, later, Captain William Paterson, the Corps was immediately concerned with the introduction of military-style rule. This action would grant the Corps significantly increased powers than those under Governor Phillip’s leadership (Lewis 1992; Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009). When Phillip returned to England in late 1792, in a remarkable historical instance of senior ‘police’ control of an entire society and its political apparatus, Grose was left in charge of the whole colony. Given his penchant for militaristic governance, he immediately abandoned Phillip’s governmental approach and granted far more authority to the Corps (Evatt 1965; Grabosky 1977; Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009). Alongside giving members of the Corps increased rations at the expense of the convicts, Grose granted the higher ranking officers generous land holdings, often confiscating land from settlers and convicts who had been given land by Phillip. He also replaced civil magistrates with members of the Corps (Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009) to attain greater control over law and order in Sydney (Evatt 1965). Executive and judicial control was followed by great financial power. Officers also observed that the market for consumer goods in Sydney was wide-open and, given they were the only people in the colony to be paid in Sterling, Corps members were afforded great personal opportunities. The control of currency ensured that the Corps achieved a monopoly on the importation of trade goods, notably spirits, which it used to amass immense personal wealth and further strengthen its hold over colonial governance (Karskens and Waterhouse 2010).

The Corps’ monopoly of spirit imports, and subsequent control over distribution, led to it commonly being referred to as ‘the Rum Corps’. The combination of personal wealth, control over trade, and increasing authority in matters of politics and law and order, ensured that the Corps commanded elevated levels of power and had numerous opportunities for corrupt exploitation. Evatt (1965:17) stressed that this power and
influence made the Corps a “permanent hindrance to the peace and good government of the colony” (Evatt: 1965: 17). For all its other influence it was the Corps’ monopoly of rum, and its distribution, that inspired fundamental shifts in the power-relations of the colony and its government. As little official currency was sent to the colony, rum was its unofficial currency, at least when legal tender became scarce (Grabosky 1977; Lewis 1992). Accordingly, economic exchange and development was frequently driven by the Corps. Due to the popularity of spirits, the Corps’ position placed it in direct influence over the majority of society, not only in its capacity as the main ‘policing’ unit, but also as distributors of the highly prized commodity. The Corps’ primary objective was the acquisition of power, both through monetary gain and political influence (Evatt 1965). This combination of agenda and control of trade made it a formidable political actor. Nowhere was this strategy witnessed more starkly than during the ‘Rum Rebellion’ - the popular name given to the overthrow of Governor William Bligh by the Corps and Captain John Macarthur in 1808.

By the start of the 19th century, the ever-increasing power of the Corps and its control of the rum trade had aroused the attention of the Home Office which, in turn, sought to break the monopoly of the rum trade and restore power to the state (Evatt 1965; Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009). Attempts to break the Corps’ control were made by Governors Hunter, King and Bligh. All three were unsuccessful due to the political and social influence of the Corps alongside the considerable wealth of its members (Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009). Governor Hunter, the first to assume command of the colony following the Corps’ period of full control in 1795, was alarmed by the unrestricted trade in spirits and its impact on the general condition of society in Sydney (Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009). He immediately set about introducing strict rules regarding spirits use and distribution but, due to the non-compliance of the Corps, was, ultimately, unsuccessful in his efforts. It was, however, Governor Bligh’s relationship with the Corps that resulted in the ‘Rum Rebellion’.
Bligh, from the beginning of his reign as Governor of NSW, was forthright in presenting his design for the colony. In his first address upon arriving from England in 1806, he unveiled his plan which made an immediate impact on his relationship with the Corps. Bligh stated that he believed, through proper regulation, that free settlers and other industrious persons of the colony should be encouraged to succeed in their various economic endeavours, and could be best achieved through strict supervision by the government (Evatt 1965). Naturally, this new political stance contrasted significantly from the previous governments which, by and large, had either turned a blind eye to the Corps’ monopolies or been powerless to act against them. As such, Bligh was immediately targeted as an enemy of the Corps and his downfall began. Bligh’s actions did little to slow his demise. After writing to the Home Office he made it clear that he sought to end the use of spirits as barter or legal tender, and to return normal trading practice to the settlement. He also sought to stop the unjust practice of granting land without due process (Evatt 1965). This change would, of course, seriously inhibit the Corps’ revenue streams and, therefore, limit its power over matters economic. John Macarthur, a prominent and influential member of the Corps, took particular offence to the actions of Bligh, and it was their relationship that ultimately resulted in the first (and so far only) armed takeover of government in Australia’s history (Evatt 1965).

Macarthur, himself a wealthy land-owner and future leading wool merchant, had a particularly large amount at stake under Bligh’s government. Given Bligh’s attempts to reform colonial economic practice, Macarthur was placed in a precarious position in which his financial prosperity was threatened. After a number of disputes, Bligh ordered Macarthur arrested for disobeying a magistrate’s order and failing to appear in court on matters involving a convict escape which occurred on a ship under Macarthur’s charge. With the Corps on his side, Macarthur defied the court and, instead, with the help of other key members of the judicial system, marched on Government House with the objective of overthrowing Bligh under the premise that he was no longer fit to govern (Evatt 1965). The overthrow was successful and precipitated a reversion to conditions that had existed prior to Bligh coming to power.
The Rum Rebellion provides the ultimate example of the power of the Corps in shaping the early political and social conditions of NSW. Through corrupt practices and the monopolisation of not only law and order but economic trade, the Corps created an environment in which its rule dictated much of the social behaviour of colonial society. Underlying this power was the Corps’ relationship to alcohol and its distribution and consumption in the colony. When this relationship was challenged by Bligh, the Corps was given an incentive to usurp the colonial leadership. Given its political and social position, and the wealth that its members had generated through years of exploiting monopolies of liquor and state-sanctioned violence, the Corps was temporarily successful in maintaining power through organised, armed rebellion. Nevertheless, this extreme act raised alarm in London and it became the final undoing of the Corps and its hold on political power in Sydney. A key first goal for the next Governor Lachlan Macquarie was a curtailment of the arrogant power of the Corps. Reform of the policing structure was needed to restore police control to the state, and so began a process of shifting control back to the centre. However, this move would result in the creation of a new set of issues and challenges that will now be discussed.

Centralisation and the Upsurge in the Policing of Petty Offences

Following the police reform debates taking place in London in the 1820s, the police in NSW also began a process of transformation in which the various constabulary forces, which had been locally-controlled up until this time, become centralised and state-based (Finnane 1987; 1996). According to Finnane (1987), NSW was the first Australian state to implement structural changes in line with its British counterparts and “under the Police Act of 1833 the Sydney police became one of the first colonial forces to come under the influence of the London Metropolitan Police” (Finnane 1987: 21). While London certainly provided considerable direction regarding new forms of policing in NSW, processes of centralisation were not complete until the mid-19th century (Finnane 1987). This process, guided by legislative amendment, specified that the police force was to be run by a “single responsible officer, variously titled commissioner, chief commissioner or
inspector general, who was to administer the police subject to the direction of the colonial secretary or other responsible minister” (Finnane 1996: 14). This proclamation was intended to ensure that the police were independent in their daily operations although directed by the political will of government.

O’Malley (1983) suggests that the development of “hegemonic policing” in NSW was a direct strategy borne out of the need to address the concerns regarding rising crime rates, civil strife and public disorder. Consent to the formation of the ‘new’ police lay in the ability of a police force to provide ‘peripheral’ social services by actively engaging with wider needs for safety and security. Through such engagement, the social life of the working class could be more closely monitored while still maintaining the impression of benefitting the targeted population. From the 19th century, the development of hegemonic policing has laid the foundation for processes that have continued to shape policing imperatives in contemporary Sydney.

The new Sydney press played a central role in developing public discourse about the safety and condition of Sydney around this time. In 1835, when Judge Burton (cited in Finnane 2008: n.p.) of the Supreme Court criticised the number of serious crimes being brought before the courts, *The Sydney Herald* published an alarming editorial about burgeoning crime rates that were “unexampled in the criminal records of any country”. A decade later, *The Sydney Herald* wrote of the “complete sense of insecurity” that pervaded Sydney, stating that: “Robberies and murders, increasing both in numbers and in audacity, infest our streets and beset our inhabitations” (cited in Finnane 2008). In fact, during this time Sydney’s crime rate had fallen, but highly publicised crimes, such as the murder of shopkeeper Ellen Jamieson by John Knatchbull in January 1844, combined to justify the media and political campaigns against the convict and ‘dangerous’ classes who were seen as the cause of so many of the issues confronting society, particularly those of a criminal and violent nature (Finnane 2008). The urban politics of law and order had its genesis in these early media campaigns, also displaying the way in which social perceptions of crime could be manipulated to rationalise the
implementation of more stringent policing measures, as was the case in Sydney with the emergence of the newly centralised and state-based NSW Police.

Alongside widespread anxiety about rising criminality and the threat it posed to civilised society in Sydney, one of the driving forces of change in NSW was the fact that, as previously mentioned, drunkenness and dereliction of duty had reached such levels within the hierarchy of the police that the organisation had become ineffectual (O’Malley 1983). It was believed that the creation of a centralised police force, run by government directive, would raise the standards of policing. The colonial Acts that governed the formation of centralised police forces in NSW have had significant bearing on the contemporary makeup of the police. The centralisation of policing in NSW changed the nature and agenda of policing in Sydney, particularly in relation to alcohol, drinking and the working class.

Attempts at expanding policing services in Sydney mirrored changes experienced in London that sought to placate fears regarding an unruly working class that threatened the prosperity and order of ‘civilised’ society. The newly found riches realised during the gold rushes of the 1850s, saw a return to levels of drinking that had not been seen in Sydney for a number of decades (Grabosky 1977). Alongside these rising consumption levels was public animosity regarding the over-regulation of working-class life that was the cause of an increasing number of public riots (Grabosky 1977), and the new police in Sydney immediately set out to assert its position and authority. Finnane (1987: 21) remarked on this eventuality when he stated that expansion of the police “created an upsurge in such petty offences as drunkenness, disorderly conduct, breaches of the peace, ‘corner lounging’, vagrancy and prostitution”. By focusing on petty public offences, the police believed that they could alleviate widespread fears concerning working-class deviance (Finnane 1987; Hogg and Golder 1987). However, the prosecution of petty offences such as drunkenness and disorderly conduct, by far the most readily observable transgressions in colonial Sydney, only served to further deteriorate the relationship between the police, the state, and the working class.
The decision to target, and so criminalise, drunkenness and related leisure activities was always going to strain police-working class relations due to the extraordinary popularity of such pursuits. The harshness and ferocity of punishment for such offences only served to exacerbate class hatred. In 1830, following the introduction of new legislation by Governor Darling that specifically targeted the “disorderly inclinations of convicts”, public drunkenness, neglect of work and abusive language became punishable by 100 lashes or 12 months hard labour in chains (Grabosky 1977: 63). Compounding this problem was the corruption of policing practice that saw many wrongfully accused and convicted of offences they did not commit (Hogg and Golder 1987).

While execution of policing functions may have been corrupted by individual officers, the new directives shaping police action were highly strategic. Hogg and Golder (1987: 64) suggest that targeting petty offences concerned with public nuisance and the dissolution of public and social civility were designed to:

*habituate the populace to certain uses of public space...not...by a frontal assault which would engender resistance, but by insinuating norms of propriety into the existing practices of antagonistic communities, groups and individuals, and deflecting or displacing resistance onto non-antagonistic terrains...Policing therefore often amounted to a rechannelling or relocating of practices: removing hitherto public, disorganised and antagonistic conducts into institutionalised and privatised settings.*

The policing agenda was as much about shaping popular perceptions of crime and reconfiguring the ‘terrain’ of disreputable social behaviour as it was about reducing incidence of serious criminality. This is a particularly pertinent transition in the context of this study because it is a process that has continued to feature prominently in the policing of drinking practices in NSW to this day.
However, while the ideological direction of policing reform may have been grounded in liberal philosophy, the execution of the new agenda was often based on an entirely different set of values. Sturma (1983) remarked that this distortion was largely due to the lack of economic support from the Home Office in Britain. Lack of monetary backing seriously limited the quality of personnel available for recruitment by the police and subsequently undermined claims that centralisation aided a ‘professionalisation’ of policing in NSW. Because the Home Office believed the colony should be financially self-sustainable, and the colony itself had limited resources to spend on policing, the wages offered to constables were very poor. This situation led officers to find more creative avenues of making money (Sturma 1983). It often resulted in the corruption of the judicial process, with offences being fabricated and charges laid against alleged offenders and often against specific licensed venues which were simply targeted by police with a financial reward in mind. The justice system of the time was designed so that officers were given financial incentive for the capture of criminals, a partial justification for the low wages of the police. This routine usually involved receiving a portion of the fines administered by the magistrate for the offences of the perpetrator. Sturma (1983:167) states that “it was complained that the police refused to act unless there was some prospect of remuneration...At the same time, the offer of rewards could inspire interference with or the arrest of innocent people...Even more obnoxious was the system in which informing constables received a portion of the fines for certain offences”.

The most common offences exploited in this regard were of a petty nature. Drunkenness, easily the most visible of these offences, was, therefore, frequently exploited by the police because of its prevalence and because the alleged offender usually had little chance of providing a substantial defence or affording representation. These offences allowed significant discretion on behalf of the police and the magistrate and, as such, were ripe for exploitation (Sturma 1983). This corrupt practice further fuelled tensions within the targeted populations and acts of violence against the police were not uncommon. As a result, legislative amendments were introduced in the late 19th century in an attempt to limit such action and attempt to further “professionalise”
the police (Sturma 1987). Under these amendments, portions of the fines were no longer given directly to the informing officers, instead going towards a “reward fund” that was distributed based on overall performance rather than individual rates of arrest (Sturma 1983).

The relationship between agents of law and order and the working-class population were severely strained by the new policing practices discussed in this section. Alcohol and the policing of popular leisure were central to this hostility. Popular animosities continued to be felt and often resulted in acts of violence and resistance by working-class groups—such as the notorious larrikin mobs and razor gangs—that existed in Australian cities through the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Murray 1973). Indeed, overt resentment towards the police continued up until the late 20th century, and it has continued to influence contemporary policing practice in relation to drinking and associated leisure practices, as will be discussed in the following section which examines the rise of organised crime and its links with the corruption of NSW Police and state politics.

**Prohibition, Organised Crime and Institutionalised Corruption in NSW Policing and Politics**

Much of the 20th century was a tumultuous time for policing in NSW, with major criminal networks emerging in Sydney as it became a much larger city in the 1920s, re-emerging in the 1950s and 1960s and continuing to the present day. In all these periods criminal enterprise has been intertwined with leisure, particularly after-dark. Sly-grogging, the illicit drug trade and illegal gaming and prostitution rackets, which all featured heavily in 20th century Sydney, have played a significant role in shaping contemporary night-leisure - if not for their legacy on state policy, then through the condition and environment of various nightlife precincts in Sydney’s CBD. They have also had a strong relationship and association with politics and policing in NSW. As outlined in the previous chapter, the genesis of organised crime in Sydney can be traced to rise of the Temperance
Movement and the subsequent prohibitions that were legislated under its influence at the beginning of the 20th century (Writer 2001; Girling-Butcher 2010). Restricted trading of licensed premises, the prohibition of cocaine sales from chemist shops, bans on gambling and the criminalisation of street prostitution, promoted the emergence of sophisticated ‘black markets’ run by increasingly organised criminal gangs, including those commonly referred to as ‘razor’ gangs (Writer 2001; Girling-Butcher 2010).

Three criminal groups were particularly prominent from the 1920s and dominated Sydney’s illicit trades up until the outbreak of World War II. One was run by Phil ‘the Jew’ Jeffs, and the others were led by two powerful women: Kate Leigh and Tilly Devine (Writer 2001; Girling-Butcher 2010). Both Leigh and Devine were able to exploit legal loopholes that prohibited men from profiting from the work of prostitutes and so established themselves as the two most prominent madams in Sydney. These gangs competed ferociously for market share in Sydney’s vice economy, resulting in two major riots in 1929. The first, known as ‘the Battle of Blood Alley’, took place in Eaton Avenue, King’s Cross on May 7th, 1929 (Writer 2001). Later that year, on August 8th, 1929, another riot, ‘the Battle of Kellett Street’, took place between the rival gangs (Writer 2001). Community outcry over this very public violence inspired targeted legislative amendments and aggressive police intervention which ultimately curtailed the operations of these gangs in Sydney (Birmingham 2000). Of particular note, the NSW Vagrancy Act was amended in 1929 with the introduction of a ‘criminal consorting clause’, by which it became illegal to associate and drink with thieves, prostitutes or persons who have no visible or lawful means of support (Girling-Butcher 2010).

However, while the ‘razor’ gangs’ influence diminished with the outbreak of World War II, a new breed of career criminal emerged to fill the void. Police action had momentarily stamped out the illicit drug trade but “gambling, drinking and sex... remain[ed] as popular as ever” (Girling-Butcher 2010: 13, see also Birmingham 2000: 466). As outlined in the previous chapter, the war saw an increase in social problems associated with alcohol in Sydney- drunkenness and crime abounded (Grabosky 1977). Around this time
there was also an acute sense of dissatisfaction with trading restrictions in hotels and resulting conditions in pubs around the city (Lewis 1992). Illicit trading was further popularised due to critical shortages in beer supply following the reduced production and off-shore demand created by the war (Girling-Butcher 2010). Indeed, it was stated that:

\[ \text{A publican could make an extra £2 [a current value of around $100 according to the author] per dozen bottles of beer above the government-set price if he sold it out the back door. Sly-grog dealers were reported to be selling beer at up to £6 [$350] per dozen, local spirits at £4 [$234] per bottle and scotch at £7 [$410] a bottle (Girling-Butcher 2010:13)} \]

The affluence introduced to the city in the form of American soldiers on leave from the war fuelled the demand for liquor. In fact, this was a time of “massive expansion” of illegal vice markets (Birmingham 2000:466), with high demand for liquor, drugs, prostitution and gambling (Girling-Butcher 2010). Twenty years later, during the Vietnam War, American troops would again stimulate the vice districts of Sydney (Cockburn and Steketee 1986) but, this time, Sydney’s underworld had been transformed into a far more sophisticated, complex and violent entity (Birmingham 2000).

The 1950s and 1960s were a period of long affluence in Sydney and across Australia. The prosperity of this period, which lasted until the 1973 economic downturn, enabled a more liberal approach to leisure spending and further fuelled the dramatic growth of Sydney nightlife during this period. The immense profits created in illicit night-leisure markets lured career criminals, like Abe Saffron, to establish and become involved with numerous venues in Sydney’s bustling nightlife during the 1950s. The convening of the Maxwell Royal Commission in 1952 to inquire into the liquor laws governing the state uncovered the extent of the illicit grog market in Sydney (Lewis 1992). In relation to Abe
Saffron, the Commission’s report (1954: 71) concluded that he was using licensed premises as cover to supply restaurants and nightclubs with around 3000 bottles of beer and other spirits a week. The Commission also looked at the relationship between sly-grogging and the NSW Police. Maxwell (1954) concluded that a ‘laissez-faire’ attitude had developed among many members of the NSW Police, and that there were serious irregularities and suspicions concerning senior officers who had been given significant amounts of money from illegal bookmakers and pub owners with connections to Sydney’s sly-grog trade. Many others were also found to have unaccountable wealth (Report of the Royal Commission on Liquor Laws in NSW 1954).

By the late 1960s, following the outbreak of very public and brutal gangland warfare which resulted in a number of high profile shootings, the organisation and effectiveness of policing in NSW was becoming a topic of increasing public comment and political debate (Dixon 1999). Throughout this period, and into the 1970s and 1980s, more major crime syndicates arose in NSW and relationships with both key politicians and members of the police would become further entrenched in corruption. Sydney’s drinking venues and nightlife scene formed the terrain for this new pattern of corruption. Particularly prominent were crime figures George Freeman, Lenny McPherson, Stan ‘The Man’ Smith, Perce Galea, Frederick ‘Paddles’ Anderson and Neddy Smith, alongside Saffron, who continued to operate numerous Sydney drinking venues (Hickie 1985; Birmingham 2000; Girling-Butcher 2010). Between 1965 and 1976, during the leadership of Premier Askin, NSW experienced a period of political and police corruption “unparalleled” in its history (McCoy 1980). Indeed, an “impeccable source” close to Perce Galea and high up in his criminal organisation stated that between 1968 until Askin’s retirement from public office (1976), the Premier and his Police Commissioner, Norm Allen, were paid $100,000 per annum each (equivalent to $1 million today (Girling-Butcher 2010)) to keep illegal casinos in Sydney open and away from police attention (Hickie 1985:59). Around this time, licensed venues also became the new locus for the distribution and selling of heroin.
A key change for policing at this time was a new atmosphere of social movement and civil libertarian criticism of Sydney police. The challenge of anti-Vietnam, student radical, feminist, indigenous, gay and green movements all had a serious impact on public confidence and the pressure for police reform and accountability. The new attitudes of social rebellion and media freedom clashed headlong with revelations about widespread corruption within the criminal justice system (courts, police and prisons) in NSW. Some of the political pressure for change was also an outcome of inept efforts to impose traditional authority on internal criticism.

In 1970, Philip Arantz, a computer expert then working for NSW Police, leaked police statistics to a journalist at The Sydney Morning Herald which provided evidence that the police, under Commissioner Allen, had been systematically under-reporting crime rates and that police effectiveness in solving the rising crime problem was minimal (Dixon 1999). The ‘Arantz Affair’, as it would become known, highlighted police ineptitude and corruption and led to a very public slander campaign against Arantz. Both Allen and Premier Askin attempted to discredit Arantz, and Allan even attempted to have Arantz certified and committed to a mental hospital (Dixon 1999). As a result of the scandal, Allan resigned from his position as Commissioner of NSW Police (Girling-Butcher 2010). These revelations led Finnane (1995) to describe Allan’s term as the lowest point in the history of NSW Police (see also Dixon 1999: 14).

So great was the public concern about corruption and crime that the Moffitt Royal Commission was established in 1973 to investigate the extent and activities of organised crime in NSW clubs (Hickie 1985). As expected, NSW Police responded defensively to the Commission’s inquiries (Dixon 1999). However, in an extraordinary gesture, the police department asked the Commission to “not voice publicly...any adverse findings that he might draw against the police”, which for Dixon (1999: 18) was “symptomatic of a mentality that found it difficult to accept public criticism”.

Public criticism of police ineffectiveness and links to corrupt practice continued to feature in debates about crime and policing up until the election of Neville Wran as Premier of NSW in 1976. Wran, in an attempt to distance himself from Askin’s legacy of corruption, sought reforms in policing structure and extended powers of the Ombudsman to investigate complaints against the police (Dixon 1999). However, Allan’s replacement as Commissioner of NSW Police, Fred Hanson, did little to allay public concern regarding corruption. It would later be alleged that he, too, was receiving bribes to ignore the operation of illegal casinos in Sydney (Dixon 1999; Girling-Butcher 2010). Indeed, Swanton and Hoban (1990: 33) commented that “Hanson served as Commissioner for a brief four colourful years, generally an unproductive, cavalier and intemperate regime which contributed minutely to the welfare, reputation and progress of the Police Service”. There was a rapid succession of Police Commissioners around this time, with Commissioner Wood (1976) continuing on the same path as Hanson and Allan before him. Wood’s complacency regarding police corruption was cause for significant public concern (Dixon 1999). In a quotation taken from The Sydney Morning Herald on the 1st of July 1977 (pg.7, cited in Dixon 1999), Wood responded to the question of whether or not police corruption was ‘inevitable’, saying:

> Of course, you must remember that some police get a lot of temptations that you wouldn’t get in other vocations. Are we any more corrupt that any other section of society? No. Definitely not. There’s an old expression: ‘We’re all thieves at heart’. We’ll all steal from the income tax department. You don’t see too many extremely wealthy police.

The frankness and imprudence in these comments heightened public and political concern. Police and government relations became exceedingly strained (Dixon 1999). The relationship was further damaged when Premier Wran repealed the Summary Offences Act 1970 in 1979 as part of his left-liberal reform agenda for the police that included the decriminalisation of a range of ‘victimless crimes’. This reform began a public political battle between the NSW Police Association and the Wran Government
Frank Walker, the NSW Labor Attorney General under Premier Wran, was singled out as the architect of the reforms and was targeted by police during the 1981 election. During this election the police engaged in a campaign of “selective non-enforcement” (Hogg and Brown 1998: 36) in which they did not attend to matters of public law and order in a range of city locations, including Walker’s Georges River electorate (Egger and Findlay 1988). The result was the stimulation of public discontent against the government and, specifically, Attorney General Walker, with many police complaints channelled towards the government. Indeed, in many cases the public were wrongly told that the police were “unable to do anything” due to the legislative changes and were advised to “talk to Mr Walker” if they had objections (Egger and Findlay 1988: 220). At the same time, the NSW Police Association launched a media scare campaign about the reforms and a phase of union militancy began with large and angry police gatherings. The power of the police was on full display during this episode and demonstrated “how the politics of law and order can become mired in the most symbolic debates about police powers which are almost completely devoid of any practical connection to the factors which affect serious crime rates” (Hogg and Brown 1998: 37).

Another major part of Wran’s reform agenda was the establishment of the Lusher Inquiry in 1979. Set-up to examine the condition and structure of the administration of NSW Police, the Inquiry lasted 18 months and had a broad mandate to investigate the structure, organisation and management policies of the NSW Police, as well as the relationship between the police and the Executive Government (Lusher Report 1981). The results were significant and proposed wide-ranging reforms to the structure and governance of the police. Of particular note, the Inquiry sought a clarification of objectives within the police hierarchy. It suggested that these objectives must be periodically subjected to performance assessment in an effort to realign police roles with community needs and to recover police/community relations (Lusher Report 1981). It also made recommendations concerning recruitment, training, promotion and the prevention and detection of corruption (Lusher Report 1981). However, perhaps the most notable developments following the conclusion of the Inquiry was the
establishment of the NSW Police Board and the appointment of John Avery as the NSW Police Commissioner in 1984. It has been argued that these events brought about major organisational and ideological change in the nature of policing in NSW (Chan 1997).

Under Commissioner Avery and the new Police Board, many of the recommendations of the Lusher Inquiry were realised. In what can be understood as a refinement of Peelite policing, Avery championed a movement towards ‘community-based policing’ that had been outlined in his visionary, and controversial, book *Police: Force or Service?* (1981). The formation of the Police Board also played a central role in the transformation of the police in NSW. Dixon (1999:24) asserted that “[t]he establishment of the Police Board in 1983 provided a vehicle for instituting change in police administration, especially in reviewing the system of promotion by seniority, in the area of education and training (with the establishment of the new Police Academy in Goulburn) and in reforming the modes of centralisation and inflexibility that had characterised administration”. A campaign against corruption became the focal point for a more general process of initiating rapid occupational change. Structural re-organisation, through decentralisation and regionalisation of the police, allowed Avery to combat institutionalised corruption. Such processes limited the power of large police branches, such as the notorious Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB), and closed the gap between police decision-makers and private citizens (Chan 1997; Dixon 1999). Similarly, a new focus on education and training began a significant push towards ‘professionalisation’ that featured prominently in police reforms over the next decade.

In relation to nightlife and drinking, a key reform was the abolition of the NSW licensing squad (Fleming 2008). The licensing branch was seen as a hotbed of corruption, with practices such as the lax regulation and non-prosecution of licensing breaches (under-aged drinking, violent premises, illicit drug dealing *etc.*), and forms of graft and kick-backs ranging from free drinks and entertainment to significant cash payments being commonplace during their oversight of hotels and clubs in Sydney.
However, while Avery’s term as Police Commissioner ‘revolutionised’ the NSW Police, the most publicised event in the history of policing in NSW was the Wood Royal Commission. Established in mid-1994 to investigate allegations of corrupt police protection in cases of paedophilia, the Commission resulted in significant structural, cultural and operational changes within NSW Police that moved far beyond its initial mandate. As a component of these developments, several new processes have been employed to attempt to ‘professionalise’ and distance the organisation from its corrupt past. In discussing this period, key elements concerning both the Commission itself and the resulting changes have been selected for further analysis.

As stated above, the decades before the Royal Commission saw law and order become a major political issue in Australia (Finnane 1999), particularly so in Sydney. In this time, a number of high profile, ‘gang-related’, killings had stimulated public anxieties and political debate around issues of policing and public order. However, the post-war period between 1950-1970 witnessed a process of liberalisation in relation to liquor and gaming policy that sought to invigorate the economy (Prenzler and Sarre 2002). Similar to the problems discussed in earlier sections of this chapter, it was believed that many of the issues that arose in relation to corruption within NSW Police prior to the Wood Royal Commission were borne out of the policing of this ‘vice’ and the opportunities afforded to police for the exploitation of their positions of authority (Prenzler and Sarre 2002). Alongside this relationship, and again evident throughout NSW history, political pressure to decrease apparent rates of crime encouraged the employment of corrupt policing practices, many of which came to the fore in the investigations of the Commission. According to the Final Report of the Royal Commission (Wood 1997), systematic corruption was entrenched in almost every facet of NSW Police. Among the ways in which these corrupt acts manifested themselves were: substance abuse (including drug and alcohol abuse), theft and extortion by officers, falsification of evidence, the receipt of gratuities (either financial or otherwise) for services rendered, serious assault, drug supply and extortion (Wood 1997). Many of these incidents were carried out in nightlife spaces in which vast sums of money were being generated by
illicit activities, particularly in relation to illegal drug markets which had emerged during the 1980s.

Perhaps what was most concerning regarding the state of policing in NSW was that, according to Wood (1997: 153), corruption:

> Was no longer confined to fortuitous opportunity or to protection provided by way of a blind eye to selected criminal activities, but often arose because police created and actively planned similar activities.

The apparent tone of surprise that came from Commissioner Wood and his colleagues was not justified, but the extensive use of video-recording and audio surveillance technology, and the sensational release of this evidence in the national media, drew a more critical public eye to matters of police malpractice. It could also have seemed naïve to serious students of local police history or many thousands of serving and retired police officers in NSW at this time with knowledge of entrenched corruption from past decades.

The existence of a “police culture” has been highlighted by many commentators as a critical element in the reality of systematic corruption in the police (James and Warren 1995; Chan 1997; Dixon 1999). As such, this culture was referred to with significant emphasis during the Commission. Police culture is seen as a practice inculcated through exposure to experienced officers both on the job and through the various training programs of new recruits. Manning (cited in Chan 1999: 267) describes police culture in the following excerpt:
The occupational culture constructed by the police consists of long-standing rules of thumb, a somewhat special language and ideology that help edit a member’s everyday experiences, shared standards of relevance as to the critical aspects of the work, matter-of-fact prejudices, models for street level etiquette and demeanour, certain customs and rituals suggestive of how members are to relate not only to each other but to outsiders, and a sort of residual category consisting of the assorted miscellany of some rather plain police horse sense.

The construction of this culture has been attributed to a number of conditions which exist within policing organisations around the world. Chan (1999) suggests that police culture is maintained by processes of socialisation that take place within the structure of police hierarchy. During this process new recruits are socialised by their senior colleagues through the recounting of anecdotes and “war stories” (Chan 1999: 112). These war stories are often glamorised versions of events that depict heroic acts of courage, bravery and loyalty, and frequent rule-breaking that was overlooked, in order to reinforce masculine ideals that are prized within police cultures. Drinking seems to have played a critical role in the continuation of this culture, and received comment during the Commission (Wood 1997).

Dixon (1999) also discusses the ways in which these ideals are taught and learnt through the “normative structure of policing”. He observes how various types of normative guidance are inculcated in police recruits by their superiors. These forms of guidance attempt to encourage a certain moral and ethical awareness to new police officers. Although he recognises that a normative structure may be regarded as mere rhetoric for some officers, Dixon (1999) maintains that it helps to shape the real attitudes and behaviour of police. These ideals also provide a benchmark for police behaviour that assists senior management when assessing subordinate, unethical or illegal behaviour. While police culture may have many positive characteristics, it is the negative influence that it can exert on officers that is the focus of much of the literature regarding
institutionalised corruption within police agencies. The central problem here is to find a way of overcoming this workplace culture when it is supporting damaging practices.

In the case of the NSW Police and the Wood Royal Commission, it was argued that the high status of the Criminal Investigations Branch (CIB) within the police hierarchy meant that it held significant sway over the developing cultures of the force. In relation to vice and nightlife in Sydney, members of the CIB were recorded as having nefarious relationships with key crime figures in underworld hotspots like Kings Cross in Sydney’s inner city. Indeed, Kings Cross police officers regularly protected local crime syndicates from unwanted police intervention and were implicated in gross acts of corruption and extortion in the notorious nightlife precinct. While not a new phenomenon, Wood (1997: 191) remarked that this corruption was sustained by a “code of silence”, a cultural practice that saw police protect each other from outside scrutiny and investigation by resisting inquiry and failing to report on the dealings of other officers. According to evidence submitted during the Commission, failure to uphold the “code” often resulted in ostracism, alienation and even dismissal (Wood 1997: 191-193). Furthermore, the final report following the Commission (Wood 1997: 192) suggested that the code and culture of protection and resistance were fostered by an adversarial culture which perpetuated an “us versus them” attitude. In this approach, anyone not within the police, or who actively challenged policing integrity, was seen as an enemy and dealt with accordingly as an “enemy”.

One of the main strategies proposed during the Commission to overcome systematic corruption and the cultural ideals of self-protection and closure that existed within the police was the introduction of tertiary, specialised education. Advocates of this approach argued that higher education was synonymous with a commitment to challenging, questioning, criticising, and analysing existing institutions and, therefore, would provide a way of imparting new values and broader perspectives into the police organisation (Whitehead 1967; Brown 1974; Gouldstein 1977). As such, the Commission favoured a system under which entry into the service would depend on the acquisition
of a university degree, obtained through an approved university before application was made to join the police. Following this education, the necessary practical skills would be delivered at the NSW Police Academy (Wood 1997). By providing an external influence, removed from pre-existing ideals of the police, the Commission believed that the entrenchment of negative workplace cultures could be negated. In this way, the issue of corruption and its solution was further merged with the professionalisation goal of many.

This official focus on police culture and its pernicious effects was a major event in the scrutiny and reform of police within and beyond Sydney. Yet, an unfortunate consequence of the Commission’s central focus on a negative occupational culture appears to have been a lack of detailed interest in the urgency and formal implementation of structures and processes to ensure police organisational accountability, and to counter abuses of power with a balance of external oversight and a continuing stress on the value of serious community engagement. From the late 1990s onwards, aspects of the Wood Commission’s criticisms of NSW Police were sometimes interpreted as signalling the failure of Avery’s reforms and a renewed need for more disciplined and management-driven dealings with the media, crime and public.

These processes of reform in police education were part of a broader shift aiming to produce greater ‘professionalisation’ within the police. This change has coincided with a transformation of the police not only in NSW but throughout Australia. Analysing this transformation is of critical importance to this study. Without adequate exploration of this process, future developments, including the pluralisation of policing and subsequent “load-shedding” (Button 2002) between public and private police agencies, are less easily understood.
Credentialism, ‘Professionalisation’ and the Evolution of Contemporary Policing

Internationally the level of formal police education has increased dramatically over the past thirty years (Carter and Sapp 1990; Lee and Punch 2004; Wimhurst and Ransley 2007). In Australia, the Police Ministers’ Council, along with Justice Wood, identified a need to ‘professionalise’ and claimed that this process would be best achieved through an increase in the level of education recruits were required to complete prior to joining the force (Resolutions 1990; Wood 1997).

As an advocate of this new university-based approach, Bittner (1990) made the claim that policing in the 21st century requires considerable intelligence, knowledge and judgment from officers on the front-line, and that these qualities can only be instilled in police officers through the achievement of specialised, policing related, higher-level education. Bittner (1990) argues that policing has evolved from being a low-grade occupation where complicated decisions were made by superiors and not by front-line officers to a job where street level police are often required to apply discretion in making on-the-spot judgement calls on a range of incidents. The restructured organisation of police work, and the establishment of ‘community’ and ‘problem orientated’ policing, he claims, require new staffing assumptions and practices. Furthermore, he suggests that the new generation of police requires an understanding of social structure and the position of police in relation to the layers of concentrated power that constitute society.

How can we interpret this new advocacy of university credentials for police in recent decades? Reiner (1992) argues that policing in the early 1990s was suffering a crisis of paradigms. Entrenched cultures and structures of practice within the police were diametrically opposed to processes of change that were taking place within broader

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15 Currently in NSW, prospective recruits for NSW Police have two main entry options. The first approach is attending the NSW Police College for eight months basic training after which a graduate enters the police force as a “probationary constable”. The second method of entry is through the completion of a tertiary degree. This option has become available over the past decade in NSW and it represents a kind of compromise between university and in-house occupational training. A Bachelor Degree in Policing takes three years to complete and incorporates the period of practical training at the NSW Police College. Only two universities in NSW provide this degree, they are: the University of Western Sydney (Bachelor of Policing) and Charles Sturt University (Bachelor of Justice Studies).
society. Modifications to the existing structures of the police were required not only to combat problems within the police, but also to stimulate positive change and drive the police out of this crisis. Along these lines, Bradley (1996: 88) states that the lack of progress in policing and police development made them an unreflective institution, one that was intellectually stagnant and in need of fresh, progressive and radical reform.

The new image of truly ‘professional’ police and policing promoted by an alliance of police leaders and reformers, interested academic institutions, and new management segments aspires to achieve reasoned and gender neutral work practices. Professionalism and its imagery necessitates distancing these police from newly expanding groups of private security and from traditional styles of workplace masculinity in peer group protected forms of corruption and overtly aggressive modes of dealing with the public. However, transformations to the nature of state governance and an increasingly demand for security in contemporary society have tested these ideals. The following section will explore the challenges of these changes and look at the new organisation of the policing sector in Sydney’s NTE.

**The Transformation of the Modern State and the Nature of ‘Policing’**

_Policing has become a responsibility explicitly shared between government and its citizens, sometimes mediated through commercial markets, sometimes arising spontaneously. Policing has become pluralized. Police are no longer the primary crime deterrent presence in society; they have been supplanted by more numerous private providers of security (Bayley and Shearing 1996: 588)_

Bayley and Shearing’s landmark article ‘The Future of Policing’, written in 1996 and the source of the above quote, highlights processes of change within the nature of policing that have had a profound impact on not only contemporary notions of crime and safety,
but also on the very nature of social governance. Bayley and Shearing (1996) outline two critical transitions that have witnessed a watershed transformation in the very nature of crime control and law enforcement in Western democracies: the “pluralisation” of policing and the search for identity by the public police. However, underlying these transitions are processes of social change that require unpacking before pursuing an analysis of their arguments regarding the transformation of policing.

The 1990s was a time of mixed threats and opportunities in police expansion and resources. Governments were increasingly turning to neoliberal strategies of governance to cut public service budgets and privatise assets and services to an eager and entrepreneurially-minded private sector (Harvey 2007). This process of retracting state fiscal responsibility has been discussed by many as a critical element in the shaping of contemporary policing policy and practice (O’Malley 1992; Garland 1996; Lee 2007). Of foremost importance in these debates is the idea that the very nature of governance within the state apparatus has changed in the modern political and economic landscape.

The emergence of the neoliberal state has fundamentally changed the nature of governance (Harvey 2007), with many Western governments reconfiguring their role as the principal provider of security by encouraging citizens to become active and to assume responsibility for the provision of law and order. This idea was developed by Garland (1996), who suggests that the sovereignty of the nation-state is declining, a point highlighted by the state’s impotence in addressing and/or providing effective solutions to the demands of its populace. He submits the idea that a key indicator of this failure is seen in the government’s inability to provide effective strategies for combating the escalating crime rates that have followed the conclusion of World War II:

...the perceived normality of high crime rates, together with the widely acknowledged limitation of the criminal justice agencies, have begun to erode one of the founding myths of modern society: namely, the myth that the sovereign state
is capable of providing security, law and order, and crime control within its territorial boundaries (Garland 1996: 448).

However, Reiner (2007) argues that it was the very emergence of neoliberalism that was responsible for the increases in crime rates following the end of the war. He stated that the laissez faire policy associated with neoliberal ideology eroded social cohesion and encouraged criminal activity while simultaneously promoting a punitive and inhumane attitude to crime which only exacerbated the crime problem. Increases in reported crime rates and an intensification of crime news (discussed in detail in Chapter Five) in this period raised greater awareness of the threat of crime. Consequently, criminal victimisation moved away from the peripheries of social consciousness and become a significant factor in determining societal perceptions of safety and security (Garland 2001; Reiner et al 2000; Loader and Sparks 2002). Perhaps a further catalyst in this regard is the dramatic increase of quantitative crime data that has perpetuated a heightened sense of anxiety and fear among national populations and led to a ‘commodification’ of security (Loader and Sparks 2002).

Many accounts from criminologists seeking to explain the social causes of crime in contemporary societies do appear to overlook the extent to which actual levels of criminal offending are ‘knowable’, especially given uneven reporting of crime by victim groups, and the constantly evolving recording practices of police organisations with increased levels of staffing and technical resources. Nevertheless, there is solid evidence for the further extension of public fear of crime that has caused fear of ‘others’ to permeate public interaction in large cities (Sparks 2001; Hubbard 2003; Lee 2007). Drawing from this anxiety, Ericson (2007) argues that the neoliberal state is now

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16 While the emergence of victim surveys has certainly had a notable bearing on uncovering part of the ‘dark figure of crime’, there are a number of flaws with the recording methods used in surveys that ultimately affect results (Skogan 1981; Weatherburn and Indermaur 2004; Walklate 2011; Maguire 2012). Some of the key limitations are that victim surveys have limited samples; that victims can inaccurately recall events or forget certain details; that many respondents have inherent biases based on the experience of family and friends or their exposure to crime news; that some respondents may not recognise certain events as crimes or may report events that fall outside the survey range and that respondents may define ‘crime’ differently to the designers of the survey (Walklate 2011; Maguire 2012).
dominated by a preoccupation with fear, uncertainty and risk (see also Beck 1992). He (2007:1) states that this anxiety has even led to an “alarming trend across Western countries of treating every imaginable source of harm as a crime”. Chomsky (2005) and Rajagopal (2006) both highlight the impact of recent terrorist attacks on producing a sense of vulnerability and insecurity that has enabled many Western governments to gain popular support for the introduction of highly invasive security measures, including increasing surveillance and further regulation of ‘risky’ domestic populations.

The existence of such widespread apprehension concerning crime and public safety has empowered the neoliberal state to activate anxious individuals and encouraged them to undertake measures to promote and stabilise their own sense of security. It has been argued that this concern “can lead individuals to hunker down, engage in risk avoidance, and limit the freedom of others in the name of security” (Ericson 2007:4). Lee (2007:178) suggests that the privatisation of policing and security services “fits neatly in broader neoliberal governmental rationalities which emphasise personal responsibility and attempt to govern at a distance”. Furthermore, Lee (2007:178) posits that “once fear of crime becomes a technology of government, a responsibilising mechanism, the private sector is poised to service this”. This concept provides insights that can help to explain the rapid development of the private security industry. Garland (2001:124) describes “responsibilisation” by stating that the strategy is a:

new kind of indirect action, in which state agencies activate action by non-state organisations and actors. The intended result is an enhanced network of more of less directed, more of less informal crime control, complementing and extending the formal control of the criminal justice state.

Along similar lines, O’Malley (1992), Beck (1992) and Rose (1996) state that this social and political transformation has coincided with an increasing focus on neoliberal conceptualisations of risk (Ericson and Haggerty 1997). This realignment of political
thinking is indicative of public governmental resignation about being unable to provide adequate facilities through which crime, disorder and popular insecurity can be managed. It is also indicative of the new awareness of the legal obligations and potential financial sanctions that property owners and organisations are now subject to in contemporary society. According to Beck (1992:19), the paradigm of risk society is concerned with how the anxieties, fears and insecurities that have been produced as a by-product of the processes of modernisation can be “prevented, minimised, dramatised or channelled”. The strategies employed by the neoliberal state utilise actuarial technologies to identify ‘risks’ in populations and then deploy the most suitable regulatory mechanism to reduce the defined risk. O’Malley (1992) suggests that this approach enhances governments’ capacity to regulate a target population whilst maintaining/promoting the illusion of benefiting the affected group (again a strategy of hegemonic policing). As such, these risk-based strategies provide a less aggressive tactic for implementing regulatory initiatives. O’Malley (1992) suggests that the effectiveness of such programmes is enhanced by a distinct lack of resistance by the targeted community, group or individual, which ultimately serves to de-politicise conflict (see also Donzelot 1979).

Underlying this shift is a movement towards managerial and economically rational governance, with governments acknowledging that they no longer have the resources to provide effective measures for combating crime and insecurity in contemporary society. This permutation has seemingly heralded a significant shift from government to governance that has re-configured state criminal justice “objectives...organisational logics and cultures, their working relations with other agencies, and their modes of accountability...(in) significant ways“ (Loader and Sparks 2002:87). For this thesis, it is noteworthy that these changes in the apprehension of urban risk and self-regulation have risen to prominence during the same period as the deliberate fostering of extended nightlife in large cities around the globe. They have also had profound implications for contemporary policing.
Alongside these neoliberal strategies of government are processes situated within the broader ideology of ‘professionalisation’ that continue to exert great influence over public policing institutions. An unintentional consequence of this shift in policing ideology has been an actual change in the nature of police work. As the standard of education, work expectations and cost level have risen, it has become less economically rational and viable in most police work settings to involve police with ‘menial duties’ that could be performed by less qualified persons. Moreover, policing has shifted away from the community-policing ethic towards a more targeted, ‘problem-oriented’ policing agenda. With this transition, NSW Police is now aware of its limited resources and is intent on maximising the utility of the resources that it does possess. In this regard, NSW Police now pursue ‘hot-spot’ and high visibility policing operations. These measures and the highly symbolic aspects of contemporary campaigns have revived analyses that emphasise the ‘paramilitarisation’ of policing— that is, mixing hard line approaches to issues of disorder with technology, weapons and attire that mirrors specialist military squads (see McCullough 2001). Such approaches and images are now frequently on show in the policing of nightlife (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5: The new image of NSW Police.**

Left to Right: The new appointment vest used by NSW Police officers; Police officers in paramilitary attire in Sydney’s nightlife hotspot- Kings Cross and; NSW Police Public Order and Riot Squad stand guard at a public rally in Sydney.

Source: Left to Right: *The Daily Telegraph; The Daily Telegraph; Lawrence Gibbons.*
What this ‘professionalisation’ strategy has promoted is the absorption of a significant amount of policing function by private agencies. This movement towards privatisation of security and crime control does entail a shedding of “dirty work” (Hughes 1962) to people or organisations that will perform the duties that the public police no longer have the capacity or desire to do. Johnston (1992:58) defines this process as “load shedding”, whereby “both the funding mechanism and the delivery of a service are shifted into the private sector”, as well as those instances where publicly-funded police organisations have some of their functions usurped by private individuals or organisations.

Bayley and Shearing’s (1996) key argument about the transformation of modern policing services was that the public police are increasingly uncertain as to their identity and role in an increasingly fragmented policing sector. This institutional self-doubt is due in part to their diminished role as key facilitators of safety and security in the modern social landscape, but it is also due to the increasing claims of the private sector about being able to produce positive outcomes in relation to the prevention of crime. Perhaps adding to the uncertainty of police identity, and indicative of the view that the state is unable to provide the required security services through conventional public policing, is the fact that the private security industry is now growing at a far faster rate than the state police. This process is also reflective of policies of load shedding that have occurred in tandem with measures to professionalise the police. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) shows that, between 1996 and 2006, the Australian population increased by 11.8% to 19,855,288, police numbers increased by 14.5% to 44,898 Australia-wide, and ‘security providers’\(^{17}\) increased by 41.2% to 52,768 across Australia. Given the high levels of unrecorded casual and occasional work in the security industry, it seems likely that the real imbalance in size between these two occupational segments is much larger. The nature of ‘policing’ has shifted significantly in post-industrial society. In the search to provide increasingly anxious national populations with a more visible security

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\(^{17}\) Although this percentage can be broadly accepted as an indicative figure Prenzler et al (2007/08) note that ambiguity in the ABS definition of ‘security provider’ has, due to a shift in ‘category’ from ‘security officer’ to ‘alarm, security and surveillance monitoring’, created difficulty in providing an absolute and accurate account of the industry numbers.
presence, it seems that the private security industry is filling the gap where the largely restricted public sector is falling short. Of this process, Stenning (2000:328) notes that “it is now almost impossible to identify any function or responsibility of the public police which is not, somewhere and under some circumstances, assumed and performed by private police in democratic societies”.

Sarre (1997) confirms this point when he states that the growth of private security has been primarily promoted by two key factors: first, deliberate government recognition of the limited capacity of conventional public policing to prevent crime and, second, the growing popularity of situational crime prevention strategies\textsuperscript{18} for dealing with the increase in criminal activity. Prenzler et al (2007/08) also note a dramatic increase in market demand for private security, insurance requirements, the increased liability and legal responsibilities placed on property owners for visitors and staff, and improvements in security technology as catalysts for the rapid expansion of the private security industry. One of the most visible sites of this transformation, and the dual pursuit of further use of private security and situational crime prevention measures is the NTE. This phenomenon will be discussed in the following chapter.

While public policing in the NTE is present, the policing agenda favours intermittent and targeted strategies, leaving the private sector to provide the more constant vigil. The success of this approach is frequently lauded in the media, but its actual impact on addressing public needs is questionable. The resources required for operations beyond these high-visibility public policing blitzes are said to be beyond the capacity of the

\textsuperscript{18} First introduced by Clarke (1983: 225) situational crime prevention refers to ‘(those strategies) comprising measures directed at highly specific forms of crime that involve the management, design, or manipulation of the immediate environment in as systematic and permanent way as possible so as to reduce the opportunity for crime and increase its risks as perceived by a wide range of offenders’. Situational crime prevention is significant in the regard that it shifts the emphasis of criminal behaviour away from the criminal offender onto the environment in which the criminal act is perpetrated (Clarke 1997; Rosenbaum et.al. 1998). Situational crime prevention has led criminologists to claim that environments are more predictable, and therefore more easily controlled, than individuals (Clarke 1997). This development coincided with the emergence of the notion of a ‘hot spot’ of criminal activity that has particular relevance to the security industry and situational crime prevention in the NTE.
police to provide on a regular basis. As rates of assault and other offences relating to night-time leisure remain stable or show modest declines, fear and insecurity are still widespread, and the role of the police in relation to this community anxiety must be analysed further. Other factors, including the rapid expansion of the private security industry and the mixed gentrification of urban nightlife precincts impinge on the contemporary policing of public order and drinking in Sydney.

**Conclusion**

As outlined throughout this chapter, policing in Sydney has undergone immense internal transformation since settlement in 1788. The unique environment of colonial Sydney presented numerous opportunities to police for the exploitation of their power and authority. Alcohol was at the very heart of this vexed relationship. The NSW Corps control of alcohol afforded it immense political and social influence and ensured vast personal wealth to its members. The ultimate display of this power was seen during the ‘Rum Rebellion’ in the early 19th century in which members of the Corps successfully overthrew the Governor of NSW. This episode was the first major example of the nexus between corruption, drinking and the police. The regulation and policing of drink has frequently resulted in the corruption of policing practice. Prohibitions introduced at the beginning of the 20th century set the scene for the emergence of organised crime in Sydney, with significant implications for policing in NSW. The vast wealth generated through illicit trade, particularly in relation to the ‘black market’ trade of alcohol and drugs, provided criminal enterprise with the capital to influence and corrupt not only the police in NSW but also the politicians who directed state law and order policy. Once entrenched in politics and policing, the influence of institutionalised corruption over policing practice in NSW lasted almost half a century, possibly longer. While numerous inquiries and commissions examined links between the police and criminal acts, few had any real effect on levels of corruption. It was not until reforms of the 1980s and 1990s that apparently significant progress was made in eradicating corruption from policing practice in NSW. However, the ‘post-corruption’ era of policing is not without its own flaws and failings.
Under the direction of neoliberalism and the adoption of various crime prevention and crime science initiatives discussed in the following chapters, the state has retracted much of its responsibility in relation to state-public services. Resource shortages have meant that the state is no longer able to meet the rising expectations for personal safety and security in contemporary society. This inability has promoted the emergence and proliferation of private security providers who have increasingly assumed many of the roles that were formerly the exclusive remit of the state police. In no environment has this change been as prominent as in the NTE. This “pluralisation” of policing has presented new concerns for both public and political actors. Moral ambivalence concerning both extensive drinking leisure and the role of private security in law and order continues to exert influence over the condition of policing in Sydney, with state police performing frequently symbolic operations aimed at placating public anxieties. While this chapter has looked at the specific policing history in NSW, the next chapter will give detail about the local NTE and the various other regulatory mechanisms have been employed in the fight to regulate drinking in Sydney’s NTE.
Chapter Four: Regulation, Security and the Night-Time Economy: The Sydney Study

Introduction

The NTE, as a concept, refers to the range of leisure-based activities and experiences connected with after dark socialising and entertainment (Rowe et al 2008). However, there is a marked divergence between this positive ‘vision’ of the NTE and the material reality and forms of nightlife that have emerged in contemporary society. Researchers have suggested that the urban centres that were developed to host the NTE are the product of neoliberal strategies, such as market deregulation and the promotion of private investment, that claim to provide the solution to dormant economies and the crisis of public sector funding (Harvey 1989; Hughes 1999). Since the concept came to prominence in urban and cultural politics, NTEs have emerged as significant sites in the production and circulation of social and cultural meanings, values, identities and practices (Lovatt and O’Connor 1995; Presdee 2000; Hobbs et al 2003; Hadfield 2006; Winlow and Hall 2006). While most of the commentary concerned with the NTE originates from the United Kingdom (UK), an increasing number of relevant studies have been produced in Australia, Canada and continental Europe (see Roberts et al 2006; Graham and Homel 2008; Rigakos 2008; Rowe 2008; Rowe et al 2008; Chikritzhs 2009; Bavinton 2011; Rowe and Lynch 2012; Miller et al 2013). The prominence of the NTE in political and social discourse has encouraged a broad range of conceptual and theoretical analysis from a diverse group of academic, government and social commentators. However, the majority of literature on the NTE oscillates between two dominant, yet often contradictory, models. The first discourse promotes after-dark

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19 For the purposes of this thesis I have adopted Harvey’s definition of the term neoliberalism. Harvey (2005:2) defined neoliberalism as: “A theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free market, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices”.
leisure through more inclusive and diverse cultural planning and the second discourse is focused on the need for further regulation of the NTE through the introduction of increasingly restrictive policing and legislative models.

The first position, generally championed by cultural policy advocates, views the NTE not as a problem but as an ‘economy’\textsuperscript{20} with the potential to arrest the decline of many inner-city precincts and to create new forms of public sociability and inclusion in regenerated and reinvigorated urban spaces (see Bianchini 1995; Landry \textit{et al} 1995). From the perspective of the cultural planning and policy sector, the NTE is seen as a site of tremendous potential in terms of its cultural and creative output (Landry \textit{et al} 1995; Stevenson and Paton 1999). Here, creative, inclusive and diverse planning of after dark leisure is seen as a means to encourage a move away from mono-cultures of drinking that have commonly come to dominate urban nightlife (Chatterton and Hollands 2002). Indeed, Bianchini (1995), the first to coin the term “night-time economy”, argued that the creation of vibrant, inclusive, and culturally diverse night-time entertainment precincts would have the combined effect of providing a solution to issues of crime and personal safety in derelict sites, as well as rejuvenating depressed city centres by mobilising social and cultural engagement in unused urban spaces. This planned transformation was borne out of the need to reinvigorate stagnant urban economies following the transition away from Fordist modes of production.

The second position is in stark contrast to the focus on stimulation advocated by cultural policy and planning experts. It regards the NTE as problematic and in need of regimented strategies of regulation and control. Here, the NTE has been characterised as “urban playscapes” (Chatterton and Hollands 2002) where young, hedonistic revellers socialise in myriad pubs, clubs and bars seeking pleasure, danger and emancipation from restrictive daytime norms (Presdee 2000). The official response to such imagery often

\textsuperscript{20} The term ‘economy’ has been highlighted because, in the context of the NTE, it should not simply be considered in its traditional sense, but also in relation to its cultural and social aspects (Lovatt and O’Connor 1995).
highlights problems of social order and promotes heavy ‘policing’ and crime prevention focus aimed at combating incidents of anti-social behaviour and violence predominantly carried out by young males engaged in collective public drinking (Chatterton and Hollands 2002; Graham and Homel 2008). This approach sees the liberalisation of alcohol-related policy as exacerbating problematic cultures of consumption, and seeks to limit trading in licensed premises through the introduction of more restrictive legislative and policy models (Graham and Homel 2008). Other controls have been more ‘problem-oriented’, high profile, policing operations that target specific problematic activities and behaviour. In Sydney, this approach has come to characterise the NTE and, as such, will be discussed in relation to its impact on policing and regulatory practices employed in NSW.

These two dominant perspectives regarding the NTE are evidence of the clear distinction between the NTE as a concept and the NTE as a material reality. However, while these two positions seem to be contradictory and opposed, they are not mutually exclusive. It is the contention of this chapter that this paradigmatic binary is the result of the widespread deregulation of night-time leisure markets. Most developed NTEs around the globe are an unwieldy mix of idealistic deregulation and later measures of control and restriction. Often what has materialised is an economy driven by forms of sociability related to the consumption of alcohol that has largely failed to integrate a more mixed and inclusive cultural dynamic. Indeed, this eventuality has led many of the original visionaries of the NTE to become disillusioned and to change their perspective to a far more critical stance, which, ironically, may only mirror the second discourse presented above. This realignment of thinking has been publically evidenced in the case of John Montgomery, a key advocate of the original projects concerned with encouraging growth of NTEs through liberalising licensing laws in England (see Comedia 1991). Montgomery has since labelled the resulting NTE as awash with a “tyranny of yob...something deeply engrained in the psyche of the English which causes them to drink too much and then behave aggressively” (Montgomery 2004: 82-83). A comparable blurring between these two perspectives has also been evident in Sydney, where key figures in Sydney’s NTE have recently suggested that the promotion of
continental ideals of ‘civilised’, diverse or mixed-use nightlife is crucial in countering the imagery of belligerent intoxication which has come to dominate representations and perceptions of Sydney nightlife (see Campion 2011; Munro 2011).

What (re)emerges from the above ideological binary, and is partially evident in Montgomery’s quote, is a politics of class leisure. It is clear that there is a distinction between respectable and disreputable leisure that still frequently materialises in a clash between middle-and upper-class notions of civilised leisure and working-class drinking cultures. In debates that have featured in public discourse since the very public ‘gin craze’ discussed in Chapter One, specific working-class based drinking practices are categorised as inherently troublesome. Here, the uncouth and aggressive beer drinking ‘yob’ is contrasted with the civilised citizen. Again following a historical path, and certainly evident in contemporary debates about the direction of Sydney’s night-time policy, the middle-class patron is promoted as the ideal consumer, contributing towards a more ‘continental’ ambience that neatly aligns with city-imaging ideals. Conversely, the working-class (male) consumer is condemned (often justifiably) for their ‘negative’ and costly behaviour.

In order to understand the impact the NTE has had on new regimes of policing and security, it is necessary to analyse its historical antecedents, including the origins of neoliberalism. This chapter will seek to address a number of critical transformative forces that have come to shape the nature of the NTE. Foremost in this discussion will be an examination of the transitions that took place following the decline of industrial, Fordist modes of production. This transition paved the way for the emergence of a more flexible, consumer-oriented economy that has not only influenced the nature of capitalism, but also significantly influenced the formation of consumption-based identities in contemporary society. The nightlife ‘subject’ in this new economy has come to be framed with apparent exaggeration as hedonistic and revelling in the carnivalesque environs of a social and cultural sphere that promotes transgression from restrictive day-time norms (Presdee 2000).
Following on from this discussion will be an analysis of the implications that the material realities of many NTEs have had in relation to patterns of urban social interaction. In recent times, the NTE has, as noted earlier, become synonymous with a mono-culture of “determined” alcohol (Hadfield et al 2001; Hobbs 2005; Measham and Brain 2005; Winlow and Hall 2006) and drug-based (Sanders 2006; Silverstone 2006) intoxication that frequently results in outbreaks of disorder and acts of violence (Tomsen 2005; Hadfield 2006; Winlow and Hall 2006). According to recent British accounts, this development is the by-product of modern capitalism’s core logic of profit maximisation that has positioned key sites of leisure and social interaction around alcohol consumption (Winlow and Hall 2006). Heavy drinking, while encouraged due to its profitability for economies of leisure, is a major factor in producing fear and anxiety concerning the city after dark (Hubbard 2003). The relationship between perceptions of, and various realities within, nightlife cultures is of critical importance when seeking to understand current policing in the NTE. As such, the final section of this chapter will look to analyse the literature relating to the regulation and policing of the NTE. While much commentary has been produced on this topic, no studies have yet closely looked at the policing of the NTE in relation to both public and private police work.

The shifting relationship between the two dominant policing bodies in the NTE (being the public police and those working in venue control and doorwork) should not be overlooked in what is an increasingly pluralised domain of policing. Private security undoubtedly represents the dominant policing body active within the NTE (Rigakos 2008). The research focusing on people employed in doorwork and venue control as ‘bouncers’ has emphasised the violent and often criminal nature of such work (see Lister et al 2000; Winlow 2001; Hobbs et al 2003) and has prompted a range of regulatory responses across different countries and jurisdictions. While these arguments are often valid and important in a study about private security operating in such an ostensibly liminal and transgressive space, this focus fails to provide full analysis of the transformations taking place in the public-private policing spectrum. Internationally, there is distinctiveness to the Australian regulatory environment concerning private security, as most states and territories have had legislative controls over the industry for
a greater period of time than many other nations, including Britain and Canada. However, while the results of international studies are not wholly applicable to the Sydney context, they introduce themes that form the conceptual foundation for discussions of the research findings of this Sydney-based analysis. This chapter will outline and discuss these themes and their relation to the policing of Sydney’s NTE, while also introducing the reader to the urban sites selected for this research. Threaded throughout this discussion will be an examination of how the processes and problems analysed in the research literature can be seen in the specific context of Sydney nightlife.

**Post-Fordism, Economic Revival and the Urban Night-Time Economy**

As previously mentioned, the material environment of the NTE is based on a series of transformations that have shaped the nature of contemporary society. The most significant transition has been the movement from Fordist to post-Fordist modes of production. This shift fundamentally altered the organisation and structure of many urban landscapes in developed countries. Attempts to address new social and economic realities have resulted in the re-invention of the city as a site of mass consumption and night-time leisure (Lovatt and O’Connor 1995; Hughes 1999; Hobbs et al 2000; 2003; Jayne et al 2006). Many modern, ‘global’ cities formerly dependent on industrial and manufacturing economies that, for the most part, ceased to exist in recent decades, have turned to more flexible forms of production that have relied on the consumption of services, including leisure (Lash and Urry 1987; Comedia 1991; Amin 1995; Hughes 1999) (see Figure 6, below). This transition also promoted considerable change in the economic and cultural practices shaping both public and private life (Harvey 1994; Featherstone 1991). Widespread changes in the nature of labour, most notably moving from lifetime employment with rigid routines of practice to more flexible and transient forms of employment including fixed-term, seasonal, casual, shift-work and part-time contracts, ostensibly affords working populations new mobility and adaptability (Lash and Urry 1987). These changes have also produced new rhythms of work/leisure as the
traditional ‘nine-to-five’ structure of working lives has begun to break down, facilitating the emergence of the night as a viable, and potentially prosperous, domain for economic development. Comedia’s (1991) *Out of Hours* report, one of the first major studies that analysed this emergent urban landscape in Britain, argued that technological development also had significance on a shifting temporal dynamic in working and non-working life. It was argued that technology such as the VCR played a significant role in time-shifting private TV viewing, essentially eroding the ‘tyranny of the broadcast’ and freeing up individual and family leisure time. The report recommended that “these shifts in people’s lifestyles and needs must be recognized in town centre strategies” (Comedia 1991: 22).

**Figure 6: Revitalised city centres.**

City centre revitalisation programs can be seen in the reimaging of former industrial cities like Newcastle and Dublin in the UK and Ireland. The below images show Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle and Temple Bar, Dublin, as examples of formerly barren night precincts that have been redeveloped and reimaged into urban districts that provide a wide range of night-time cultural activities.


Coinciding with these new ideas about urban development was an important change in the way that cities were governed. Stifled by economic recession, popular protest about
public expenditure on urban revitalisation projects (Hannigan 1998), and mass movements towards the more attractive metropolitan fringe and suburbia (Hannigan 1998; Roberts and Eldridge 2009), governments were forced into making difficult appraisals of the future direction of city planning (Hughes 1999). New and innovative strategies were required to cultivate popular desire to return to urban centres that were left barren following the post-work flight back to the suburbs. Neoliberal strategies of increasing competition, promotion of private investment, retraction of state fiscal responsibility and the removal of restrictive regulations over corporate behaviour, came to be seen as a feasible and attractive means through which city centre revitalisation could be funded (Amin and Malmberg 1995). Research has illustrated that this transition coincided with a movement away from direct strategies of public sector urban governance towards a system that fostered entrepreneurialism and the forging of public-private partnerships (Harvey 1989; Heath 1997; Hughes 1999; Reiner 2007).

This economic shift has been cited as a significant factor in the further stimulation of a contemporary consumer capitalist economy (Hobbs et al. 2000; 2003; Winlow and Hall, 2006). This modern manifestation has encouraged a “commodification of culture” (Hobbs et al. 2003) that, assisted by the increasingly effective means of information dispersal and communication present in the globalised world, has greatly altered the nature of contemporary urban social environments. These processes have exerted pressure on cities to market themselves aggressively as highly desirable sites of consumption (Hannigan 1998; Hollands and Chatterton 2003), while also producing a complex interchange that embodies tension and conflict over strategies to entice consumers within a hedonistic leisure setting and firm regulation by private security and police. Nevertheless, as Jayne (2006: 458) notes, “this is an economy of pleasure and the 24-hour city becomes the vehicle for economic growth, profit generation and entrepreneurialism”.

While ostensibly concerned with producing diverse, vibrant, and multi-faceted NTEs, urban planning regarding the NTE has been more about stimulating economic capital
and inward investment into urban precincts. In order to achieve these goals, many modern governments have adopted more liberal ‘hands off’ approaches to alcohol and entertainment licensing (Hobbs et al 2003; Chikritzhs 2009), which is often seen to be the most cost-effective means of economic stimulation. This process has attracted populations seeking out the “cultural carnival” of nightlife, a space where every desire can be bought, found or enacted (Presdee 2001; Hobbs et al 2000). Hobbs et al (2003: 22) state with apparent irony that:

In order to retain commercial viability, the Night-Time Economy (NTE) experience must continually re-invent itself as a potentially liberating respite from work...this is after all where the best of life ...is lived.

As previously stated, one of the unintended consequences of this market liberalisation and a focus on neoliberal strategies of private investment and competition has been the distortion of previously conceived ideals of what the 24-hour city would entail (Hadfield et al 2001; Hobbs et al 2003). The relationship between this new nightlife domain, drinking, crime and regulation will now be discussed.

**Drinking, Crime and Regulation of Night-Leisure**

The 24-hour city has become the focal point of discussions concerning the mono-culture of “determined” intoxication (Measham and Brain 2005) that is often associated with crime, violence and disorder in contemporary post-industrial cities. Hadfield et al (2001: 300) provide a colourful picture of the current state of the British NTE and articulate the distortion of previously held ideals of what the 24-hour city would involve with an ethnographic vignette when they state:

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21 The irony in Hobbs et al’s claim lies in the fact that their book is dedicated to exploring many of the dangerous and problematic aspects of the NTE and its regulation, yet here it is described as where the “best of life is lived”.

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The concept of the ‘24-hour city’ is not in good health. It’s 2.15 on Saturday morning in an English city and the ‘Mass Volume Vertical Drinker’ has assaulted the concept and all its good intentions, leaving it for dead in streets splattered with blood, vomit, urine, and the sodden remains of take-aways.

In their similarly dystopian account of urban nightlife, Winlow and Hall (2006: 94) argue that “the powerful nexus of alcohol misuse, violence and fear has become the principal common experience and contingent risk in the night-time leisure economy”. While these accounts are dramatic and paint a grim picture of the nature of social life in contemporary leisure settings, both Hadfield et al’s graphic illustration and Winlow and Hall’s claims testify that the 24-hour city and early conceptualisations of ‘European style’ nightlife have not been delivered in the United Kingdom. Indeed, this is a disjunction that may also be observable in the Sydney context. In Sydney, visions of a civilised, diverse, and culturally vibrant NTE have, like the UK, been problematised by a reliance on alcohol-related leisure as the core component of urban nightlife. These urban locales are the setting of a “binge” or “determined” drinking culture that Measham and Brain (2005) claim has come to dominate British NTEs over the past decade.

Recently, however, public and political debate has surfaced about different forms of drinking and their place within Sydney nightlife. In an effort to offer more ‘civilised’ environments for drinking, Sydney’s Lord Mayor, Clover Moore, has encouraged the introduction and proliferation of ‘small bars’ (see Figure 7). Envisaged as an antithesis to the large ‘beer barns’ and gambling-centred venues that dominate Sydney’s NTE, small bars have come to encapsulate the political push for a more diverse, inclusive and cosmopolitan nightlife with new, more sophisticated, consumers. It is the attraction of these venues to an older, middle class, and more diverse patronage that has framed the core arguments made by small bar advocates rather than any claims about the significance and success of their size.
Figure 7: Small bars in Sydney.

Small bars have become far more common in Sydney since the introduction of a special set of licensing dispensations by the City of Sydney Council in 2008. The Council has promoted the proliferation of ‘small bars’ by making the process of acquiring a liquor license far more affordable and accessible.


The size of drinking establishments *per se* has a questionable relationship to levels of intoxication and aggression, but the type of patron that frequents a venue or area is paramount. The general link between scenarios of heavy night-time intoxication and violent activity, especially within young male groups, has been corroborated in a range of studies (Teece and Williams 2000; Donnelly and Snowball 2006 and Donnelly *et al* 2007). Evidence from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research confirms that the majority of violent acts occur between 12am and 6am (BOCSAR 2010). Felson, Baccaglini and Gmelch (1986) note that the dominant demographic using licensed premises (young men) are also generally the most violence-prone group in society. Thus, it seems plausible that, even without the presence of heavy intoxication, the risk of violence in a large licensed venue is higher than elsewhere based on the demographic of the patron (see also Graham and Homel 2008). Similarly, even Hobbs *et al* (2003:11) are pushed to ask:
If you cram tens of thousands of individuals together from the age group most prone to criminal behaviour and then fill them with alcohol, does anyone really believe that it won’t occasionally ‘go off’?

However, it must be remembered that this link between masculine intoxication and violent activity is far from determining and inevitable (Tomsen 1997). Most obviously, distinctive cultures of personal and collective masculinity that either foster or stifle aggressive and violent deportment arise in different public drinking scenarios. Late 20th century ethnographic and sociological studies drew out how much “drunken comportment” takes a range of socially collective and culturally varied forms that may or may not include frequent aggression (Cavan 1966; MacAndrew and Egerton 1969). This qualitative research gave an important lead to later studies from criminology and addiction studies that have suggested there is no singular, fixed, social response to collective drinking, in opposition to claims that individual responses are pharmacologically determined (Graham et al 1997; Graham and Homel 2008).

These refinements have been vital in the development of contemporary ‘social science’ accounts of drinking-related behaviour in night-time venues that seek to inform regulation and prevention with firm knowledge about the environmental origins of aggression and violence. Such accounts have been well received by politicians and industry figures, as they effectively seek a type of knowledge-based ‘third way’ between the heavy repression and open liberalisation models. This strategy allows police, public authorities and night-time venue operators to invest faith in behaviouristic measurement, manipulation and even possible planning of a range of previously mysterious ‘social factors’ in nightlife. Environmental criminologists advocating the adoption of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) strategies argue that the specific condition of the licensed environment, be it a nightlife precinct or specific pub or club, is central to the prevalence of alcohol-related violence and matters of risk and avoidance. Along these lines, studies of the licensed environment have found that a shifting range of factors relating to the condition of each venue or site can play a
significant role in producing problematic behaviour (see Graham et al 1980; Homel et al 1992; Homel and Tomsen 1993; Stockwell et al 1993; Lang et al 1995; Graham et al 2000; Donnelly and Briscoe 2002; Graham and Homel 2008). In this literature a very large number of contributing situational factors are typically identified as affecting the likelihood of violence in the NTE. First among them are high levels of drinking and the irresponsible service of alcohol, with continued service to intoxicated patrons being listed as a critical factor in the probability of associated violence (Stockwell et al 1993; Donnelly and Briscoe 2002). Alongside levels of intoxication, overcrowding, poor ventilation, lighting, seating arrangements, venue design, patron comfort, bar access, staff training, and overall venue management are all named as elements that contribute to risk and problems in the licensed drinking environment (Homel and Tomsen 1993; Graham et al 2006; Graham and Homel 2008).

The venue environment that reinforces many of these negative factors has been associated with past attempts at profit maximisation by the encouragement of rapid consumption. Previous chapters have described how the licensed environment was shaped in ways that promoted heavy drinking and increased patron spending. Perhaps most notorious among these strategies is the promotion of ‘vertical’ drinking, whereby licensed venues limit the amount of seating inside the premises both to increase the patron capacity of the venue and to encourage more rapid consumption of alcohol. Vertical drinking has been presented as a significant factor in binge drinking and associated disorder within licensed premises (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology 2005; Fox and MacAvoy 2011). The stark Sydney pub design that prevailed in the mid-war years (described earlier) remains as the most striking local example of attempts to promote rapid (working-class male) drunkenness by a specific configuration of basic drinking space. It is now believed that this pernicious past link between high levels of consumption and the physical environment can be criminologically studied, fully analysed, and then remoulded afresh with an ideal social engineering outcome.
Research on situational factors in the drinking environment is now welcomed by politicians and regulators due to an apparent perfect match with neoliberal deregulation of drinking venues and nightlife precincts. Nevertheless, environmental criminology has been only partially successful in this regard. Most importantly, key researchers describing situational factors that determine risk and practical ways of addressing problems in night-time drinking see extended late and early morning hours of venue operation as especially harmful (see Chikritzhs and Stockwell 2002; Graham and Homel 2008). Against a neoliberal backdrop, and claims about the possibility of trouble-free, 24-hour consumption, these study results are disregarded. In effect, science is then recast as mere opinion.

Even more broadly, the public regulation of after-dark urban space is vexed because, as discussed in Chapter One, governing bodies concerned with generating new, diversified, nightlife are frequently dealing with socially entrenched cultural practices (Thomas and Bromley 2000) related to high alcohol consumption (Hobbs et al 2003). Here, the very neoliberal policies that encouraged the development of NTEs around the globe and helped solve serious economic problems in post-industrial cities have also contributed to contemporary issues of crime and safety in urban nightlife precincts. Hobbs et al (2003: 259) make this point when they state:

...new regulatory controls often come to be developed in response to problems the planners and policy makers themselves helped initially to create. Further, it is now proving very difficult, retrospectively, to insert commercial diversity into a market place that is...driven primarily by cold commercial rather than social, considerations

A prominent argument in relation to the proliferation of concerns relating to public drinking and alcohol-related disorder in urban night-time districts discusses the shift in labour markets as they relate to youth and working-class identities active within newly revitalised cities (Winlow 2001). This claim follows the line of thought that the evolution
of a consumer economy dominated by leisure markets has coincided with a process of transformation in the ways that people identify themselves and others (Lipovetsky 1994; Winlow 2001; Winlow and Hall 2006). Here, processes of de-industrialisation coincided with a crisis in the welfare state, with state fiscal pressures forcing social service provisions to be dramatically cut (Jessop 2002). It is argued that this decline of the welfare state created new tension between the state and many in the working class (Reiner 2007). The rise of neoliberal strategies of governance has further damaged these class relations, creating popular animosities concerning the lack of affordable social services and the widening of class-based socio-economic inequalities that remain to this day.

Following the breakdown of routines and rigid structures associated with industrial economies, the NTE also became a significant site in the enactment of new, seemingly classless, subjectivities for youth and other groups (Winlow 2001; Winlow and Hall 2006). The collective attainment of identity by attachment to rival forms of taste and style in night-time consumption is commonplace, but limited means of self-definition do not appear to rely directly on matters of fixed social class, profession and socio-economic status (Malbon 1998; Jayne et al. 2006; Hobbs et al. 2003). This new experience of subjectivity in the settings of night-time leisure has a further emotional dimension that forms part of its appeal to drinkers and revellers in dynamic group space. Malbon (1998:183) argues that the:

> appeal of contemporary night-life lies most centrally in its ability to offer a form of experiential consuming that is non-tangible but which can produce important memories, emotional experiences and imaginaries that can be sources of identification.

This process may be heightened for members of nightclub, dance party, and similar nocturnal subcultures sharing licit and illicit substances alongside specific clothing and
music styles in venues with loud music that overrides conversation (Measham 2004; Sanders 2006; Silverstone 2006). In such circumstances, there is a subjectively perceived breakdown of traditional and more rigid means of identity formation in the shifting intimacy of urban night-time leisure environments. There is also a negative emotional dimension to engagements within such crowded and ‘lively’ night time spaces. The formation, increasing popularity, and scale of alcohol and drug imbued NTEs has triggered further fear relating to the convergence of “strangers” in such spaces (Lofland 1973; Hubbard 2003).

Dealing individually and collectively with risk and uncertainty is a regular experience and challenge for NTE consumers and workers, yet this new possibility for the perception of fear is significant to onlookers who rarely or never participate in late night-time drinking and public leisure. While middle-class anxieties regarding general drunken behaviour have been seen throughout Australian history, the range and focus of contemporary media attention has produced heightened perceptions of risk relating to alcohol-related leisure in Sydney’s expanded NTE. In these accounts, binge drinking and violent youth characterise urban spaces designed to capture large amounts of disposable income.

Regulation of the NTE has taken on numerous forms both in Australia and abroad. In the UK, a raft of policy and legislative changes have been introduced over the last ten years to attempt to curtail the high levels of night-time intoxication present in the majority of cities subjected to previous measures of rapid deregulation. The most controversial of these measures has been the implementation of laws permitting 24-hour licences. Here, according to Measham and Brain (2005: 262-263), the British Licensing Act 2003 and its associated initiatives aimed to:

facilitate civilized drinking while clamping down on drunkenness and related anti-social behaviour through a policy of liberalizing licensing hours while increasing the sanctions for misbehaving individuals and retail premises.
According to these new policies, the previously ‘over-regulated’ environment of the British NTE produced problematic behaviour by forcing patrons of the NTE to consume alcohol rapidly before closing due to the limited trading hours in pubs and clubs. Invariably, a proposed solution to this problem was the extension of trading hours. According to a Home Office Report produced in the year 2000 titled *Time for Reform: Proposals for the Modernization of our Licensing Laws*, removing the incentive to binge drink before last orders promotes a more relaxed “continental” atmosphere in which people drink the same amount as before, but over a longer period of time (cited in Hobbs 2003: 250). This policy has, at its core, a very critical element of contemporary urban governance. Not only does this policy encourage entrepreneurial investment in alco-leisure through the promise of greater profits generated by longer trading hours, but it also removes a great deal of responsibility from the state for any subsequent problems. In this way, this strategy can be seen to individualise or appropriate risk for both patrons of the NTE and those premises trading within it. At its core, this policy shift encapsulates the neoliberal approach to governance by removing public investment and ‘responsibilising’ business and private individuals with tasks traditionally performed by the state. This process has been strongly evident in the transformation of policing and the dramatic growth of the private security industry employed in doorwork and venue control in the NTE, to which I now turn.

**Private Security in the Night-Time Economy**

The development of nightlife economies built on the liberalisation of alcohol-related policy and practice has, as noted, stimulated fears of disorder and alcohol-related violence. Although private security staff operating in leisure settings are not a new phenomenon (Little 1994; Johnston 1992), fears associated with the NTE have sparked a rapid growth in private security personnel and led to the introduction of doorstaff at almost all drinking venues in night-time inner Sydney. Their presence gives rise to a mixed imagery of danger, threat and protection that mirrors mixed perceptions of the NTE in general.
These ‘gatekeepers’ of the NTE provide surveillance and supervision to patrons in designated establishments. But, in Australian jurisdictions, they are given little-to-no extra official or legislated authority to perform their professional duties (Sarre and Prenzler 2011). Furthermore, as in other places, most of their professional functions are performed in the interstices of the private and public realms of the NTE (Hadfield 2008; Rigakos 2008), including the ‘roped off’ (either symbolically or literally) areas that demarcate the entrance to licensed venues where patrons can enjoy themselves through socialising but are nevertheless sorted and potentially excluded from participation in line with perceptions of ‘style’ that mask real class and status differences (Presdee 2001; Hobbs et al 2003; Winlow 2001; Winlow and Hall 2006). Policing this semi-private domain of nightlife is a difficult task. Unlike the public police, whose ostensible mandate is the service and protection of the citizenry and its interests, private security guards are governed by an altogether different agenda. While there is legislation regulating their performance in NSW (e.g. Security Industry Act 1997 and Security Industry Regulation Act 2007), guards are also fundamentally directed by private, commercial interests (see Sarre 2008). As such, part of their role is the facilitation of a profitable environment where patrons feel comfortable and so more likely to spend their money. With an increasingly vexed set of guidelines and legislation concerning acceptable behaviour inside the licensed premises, those employed in doorkin are often working between the commercial imperatives of licensees and the official, legislated requirements of the state.

Adding to this complexity has been the increased ‘legalisation’ of social settings and the associated trend to litigation as a response to a broad range of social disputes, grievances and harms (for discussion of new era of public liability, see Stone 2004). The threat of financial liability has meant that, while the provision of security is needed to placate popular fears regarding personal safety, the manner in which such services are provided has been placed under further scrutiny. While some Australian private security companies and associations (e.g. the Australian Security Industry Associated Limited (ASIAL)) have taken up the mantle of advocating for improved training and operating standards, the lack of regulation and enforcement over the industry is cause for
significant concern. This occupational angst was evident during the 2009 Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) investigation into the security training sector in NSW (ICAC 2009). In its report, ICAC suggested that, without more effective enforcement, any reforms would prove ineffectual in improving the operational standards within the security industry. In the UK, a similar lack of effective regulation led to negative public perceptions of the private security industry (see Button 2007; 2008). This negativity seems to be, in part, justified through the findings of many studies that have suggested that criminality is common within the workforce (see Hobbs et al 2000; 2002; 2003; Lister et al 2001 and Winlow 2001). In these studies, frequent evidence was unearthed about night-time security staff engaging in illicit activities such as drug trafficking, extortion, and serious acts of violence.

Although officially regulated by Licensing Police such as those in Sydney, the occupational location of any ‘bouncer’ is a semi-supervised and highly gendered territory that provides employees with a specific discretion in the performance of their duties. British research by Monaghan (2008) noted the hyper-masculine nature of doorwork and the “body capital” of size, weight, muscle build and fighting techniques of venue controllers, which are critical factors in inculcating a wariness among patrons about their non-conformity to the ‘rules of the house’. However, such conformity, in a setting of frequent social license and heavy consumption of alcohol, is likely to be judged in an arbitrary way. Winlow (2001), Tomsen (2005), Winlow and Hall (2006), and Monaghan (2008) note the precarious environments of drinking establishments and the clash of masculinities that can occur in them between patrons and venue security staff. Rather than reinforcing a sense of safety, this realm of embodied risk often produces

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22 The regulation of the security industry in NSW has recently undergone profound change. Prior to an independent review of the NSW Police Force’s regulation of the security industry between February and April 2010, a co-regulatory model was in place in NSW that combined the resources of the Security Industry Registry (SIR), a division of the NSW Police, and ASIAL, the peak security industry association. The review, performed by accounting firm Deloitte, recommended abandoning the co-regulatory model in favour of the SIR assuming full control and reporting to the Commissioner of Police via the State Crime Command (Sarre and Prenzler 2011). Following the abandonment of the co-regulatory approach, SIR was renamed the Security Licensing and Enforcement Directorate (SLED). As of July 2010, the SLED has become the sole regulatory body in NSW, given the remit of identifying and investigating non-compliance with the Security Industry Act 1997 both proactively and in response to industry complaints (Sarre and Prenzler 2011).
heightened perceptions of personal danger both among security staff and patrons of the NTE. This risk is exacerbated by the confusion about the sanctioned authority of those working in the security industry. According to Sarre and Prenzler (2011:103-104):

[the] legal authority, rights and powers of private security providers are determined more by a piecemeal array of legal privileges and assumptions than by clear law...The lack of legislation is confusing for security personnel and the public alike...public police are given statutory immunity from civil suit in circumstances where their beliefs and acts are ‘reasonable’. Private personnel are afforded no such luxury. Indeed, private security remain vulnerable and constantly run the risk of being sued in the torts of assault, false imprisonment, intentional infliction of mental distress, defamation, nuisance and trespass to land and to the person.

Regardless of such occupational drawbacks, the risks of physical challenge and the possibility of violent engagement attracts many recruits to this male-dominated segment of policing work. Interview material gathered for this thesis (see Chapter Six) suggests that meeting and surviving challenges and ‘scrapes’ with aggressive patrons becomes a frequently cited aspect of the occupational lore of doorwork/bouncing. This aggression is not redundant and, as Hobbs et al (2005:169) state, “control strategies and regulatory attempts to incorporate the night time population rely heavily upon intimidatory devices in the form of commercial security staff”. Furthermore, despite the inherent risks of bouncing, there is an ongoing attraction of bouncing work to those with a forceful working-class masculine demeanour. Indeed, this predisposition is commonly expected and cultivated as the embodied capital needed to perform on the job, essentially meaning that “the emergence of the bouncer enables traditional violent masculine strategies to be relocated into new commodified arenas” (Hobbs et al 2007:23).
The apparent division between the hyper-masculinity of industry employees and the regulations that govern their actions, in an environment seemingly offering social license for hedonistic leisure, is one of considerable tension. The introduction of new local legislation governing the professional environment of doorstaff and venue controllers in NSW has increased the regulatory controls, but they are not enforced through direct, sustained, supervision. The recent pattern of regulation of security in NSW has made this point even more significant. Efforts during the 1980s and 1990s to purge corruption from local police included abolition of ‘licensing squads’ comprising hundreds of officers with specialist and major duties in relation to overseeing venues and security (Fleming 2008). This formal abolition of specialist licensing police in Sydney was reversed in later years. Nevertheless, the scaling back of a squad focus and allocation of specialist resources in recent decades\(^{23}\) served to further the contemporary pattern of spasmodic or ‘hands off’ governance in deregulated NTEs. The following section will introduce the key sites of Sydney’s NTE as well as provide a more specific analysis of regulation and policing in the local context.

The Sydney Study

Sydney is Australia’s most populous city. It is also the Australian city that competes most vigorously for ‘global-city’ status. Sydney’s success at hosting major events led to it being named as the ‘top global city’ at the inaugural 2010 International Festival and Events Association ‘World Festival and Event City Awards’. Some of the more notable night-time events hosted in Sydney include the annual New Year’s Eve fireworks on Sydney Harbour, the Sydney Mardi Gras, Vivid Sydney and the Sydney Festival (see Figure 8). It is claimed by the City of Sydney Council that an inclusive, socially connected and vibrant NTE is essential to the Sydney ‘brand’, attracting significant international tourism and inward investment (City of Sydney Council 2011).

\(^{23}\) This process was further marked by a high level of retirement and turnover among older staff.
As previously discussed, contemporary Sydney and its nightlife were shaped by a number of major social and economic changes that occurred following the Second World War. In those decades, Sydney experienced a manufacturing boom and subsequent suburban expansion that was fuelled by significant population growth and immigration from Europe (Wotherspoon 2008). By the 1970s, the post-war move to the suburbs, and relocation of many of the city’s manufacturing, port and warehousing complexes, had left the city bereft of any extensive nightlife outside of Kings Cross. The urban nightlife scene changed dramatically with the emergence of a new gay subculture around East Sydney and an influx of middle-class professionals seeking a life close to the city (Faro and Wotherspoon 2000). Sydney’s inner-city property market grew substantially and became highly desirable to both investors and Sydney “yuppies”24 in the 1970s and 80s (Wotherspoon 2008), with gentrification of many derelict and undesirable city spaces (Faro and Wotherspoon 2000).

A trend relating to the renovation of inner-city terrace homes ran in tandem with a rise in apartment living. New apartment blocks were constructed in East Sydney, South Sydney and the former port areas of Pyrmont and Darling Harbour. This growth in the number of city dwellers with high disposable incomes made possible the further expansion of city nightlife. Ironically, most of the areas that arose as new or enlarged nightlife precincts (Kings Cross, Oxford Street and Chinatown) were those spaces that were at some time seen as problematic for their association with crime, corruption, and their sexual and racial difference. During the 1980s, Sydney first emerged as a leading centre for information technology, finance and law in the Asia-Pacific region. Since then, the city’s economic and cultural links with Asia have developed strongly, so that, by the end of the 20th century, just over 30% of Sydney’s population was born outside Australia. If those with one or both parents born outside Australia are added, this number rises to over 50% (Wotherspoon 2008). Thus, Sydney became a multicultural city with strong influences from Europe (particularly Italy and Greece), the Middle East, India, China and South-East Asia.

24 ‘Yuppie’ is a slang and often derogatory term that draws on the acronym ‘young urban professional’ to describe a well educated young professional living in the city who lives an affluent lifestyle.
Figure 8: Major events in Sydney at night.
Clockwise from top: Sydney Harbour during New Years Eve fireworks; A colourful participant at Sydney’s Mardi Gras parade on Oxford Street; the Sydney Opera House during Vivid Sydney; and the Domain during the Sydney Festival.

Source: The City of Sydney Council.

Sydney’s NTE has grown substantially in the past decade. Currently, there are 1900+ licensed premises in the city, 20% of which are pubs and registered clubs. The majority (70%) of licensed venues in Sydney are restaurants, licensed cafes, small bars and karaoke venues (City of Sydney Council 2011). According to a cost-benefit analysis undertaken in 2011, the economic benefit of Sydney’s NTE is significant and increasing (Bevan et al 2011). The study estimated that Sydney’s NTE generated a turnover of $15.18 billion between its core and non-core businesses in 2009. Of this figure,

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25 Core businesses are defined by the City of Sydney Council (2011: 6) as “places offering food, drink and entertainment”. According to Bevan et al (2011), there are 2,750 core businesses operating in Sydney’s NTE.
“drink-led” business generated $425 million. The report also suggested that 28.4% of all jobs in the City of Sydney were generated by these core and non-core businesses. The considerable economic significance of the NTE for state revenue cannot be discounted when examining regulatory approaches to Sydney nightlife, particularly in relation to alco-leisure. The governance of Sydney nightlife is an increasingly complex task, with myriad financial, social and political concerns evident in public discourse.

While food and alcohol-related activities dominate the night-time leisure market, Sydney has a number of major cultural facilities which contribute to the NTE. Some of the more prominent cultural sites in the city include the Sydney Opera House, The Museum of Contemporary Art, the Art Gallery of NSW; The Museum of Sydney, the Australian Museum, Chinatown, the State Theatre, the Capitol Theatre and the Belvoir Street Theatre. The rise of the NTE has stimulated a great deal of public civic planning along similar lines to other cities around the world where expanded reputation for nightlife is being consciously worked on as part of an inter-city rivalry for investment and tourist dollars.\(^{27}\)

The Australian Research Council funded City After Dark project (2008-2011), which this PhD was a part, included an online survey\(^{28}\) to ascertain views regarding different night-

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26 Non-core businesses are defined by the City of Sydney Council (2011:6) as “providing transport, accommodation, retail, education and government services... at night”. According to Bevan et al (2011), there are 4,491 non-core businesses operating in Sydney’s NTE.

27 Accordingly, the key facilitator of policy and planning concerning Sydney’s day-time and night-time economies, the City of Sydney Council (the Council), has recently developed a long term action and strategy plan for Sydney’s nightlife (City of Sydney Council 2011). This makes the claim that the primary aim of the Council is “to deliver a world class, and most importantly, safe night-time economy which provides opportunity for all to participate” (City of Sydney Council 2011: 2). Part of the Council’s effort to encourage ‘diversity and inclusiveness’ in the city after dark has been the hosting and promotion of a number of major cultural events. Some of the more prominent of these include, as noted earlier, the Sydney Festival, Art and About, Vivid Sydney, the Sydney Film Festival, and Mardi Gras. Each of these events is intended to activate spaces that are not necessarily always used in the nightlife context with consumers who may not otherwise enter the city at night.

28 The survey data is limited in a number of ways. Firstly, the sample is non-representative, relatively small and obviously skewed towards inner-city residents. The data is also skewed towards Anglo-Europeans and over-represents the gay/lesbian community, most likely caused by the circulation and advertisement the survey received via specific urban magazines that have a largely Anglo-Australian readership. The survey
time activities in Sydney and their changing patterns, regulation and intervention by authorities. In addition, responses were garnered to determine levels of participation in night-time leisure activities and issues relating to crime and safety, diversity and inclusiveness. The results of the survey produce a mixed appraisal of Sydney’s NTE. According to the results, a strong majority (90%) of respondents stated that they normally felt safe in the city at night. A number of factors, including pedestrian activity (listed by 25% of respondents as contributing to a feeling of safety) and busy venues (20%), contributed to feelings of safety in Sydney’s nightlife districts, as well as a range of ‘other reasons’. Well-lit streets/locations, being with friends/in a group and familiarity were all common ‘open-ended’ responses provided by participants. Many respondents identified Sydney as safe, with one participant stating: “There is little to be afraid of in the first place. Sydney is a very safe city”.

However, the results of the survey also suggested problems with Sydney’s nightlife, particularly in relation to public safety. In contrast to the 90% of people stated that they normally feel safe in Sydney after dark, 77% of participants stated that there are places in Sydney where they feel unsafe. Three options for responses were offered in the survey regarding the safety of locations in Sydney: “public spaces”, “commercial spaces” and “both”. Of the 77% of participants who responded to this question, 72% identified public spaces only, 25% stated both public and commercial spaces, and 3% listed commercial spaces only as the sites in which they felt unsafe. Open-ended responses regarding reasons why particular places were selected as unsafe were varied. Drunken behaviour, poor visibility/lighting, gang activity, infrequent pedestrian activity and lack of security were the most common responses. These results are particularly instructive given the public and media attention that is given to the licensed environment as a source of problematic behaviour. The survey results indicate that most NTE occasions are in some way viewed as potentially unsafe and risky.

was also circulated throughout queer networks by a number of key agencies keen to voice concerns about Sydney’s city after dark. Gay and lesbian fears of harassment aside, these communities are not the demographic most likely to be victimised in the NTE, who, as previously stated, are male and from the working class, most likely coming into the city centre from the outer suburbs.
Half the survey respondents (55%) stated that they had had a negative experience while engaged in night-time leisure activities, and 19% stated that they had been a victim of crime while participating in nightlife. Of those who identified themselves as a victim, the offences identified by the majority of respondents were assault and/or theft. A relationship between victimisation and normally feeling safe in the city at night was canvassed. Results indicate a significant relationship: victims of crime (20%) were twice as likely to feel unsafe in the city at night than those who had not been the victim of crime (8%). A number of other significant relationships were noted between victimisation and various subgroups. More males (28%) than females (14%) stated that they had been a victim of crime while participating in Sydney nightlife. Despite these statistics, survey questions relating to night-time inclusiveness produced positive results. A majority of respondents stated that venues cater for their preferred activities during the night. Results relating to the policing of Sydney nightlife will be discussed in later sections of this chapter. However, the next section of this chapter will introduce the fieldwork locations selected for this research project.

The Research Sites

Figure 9 (below) presents a map of Sydney as defined by the boundaries of the Sydney City Council. Sydney’s NTE is spread across a number of sites that each cater for different social groups through the provision of diverse forms of nocturnal leisure. Closely studying and then comparing the night-time cultures located within these urban areas makes it possible to see variations in social and regulatory contexts. Outlined in black are the four research sites that were utilised for the fieldwork component of this thesis. The four sites were chosen because they represent the most prominent nightlife precincts in Sydney and encapsulate the highly developed, socially diverse, and often controversial NTE. They are, from left to right: 1. Darling Harbour/ Pyrmont; 2. George Street (incorporating Circular Quay and Sydney’s historical Rocks district); 3. Kings Cross and; 4. Oxford Street. Each of these sites has a distinct nightlife.
This section will address a number of issues, processes and concerns in the context of Sydney’s NTE. It will also introduce the case sites used for the fieldwork component of this research project. By doing so, a greater understanding will be developed regarding the nature of Sydney’s urban NTE and the regulatory controls that shape it. It will also set the scene for later discussions that are specific to the different spaces that make up Sydney’s nightlife precincts.
Figure 9: Map of Sydney as defined by boundaries of the City of Sydney Council

Source: The City of Sydney Council.
The four sites selected as key nightlife precincts in Sydney are:

1. **George Street and Circular Quay (including the Rocks):** This site includes the main artery of Sydney’s central business district and encompasses Sydney’s oldest district, the Rocks, that functioned as the city’s red light district in the 1800s. It is also the location of a number of Sydney’s highest profile cultural institutions and tourist destinations, including the Sydney Opera House, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Sydney Town Hall, the Queen Victoria Building and the popular Chinatown district. Ranging from Central Railway Station to the Rocks, George Street is home to a number of major transport hubs, including Central Railway Station and bus depot, Town Hall Railway Station and bus depot, with Martin Place Railway Station, Wynyard train station and bus depot and Circular Quay train station and bus depot located on the peripheries of the site. Darling Harbour and Circular Quay are both accessible via George Street and, as such, a great number of people use George Street as the access point to these major tourist destinations.

![Figure 10: Images from Sydney’s George Street.](source)

Left to Right: Sydney’s Chinatown district, Sydney’s Town Hall, and the CBD.

Source: City of Sydney Image Gallery.

The site has a large number of bars, ranging from low-end to more exclusive venues. However, a particular focus in this study was the area located around Town Hall Railway Station, situated in the middle of George Street. This area is a mass entertainment precinct that provides revellers with a range of leisure activities. It is also the site of a high number of bars that cater for a younger demographic (approximately 18-25). Many
of these bars and clubs offer cheap drinks (in ‘happy hours’ one could buy two ‘basic’ spirits for $6 during the fieldwork period) and do not have cover charges. These venues are adjacent to a number of fast food outlets including McDonald’s, Hungry Jack’s, Ali Baba’s (kebab shop), KFC (located a short distance back towards Town Hall), and also cinemas, sex shops and gaming arcades.

**Figure 11: Diverse venues from around the Town Hall area on George Street.**

Source: Phillip Wadds.

The location of the site ensures that it enjoys a mixed patronage. The high number of cheaper venues in the Town Hall area attracts a younger crowd (18-late 20’s) as well as a large number of backpackers/tourists. This patronage is further promoted by a number of budget hostels that service the immediate area. Further north along George Street, the Ivy bar and entertainment complex caters for an ostensibly more upmarket crowd. Ivy attracts large crowds on the weekend, drawn to its extensive bars and restaurants. Large numbers of revellers are also present in the Rocks, which is positioned at the northernmost point along George Street. The Rocks area typically features an older demographic than southern George Street, with many drawn to its restaurants, harbour vistas and traditional pubs. However, in recent years, many nightclubs have been established in the Rocks area, introducing a younger demographic to the site. It is important to note that the expansion of George Street (beyond the Rocks) as a nightlife destination is very recent, emerging in the 1990s when a number of large residential apartment complexes were developed in the area.
Figure 12: Sydney illuminated.

Left to Right: the Sydney Opera House during Vivid Sydney. During this event, many of Sydney’s landmarks are transformed by various lighting effects. The white sails of the Opera House are a main attraction during the event and draw large crowds to the harbour foreshore; the Sydney Harbour Bridge during the annual New Year’s Eve fireworks. Millions of tourists and locals are drawn to the harbour to witness an extravagant fireworks display, the Bridge is the centrepiece of the night; Circular Quay at night, as viewed from the North Shore of Sydney.

Source: City of Sydney Image Gallery.

2. **Kings Cross:** This site is perhaps Sydney’s most recognised, and notorious, nightlife precinct. It ranges from the Police station at the eastern end of Darlinghurst road, down to the ‘Coke’ sign (see Figure 13, below) located at the corner of William Street and Darlinghurst Road. Historically (as noted in Chapters Two and Three), this site has a strong relationship with organised crime that developed in the 1950s and 1960s when the area flourished due to the presence of illegal gaming dens, strip clubs, brothels, and, later, a flourishing drug trade (Silvester and Rule 2010). While the area has changed considerably since this time, Kings Cross still has a strong reputation for criminality, violence and alcohol-related disorder. Known as Sydney city’s ‘red light district’, Kings Cross houses a high number of pubs, strip clubs, bars and nightclubs, many of which hold 24-hour licenses. Although the area has traditionally been seen as a problem for crime and disorder, recent gentrification of the surrounding area, as well as commercial trends towards higher-end venues, has seen Kings Cross transformed into a more broadly patronised nightlife precinct. Once shabby pubs have been renovated into exclusive bars that service Sydney’s middle-class revellers. However, these changes have done little to diminish the area’s image as a hotspot for alcohol-related issues and, as such, Kings Cross is often seen as the coalface of the state and police’s battle with
alcohol-related violence. Kings Cross has also been the location of a number of recent high-profile incidents, including, most notably, the death of Wilson Duque following an altercation with ‘bouncers’ from a popular nightclub in the area in 2010 and the death of Thomas Kelly following a random and unprovoked ‘king hit’ in 2012 (see Chapter Five for a detailed discussion of these incidents).

As with most red-light districts, Kings Cross’ patronage is highly mixed. The presence of Sydney’s controversial heroin injection room, as well as a number of drug rehabilitation and charity-run hostels, has meant that many of Kings Cross’ unused spaces and side streets play host to a number of Sydney’s homeless. In relation to the nightlife venues, Kings Cross attracts a highly diverse mix of patrons. While generally more popular with the late night crowd of mainly young revellers (18-30), most age groups, sexes, sexualities, ethnic and socio-economic mixes can be found in ‘the Cross’. The Cross after dark is outwardly Sydney’s truest night ‘playground’, with social license promising that almost every desire can be bought, found or enacted. Unfortunately, the popularity of the site also leads to it being the most contentious space of Sydney nightlife. Frequent displays of violence and disorder between young men (although female behaviour is receiving increasing attention) engaged in heavy-episodic drinking and drug use are common in the area, underscoring its dubious reputation.
3. **Darling Harbour/Pyrmont**: As a former industrial waterfront, Darling Harbour has been transformed by local and state governments into a highly popular commercial, residential, entertainment and tourist precinct in what is Sydney’s closest case of UK style post-industrial urban revitalisation. This site encompasses both the Cockle Bay (East) and Pyrmont (West) side of Darling Harbour, and is one of Sydney’s most popular tourist attractions. The picturesque harbour foreshore here is lined with bars, clubs and restaurants that, free from motor traffic, provide a distinct nightlife environment. This site also houses Sydney’s Star City Casino and the IMAX Theatre. The proximity and ease of access between the different venues ensure that this area is always populated with a wide-ranging and diverse of patronage. The spectacular views afforded by the harbour and its surrounds have ensured that al-fresco drinking and dining are very popular along the Darling Harbour foreshore.

As a popular tourist attraction, Darling Harbour is a nightlife site that, unlike Kings Cross or parts of George Street, is not dominated by pubs and nightclubs. While there are many of licensed venues in the area, they are more spread out than in other city districts, with the exception of the Lime Street Wharf area, which includes a number of bars. Accordingly, on weekends, Darling Harbour is filled with families and tourists enjoying the harbour views and the many restaurants in the area. The revellers that do
enter the site tend to be slightly older than their George Street counterparts. The presence of the casino introduces another demographic to the area that is unique in Sydney nightlife. The Pyrmont side of the harbour has a distinctly Asian feel, with a number of souvenir stores drawing in the tourist crowd, as well as the casino, which provides a wide range of entertainment facilities.

**Figure 14: Sydney’s Darling Harbour/ Pyrmont entertainment district.**

Left to right: The Star Casino (formerly known as Star City Casino) dominates the Pyrmont (Western) shore of the Darling Harbour precinct. The Casino houses a number of entertainment and nightlife facilities, as well as a 5-star hotel and popular theatre. The eastern shore, Cockle Bay (pictured on the far right), is lined with restaurants and is a popular tourist destination. At night the harbour itself becomes a canvas, reflecting the lights from the surrounding commercial and retail buildings.

Source: Phillip Wadds; Brendan Esposito- *Sydney Morning Herald*; City of Sydney Council Image Gallery.

4. **Oxford Street**: Historically, Oxford Street was the main thoroughfare between central Sydney and the emerging Eastern Suburbs. In contemporary Sydney, Oxford Street is best known for its association with Sydney’s gay community. As the key site for the Sydney Mardi Gras (formerly the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras), Oxford Street has developed significant as a nightlife destination since the 1960s when, according to Faro and Wotherspoon (2000: 223), the coming of the Vietnam War reconfigured the landscape of Sydney. As organised crime syndicates began to dominate Kings Cross, the area’s streets became a very hostile place for Sydney’s gay community, so much so that they sought out new locations including, most prominently, Oxford Street. Oxford Street is the city’s second ‘red light district’ after Kings Cross with a number of sex shops and strip clubs in the area.
In recent times, a number of late trading venues known for violence and intensive drug dealing have threatened the ‘community’ atmosphere on Oxford Street. Adding to this problem, the proliferation of more ‘mainstream’ drinking venues to the street has created newfound tension between an increasing hetero-sexual patronage and the long-standing gay, lesbian and transgender community. This conflict is of particular concern for the City of Sydney Council, which is keen to preserve the multicultural and ‘village’ feel of parts of the inner-city.

**Figure 15: Sydney’s Oxford Street entertainment precinct.**

Left to right: Oxford Street by night; scenes from the Mardi Gras parade on Oxford Street and; a popular nightspot on Oxford Street.

Source: City of Sydney Council Image Gallery; *The Daily Telegraph* and; *Q Guide*.

During the course of this study, certain nightlife sites have been partly transformed by the constant and ever-changing demands for new nightlife experiences alongside shifting patterns of regulation concerning the NTE. The regulatory and policing strategies mentioned earlier in this chapter have certainly been evident at street level in Sydney and will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

**Regulating Drinking in Contemporary Sydney**

As previously mentioned, the City of Sydney Council and NSW government are increasingly concerned with the image of Sydney. Accordingly, media representations of
Sydney’s NTE as awash with intoxication and alcohol-related disorder are often rejected by local and state governments due to a potential tarnishing of Sydney’s image as a culturally diverse and vibrant ‘global’ city. For many night-users, local businesses, and residents, these issues are experienced as pressing. Consequently, strategies for the regulation of nightlife behaviour have become increasingly stringent in recent years in an attempt to stamp out aggressive forms of alco-leisure that detract from a positive city-image. At no point has this push been more evident than in 2008 when the NSW Labor Government, under Premier Rees (September 2008- December 2009), fervently declared that it would tackle alcohol-related disorder in the state and its capital.

Around this time, popular fears concerning alcohol-fuelled violence and disorder hit an all-time high, with sensitivities being highlighted by the tabloid and broadsheet press. The media frequently portrayed many of Sydney’s nightlife precincts, particularly Kings Cross, Oxford Street and George Street, as wholly dangerous spaces where drunken youth ran rampant (see Chapter Five for detailed discussion of the media representation of Sydney’s NTE, security and police). Media attention reflected wider community concern emanating from local residents and businesses who also played a key role in mobilising state intervention. Consequently, the Labor government introduced and amended a number of laws that sought to combat alcohol-related violence, many of which are still the primary tools countering alcohol-related violence in NSW. Most of these new regulations are heavily focused on situational crime prevention strategies that seek to alter the conditions within an environment, in this case the licensed pub, club or nightlife precinct, to produce a site less conducive to violence and disorder (Graham and Homel 2008), but leave the general expansion and profitability of the NTE intact.

One of the most significant initiatives was the introduction in October 2008 of restrictions for licensed premises that experience a prescribed number of alcohol-related incidents, based on evidence provided by the NSW Police. Since this time, a series of legislated amendments have been made to the *Liquor Act 2007* that enable the
alteration of licensing conditions based on the frequency of alcohol-related incidents that occur at a given venue. Under this initiative, problematic venues are ranked from level 1-3. Level 1 venues are deemed to be the worst offenders, with 19 or more recorded incidents of alcohol-related violence and disorder. Level 2 venues are those that have 12-18 (inclusive) recorded incidents, and level 3 are those venues that have 8-11 (inclusive) recorded incidents. Based on their ranking, venues are forced to comply with restricted trading conditions until their number of recorded incidents changes, at which point their level is reassessed and they are either placed in a different category or removed from the list altogether. Table 2 (below) lists the restrictions that are currently placed on level 1 and 2 venues (correct as of January, 2011).29 30

29 Note that level 3 venues, those with 8-11 (inclusive) incidents, do not have their trading conditions altered, but, instead, must adhere to the support and recommendations from the Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing to strengthen their alcohol and security management.

30 Since the election of the Liberal state government in NSW in March 2011 (following the completion of this analysis), the Labor-introduced system of calibrated punishments (see Table 4.1) has been changed to the ‘Three Strikes Scheme’, whereby licensing restrictions are based on the number of convicted offences against a venue (including via payment of a penalty notice, or alternatively, where an enforcement order is made by the State Debt Recovery Office when a penalty notice is not paid). Examples of the types of offences that constitute a ‘strike’ against a venue, include: permitting intoxication on licensed premises; permitting indecent, violent or quarrelsome conduct on licensed premises; selling or supplying alcohol to an intoxicated person or a minor; allowing alcohol to be sold or supplied to a minor on licensed premises; permitting the use or sale of substances which a licensee or manager suspects are illicit drugs; not complying with a direction issued by the Director General to a licensee or staff selling or supplying alcohol outside of authorised trading hours, non-compliance with a closure order issued under the Liquor Act to prevent or reduce a significant risk to the public interest where there are serious breaches of the Act; and a breach of key liquor licence conditions applying to violent venues listed in schedule 4 of the Liquor Act, or conditions imposed on a venue that has incurred strikes.
### Table 2: Alcohol restrictions for violent venues, by venue level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level One- 19+ incidents</th>
<th>Level Two- 12-18 (inclusive) incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A mandatory 2am lockout of patrons</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cessation of alcohol service 30 minutes prior to close</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No glass containers to be used after midnight</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No shots and drink limit restrictions after midnight</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minute alcohol sales time out every hour after midnight or active distribution of water and/or food</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or more additional security measure/s</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must maintain incident register</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This strategy of regulation has been founded on the notion that there is a clear scientific evidence base of reliable data behind its classifications. Ambiguities in the data and listing process have led to an often vocal resentment from key industry licensees and associations. While there are mixed motivations behind industry complaints, it is unsurprising that increased regulation is publically challenged and scorned as a potential business cost. However, it is also the case that venue operators and staff who work within Sydney’s NTE do realistically apprehend the problematic and arbitrary nature of such listings in light of the major failings of incident reporting and recording related to disorder and violence. These failings have been a historical, ongoing, and well-known characteristic of night crime, as confirmed by an ethnographic study of Sydney nightlife conducted in the late 80s (see Tomsen et al 1991; Tomsen 1997). Tomsen et al (1991) uncovered uneven levels of reporting and police action due to a range of reasons that included venue management style, police resources (or lack thereof), individual judgements about the significance of incidents, reliability of evidence, and even matters of graft and corruption in police-venue relations.

With a series of open, universal and calibrated punishments, the lists purport to be ‘evidence based’ and well founded, but, in reality, are much closer to a clumsy form of
science. The underlying approach has been based on studies that have focused on conditions within the licensed venue and their relationship with problematic behaviour, but this strategy fails to fully apply recommendations for reduced trading hours that would impact on private, and subsequently state, revenue (see Graham 1985, 1999; Homel and Tomsen 1993; Graham et al 2005, 2006; Graham and Homel 2008). While legislated by the state, and enforced by a number of local and government agencies, including the Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing (OLGR), Licensing Police and the Alcohol Licensing Enforcement Command (ALEC), the onus of responsibility for ensuring adherence to the newly implemented laws falls on the licensee. Failure to comply with these laws incurs significant monetary fines, as well as potential adverse alterations to licensing conditions. However, in a striking example of ‘exceptionalism’, the Star Casino has its own distinct legislation and means of regulation. Indicative of the financial importance of gambling revenue to state income, the Casino operates to a large degree in a “state of exception” (see Agamben 2005) that is based on and sustained by the political power that is wielded by casino stakeholders.

Valverde (2011: 298), in her study of local city governance in Canada, argues that this focus on licensing has become a prominent strategy of urban planning in the modern state that neatly aligns with strategies of responsibilisation and the minimal state:

*One of the virtues of licensing is that it enables conditions to be placed on the licensee. This differentiates governance to suit either local conditions or local authorities’ views, and at the same time minimizes the need for intrusive direct public policing. Instead, licensing contains a built-in encouragement for the licensee...to carefully control the operation of the business...in such a way to avoid trouble with the often highly local orders of the licensing authority. The ever-present fear of losing the license automatically generates the kind of governing move that some criminologists call ‘responsibilization’.*
This device of reducing the burden of regulation on the state, and, in particular, the police, has ostensibly empowered business to take control of their own destinies. However, this process has become an issue in Sydney’s NTE as it has created a conflict among licensees and the state government around the reporting of problematic behaviour inside their venues. In Sydney, the financial punishment, both through direct fines and potential licensing restrictions and increased safety requirements, is so detrimental to the success of a nightlife venue that it becomes a disincentive to proper recording and reporting of violent and disorderly behaviour. This pattern has been seen first-hand on numerous occasions by the author, and recorded in interview material collected for this thesis. Interviewees who worked as bouncers in many nightlife venues in hotspots, including Kings Cross and George Street, related that they had been told to send patrons involved in altercations home in taxis and to offer free drinks to ensure that they did not report incidents to the police. These claims throw new light on statistical evidence provided by Moffatt et al (2009) that showed a decline in the percentage of assaults reported by state’s top 100 most violent licensed premises during 2009 (when restrictions were operating). While this conflict is nothing new, it is certainly more obvious within the neoliberal paradigm that venues can effectively self-regulate, although in a way that was not anticipated by reformers.

Other NTE strategies have resulted in ambiguous messages and outcomes. The above regulatory structure and a mix of situational crime prevention strategies have been the basis of governance in Sydney’s NTE. They have emerged alongside the development of strategies that attempt to instil modes of self-regulation and risk avoidance among individual revellers. Here, television, internet and print advertisements target age groups that are deemed to be most ‘at risk’, as both victims and perpetrators, of problematic alcohol-related behaviour. Figure 16 shows four examples of print advertisements that have featured in Sydney since 2008.

The most high profile of these campaigns have actively targeted youth populations depicted as most likely to engage in dangerous forms of night-leisure. Embedded within
many of the advertising messages is a mixed tone of warning and possible suggestion or promise of transgressive pleasure. In two of these particular campaigns with the mottoes “don’t turn a night out into a nightmare” (ran between November 2008 and June 2010) and “binge drinking: what are you doing to yourself?” (a current campaign as of June 30, 2013) (Figure 16), an unintended connection is made equating drunkenness with a wild time and casual sex among strangers. While no doubt these practices are offensive to a delicate middle-class audience, and may indeed influence some youth drinking practices, there is a large group of revellers who seek to perform this very behaviour on a weekly basis, thereby in some way reinforcing the imagery of such public health campaigning. Consequently, the efficacy and influence of such advertisements must be questioned.
Alongside these print ads has been a string of television commercials that, again, encourage youth, and their parents, to take responsibility for their actions. Most importantly, they encourage safe drinking. Combining in this effort with apparent unity are various state agencies, including OLGR, NSW Health, NSW Police and the NSW state
government, as well as multi-disciplinary organisations, such as DrinkWise Australia. The campaigns assume that heavy consumption of alcohol is normal among youth populations and present contradictory themes of pleasure, risk and danger by graphically illustrating the ‘adverse’ consequences of binge drinking. As previously stated, these public health campaigns have run in tandem with concerted policing and security operations in Sydney’s various nightlife districts. The following section will discuss the way in which Sydney’s NTE is physically regulated by police and security staff.

**Policing Sydney Nightlife**

The new regulatory system and enforcement of new laws has made the policing of Sydney’s NTE more complex and contradictory than ever. Regulation and control of Sydney’s nightlife precincts are now shared by an increasing number of public, quasi-private and private actors, most prominently NSW Police (through general duties, special operations and the work of specialised organisations such as ALEC), the City of Sydney Council, and various private security companies. Sydney nightlife revellers now regularly witness the convergence of City Rangers and the newly formed precinct ‘Ambassadors’, employed by the City of Sydney Council,\(^{31}\) general duties police officers and specialised squads of NSW Police including the Public Order and Riot Squad (PORS) and drug dog squads, as well as the newly formed private security teams employed to oversee public order in nightlife hotspots like Kings Cross. The presence and divergent interests of these numerous agencies has produced confusion in policy direction, often resulting in divided and incongruous outcomes in policing strategy. The role and significance that each of these actors play in the policing of Sydney’s urban nightlife have been shaped by specific political and social forces.

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\(^{31}\) Precinct ‘Ambassadors’ are private security staff employed by the City of Sydney Council to provide a number of services to revellers while out in Kings Cross and George Street. The City of Sydney website states that precinct ambassadors assist 500 people per night during the summer months, helping to save lives and stem street violence. Their primary task is providing information services to nightlife patrons in high traffic areas of the city, including directions to transport hubs and train and bus timetables, but they also provide medical assistance to revellers and liaise with police when required.
NSW Police is, as previously mentioned, employing far more targeted, large-scale, high-visibility operations than ever before in an attempt to placate public anxieties concerning drunken violence in Sydney’s city after dark. These highly symbolic, often media focused strategies have most recently been seen in *Operation Unite* (see Figure 17), the trans-Tasman policing blitz involving all state and territory police forces (and also including New Zealand metropolitan forces) targeting alcohol-related disorder in major nightlife ‘hotspots’ across the region. Launched in 2009, part of the rhetoric of *Operation Unite*, alongside its core aim of campaigning against alcohol misuse, violence and anti-social behaviour, has been the appeal to private individuals within the wider community to act on behalf of the state as “third parties”, picking up on aspects of the traditional police role (Buerger and Mazerolle 1998; Mazerolle and Ransley 2005). Evidence of this appeal comes from a press release by the NSW Police Media Unit in which NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione stated:

*Tackling this issue [binge drinking and related disorder] is not something that police can do on their own...Police are looking for the community to also make a stand and to push for a change in culture and acceptable standards of behaviour...To truly address this issue, we must all say no to excessive drinking and drunken, violent and anti-social behaviour.*

While it is nothing new to have a police commissioner campaign against drunks and louts, what is distinctive here, and in police statements made in recent years in NSW, is the way in which the Commissioner has assumed a role as a major public commentator on night culture, and is now central to rallying public support for police action. Consequently, such tactics provide a window into aspects of the general crisis of public policing. Public police do not have the capacity to discharge the duties demanded by both the state itself and the general public. Currently employed strategies of crime

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prevention focus on promoting individual and community responsibility for managing risks and third-party policing (Buerger and Mazerolle 1998; Mazerolle and Ransley 2005). However, alongside these approaches are new arrangements between levels of government. Evidence of these new arrangements can be seen in the increasingly significant role that the City of Sydney Council, local business and community groups (through Liquor Accords), and the private security industry are taking in the regulation of Sydney nightlife. In what is becoming a common trend across many cities around the globe, processes of subsidiarity and place management can be seen as a means by which prominent social issues can be addressed. According to Lee and Herborn (2003:26), these processes are all part of a wider “shift away from state-centred forms of social control to forms of regulation developed and implemented at local levels”.

Figure 17: Operation Unite in action.

Large groups of police dress in high visibility, semi-military, attire in a ‘blitz’ on alcohol-related violence in Sydney. The left image displays police outside the Empire Hotel on Darlinghurst Road in Kings Cross. The right image shows police performing searches and making arrests outside a take-away shop in central George Street, around the Town Hall entertainment precinct.


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Subsidiarity refers to the principle that communities should be governed by the lowest, and most locally specific, competent and capable authority. It essentially promotes the idea that, in order to be effective at managing a local situation, and providing appropriate solutions, a government must have an intimate knowledge of the problems in an area and its population.
While spreading the responsibility of governance throughout the various key stakeholders, these processes also claim to enlist the support of the community. One of the most significant examples of both place management and devolution in Sydney can be seen in the presence of local Liquor Accords. Present in many of the larger nightlife precincts, Accords are generally comprised of licensees, police and other community stakeholders from within the local areas. By acting in cooperation, it is believed that the local Accords can outline, plan and implement effective, targeted and relevant strategies for problems in their local areas. The rise of such bodies appears to fit with the view that truly effective and successful changes to nightlife cultures require a whole-of-community approach, although the extent to which they do actually capture and reflect a ‘community’ interest remains contentious.

While the state and police seek to evolve the regulation and supervision of the NTE by engaging liquor industry groups, venues and private security firms, their own methods of dealing with perceived or real issues of social disorder frequently distance them from the views and interests of revellers and local residents, and signal a move away from a truly local and formerly-favoured “community policing” model (Avery 1981; Chan 1997; Skogan 2004; Fleming 2010). The hard-line, problem-oriented, policing operations that NSW Police now regularly employ create a substantial social gulf between the police and active nightlife users in a way that is at risk of alienating and antagonising the very community that is often needed to find solutions to problems of incivility and disorder after dark. This process was evidenced on many occasions during the ethnographic fieldwork component of this research as will be discussed in the following section.

**A Lesson from the Field**

On one particular weekend in 2008, at around 4am, I was witness to a serious assault involving a bouncer and an intoxicated and quarrelsome female patron at a prominent
Kings Cross bar. The incident occurred following a verbal altercation over the woman’s level of intoxication. Within his rights and following RSA regulations, a security guard had approached the woman and let her know that she was too drunk to be inside the venue and that she would have to leave. An argument ensued, as usually does in this type of situation, between the patron and venue security, resulting in the woman being forcefully ejected. During the process of being escorted from the venue the woman argued aggressively with the bouncer leading her from the venue. The bouncer was the size of a small car, at around 6’4 in height and weighing in excess of 130 kilograms. The rather petit woman, who stood at around 5’4 and no more than 60 kilograms, objected to the manhandling she was receiving from the security guard and lashed out at him as they reached the exit of the venue. The group of friends that were at the venue with the woman, consisting of 3 males and 1 woman, were all trying to calm her down before this moment, but the following scenes quickly changed all that.

After being struck on the arm by the woman, the bouncer once again tried to restrain her. Following an increasingly irate ‘verbal’ from the woman he abandoned all efforts to peacefully eject the patron and, instead, opted for violence. The bouncer ‘floored’ the female patron, punching her square in the face, knocking her unconscious. The males in the group of friends who had, up until that point, been trying to assist the venue security in pacifying the woman being escorted from the bar reacted and turned on the bouncer, starting a melee that was always destined to fail against the size and brawn of the security team at the venue. The fight spilled out onto the street and a large crowd, including me, congregated around the spectacle. Within minutes a team of around 10 local police officers had reached the scene and broken up the fight. All seemed to be resolved.

Following the incident, which left a number of the male patrons involved bloodied and with ripped clothing, the police went about seeking eye-witness accounts of the brawl. The bouncers involved retreated to the confines of the venue, with the large male responsible receding completely from the public gaze. A number of onlookers and the
group of males were calling the security guard out, many in a ‘frenzy’ over the events that had just transpired. As a team of paramedics assessed and stabilised the badly injured woman, the team of police started approaching witnesses to seek accounts of the incident. From the outset the police manner was aggressive, with many officers telling emotional bystanders to ‘move on’ and questioning their ability to accurately convey their versions of the fight due both to intoxication and their sensitive state.

After a number of minutes, two female police officers approached me seeking my account of the ordeal. Initially recording my name and details, the two officers were cordial in their approach and the conversation began in a positive manner. It must be stated that, while I had drunk a number of beers over the course of the night, I was in no way intoxicated, something that I think helped the police response to my report. As I began to give my version of events, an irritated male superior joined the women in interviewing me. Immediately, the tone of the conversation changed. No longer was it about my account of the incident, but a series of aggressive questions about my involvement in the fight, my level of intoxication and my reason for being at the venue. Taking offence to the manner of the male officer’s approach, I argued that I had no involvement and that I was going out of my way to help the police. While the female officers seemed embarrassed by their superior’s actions, they did not intervene in the male officer’s questioning. After the exchange became too much to tolerate, I asked for the identification of the officer to make a formal complaint. The immediate response was that I had no right to his details. As if aware that his actions had been inappropriate and confrontational, the senior officer slowly involved himself with other affairs. The female officers supported their colleague and said that any complaint would have to be made the following day at the Kings Cross police station.

The aggressive male police officer’s manner seemed to be an assertion of his authority while under threat. His actions reflected the number of volatile night-time incidents that are experienced by local police and the stress they are exposed to on a regular basis. In this way, the officer’s actions display a common police attitude that suggests an
uncompromising and suspicious stance in general dealings with night-time revellers. This observation challenges misguided expectations of a controlled and understood public order and communicates a sense that the police and nightlife environment are ‘under siege’.

While a number of arrests were made following the melee, they all involved patrons or members of the public who had been involved in the fight and were subsequently involved in irate verbal exchanges with both the police and venue staff. In the time that I remained at the scene before being moved on by police (around 20 minutes), no apparent action had been taken against the security team. The injured female patron had been rushed to hospital with serious facial damage, and a number of the male patrons involved had been treated for minor cuts and head-knocks. Management and staff from the venue certainly did nothing to implicate their security team in any wrongdoing.

Similar scenes involving heavy-handed or unfriendly police treatment of nightlife revellers have been witnessed many times during the fieldwork component of this research project, particularly during large scale policing ‘blitzes’ like Operation Unite. On these occasions, the high numbers of police in nightlife hotspots targeting drunkenness present a very hostile scene that strongly affects the night-time experience in the city after dark. This influence is confirmed in part by evidence collected during the online survey for the City After Dark project. A number of respondents noted the police presence as contributing towards them feeling unsafe and uncomfortable in nightlife areas. One respondent stated “police make me feel unsafe and claustrophobic”, another added “large groups of police are unfriendly and not approachable”. Corroborating these views, results from the survey investigating the relationship between police foot patrols and respondents normally feeling safe at night were canvassed, and it was found that a significant relationship emerged. That is, 37% of those who stated that they normally felt safe in the city at night did not nominate police foot patrols as contributing to their feelings of safety.
Further, when survey participants were asked about their level of satisfaction with a number of key night-time services (including public transport, cultural activities, council sponsored services, public policing, festivals and events and taxi availability), public policing rated poorly, with only 36% responding that they were satisfied with the current service provided. These findings were further supported by results concerning public confidence in the police. A total of 77% of those aged 45+ stated that NSW Police were not doing enough to prevent dangerous forms of nightlife. This lack of confidence was also displayed from all other age groups surveyed, with 39% of participants aged 18-24, 41% of those aged 25-34 and 45% of those aged 35-44 stating police were not doing enough in nightlife settings. ‘Doing enough’ might have a range of and even opposed meanings for different respondents, but these findings suggest that police involvement in Sydney’s NTE is failing to service the needs of nightlife revellers and is additional evidence of the lack of deep community support.

Similar problems are evident in relation to the increasing presence of the private security industry in the policing of Sydney’s NTE. Doormen and venue security undoubtedly account for the most numerically significant policing presence in Sydney’s nightlife spaces. In recent times, in a further attempt to prevent alcohol-related disorder in the public spaces of Sydney’s urban nightlife scene, a number of Kings Cross licensees have paid for a group of security guards to police public space in the area (Howden and Ralston 2011) (see Figure 18).
Figure 18: The new *public* private security teams in Kings Cross.

The team of five security guards employed by the Kings Cross Liquor Accord present an intimidating presence in Kings Cross. Dressed in high visibility, paramilitary style attire, the team rapidly responds to incidents of public violence and disorder along Darlinghurst Road and its surrounds.

Source: Lee Besford, *Sydney Morning Herald*.

The introduction of this team of security guards has altered the spatial dynamics of policing in Kings Cross. No longer are state-based police the sole agents of *public* order in the area. Indeed, this new dynamic is further evidence of the changing and reduced function of state-based policing and less frequent engagement with night culture. It is also an example of the way in which the NSW state government and other public authorities have become frozen by an increasingly reactive, image-conscious policy-making process. However, this reality has not stopped senior representatives of the NSW Police Association from damning the introduction of this private policing unit. Indeed, Scott Weber, the Association’s president, noted his concern about the presence of the team in Kings Cross when he stated: “An untrained, poorly equipped and unaccountable private security gang is no substitute for a professional police force” (Howden and Ralston 2011). This official discomfort reflects mixed feelings about the occupational shift towards privatisation of this work, but says nothing about the issues of legality that are more pressing for the greater public. This view from the top of the
Police Union seemingly contradicts the view of police working at the coalface in Kings Cross at night, with Con Constantin, the leader of the security team, stating that police have personally thanked him for their help, saying “...they can't do it without us...We are their eyes and ears” (Howden and Ralston 2011).

The presence of the security unit is also an acknowledgement by the licensees that the economic costs of any officially recorded violence under the new regulatory system is greater than the cost and potential trouble of employing private security teams. In this regard, the ranking system has successfully achieved and promoted the neoliberal ideology that underwrites less direct public police activity. The burden of service provision in the NTE is, in an increasing trend, falling on the private security industry. However, this further use of private security as an industry and venue response to the challenge of the new regulatory listings does not mean that these security officers assume a fully positive role that can inspire public confidence. The more immediate concern of the security teams is the suppression of incidents and conflicts inasmuch as they might be recorded against a specific venue.

As previously mentioned in this chapter, one of the primary concerns with this trend towards privatisation of the policing of nightlife has been the apparent ongoing lack of regulation and governance over the security industry (see also Prenzler and Sarre 2012). In Sydney, these concerns have certainly been voiced in the media as the industry has been tainted by a number of high-profile, violent, and, occasionally fatal incidents involving members of the public and bouncers employed on the door of various licensed venues throughout the city (see Chapter Five for detailed discussion of selected Sydney incidents).

Since 2008, there has been a deliberate and concerted effort to change the face of the private security industry employed in doorwork and venue control. New legislation, in the form of the *NSW Security Industry Regulation Act 2007*, has attempted to remove
rogue operators and to ‘professionalise’ the industry. Part of this process has involved an increase in the number of background checks to which potential employees are subject before being granted a license to work in the industry. These processes have been put in place to attempt to limit the number of persons with recorded histories of violence from entering the industry. Alongside the increase in probity checks, more substantial training programs have been introduced to ensure that prospective workers have a more complete understanding of the demands, and limitations, of their roles. A probation period of one year has also been introduced to ensure that those with no experience in the industry are subjected to more rigorous ‘on the job’ supervision by experienced staff. However, one major component of security work still fails to be recognised in formal training programs. Physical intervention is a significant part of security work, yet there are no requirements for industry recruits to undergo specific, tailored training in best-practice approaches for dealing with drunk and disorderly patrons. This omission is a major flaw in current industry requirements which must be addressed if any attempts to ‘professionalise’ the industry are to be taken seriously.

While the security industry still battles with its negative image, the new regulations introduced under the *NSW Security Industry Regulation Act, 2007* ostensibly restricts ‘cowboys’\(^\text{34}\) from entering the occupation. The upgraded requirements of training and probity undoubtedly represent a significant and positive progression, but the industry started from such a low base of poor regulation that there is clearly still a long way to go. Nightlife is constantly expanding to include greater and more diverse populations in the city after dark. As such, the private security industry, most notably doorwork and venue control employees, will continue to be of critical importance. However, while ambivalence about security is a mirror of the ongoing wider ambivalence about the NTE itself, much more can be done to improve public perceptions. Without legal authorities and clearly defined powers, backed up by appropriate levels of training, the industry cannot effectively undertake its expanded duties and will continue to be plagued by civil claims against operators who have exceeded vaguely defined workplace standards.

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\(^{34}\) This vernacular term is used to describe ‘out of control’, reckless and violent security staff who reject industry efforts to improve the standards of behaviour/practice of doorstaff.
However, the current arrangement shows that private security will continue to play a greater role in the regulation of public space in Sydney.

**Conclusion**

The NTE is an increasingly complex setting. The naive ideals on which NTEs concept was based have failed to produce the civilised “urban renaissance” that was initially imagined. The heavy reliance on alco-leisure, seen as an effective way to stimulate inward investment, has created spaces in which problematic behaviour leads to public tension and anxiety. Public violence in nightlife settings is undoubtedly a significant public concern. However, the politicisation of the issue has certainly exacerbated a heightened sense of alarm. The policing of this contentious space is ever more scrutinised. With limited resources in city commands, and favouring large-scale, targeted operations that produce newsworthy results, the public police is increasingly stretched in their ability to effectively police nightlife settings. Furthermore, the strategies employed by the police are often eroding public confidence and damaging relations with nightlife revellers. The result of this lack of community support is a further complication concerning their ability to fight key issues in nightlife settings (such as illicit drug dealing) through open public assistance and information sharing.

Evidence from this research suggests that the burden of service provision is increasingly falling on the private security industry, so presenting a new set of challenges and community concerns. Histories of excessive violence, corruption, and criminal association accentuate public ambivalence concerning bouncers but, paradoxically, have also mobilised political action that has stimulated positive legislative amendments and promoted reform within the industry.

The financial contribution of the NTE, reliant on alcohol and gaming industries, has seriously limited the strength and cohesion of policy regarding the regulation of drinking
in Sydney. The agencies concerned with the regulation and governance of Sydney’s nightlife are too frequently alienating the nightlife community, including commercial operators, by unnecessarily performing similar tasks. This duplication further frustrates business owners, creating widespread irritation and resistance to policy. Without community and business support there are strict limits on the progress that can be made in the battle to effectively regulate Sydney’s NTE. The following chapter will look at the way in which the media portrays Sydney nightlife and the various people engaged in policing the city after dark.
Chapter Five: Media Representations of Nightlife, Policing and Security

Introduction

“The crime waves may be ‘things of the mind’, but they have very real consequences” (Fishman, 1978: 531)

The above quote, taken from Fishman’s (1978) seminal article ‘Crime Waves as Ideology’, alludes to the power that public consciousness holds over the political and social agenda in relation to crime and safety. Fishman observed the influence of various media forms in producing a politics around crime that fundamentally alters perceptions of public safety and security. Similarly, Hall et al. (1978) argue that media-driven moral panics can serve as reinforcement for repressive state-based policing initiatives and authoritarian politics more broadly. While these works were written over thirty years ago, their messages resonate in contemporary society (see also Hogg and Brown 1998; Critcher 2003; Potter and Kappeler 2006; Poynting and Morgan 2007). In an age of ever-expanding media platforms and ‘new media’, the general public is exposed to more news than ever before (Lee 2007: 189). In relation to crime and crime news, it appears that public interest and, subsequently, anxiety, has grown alongside the range of media texts and technologies through which information is channelled. As a result, crime, in both ‘fact’ and fictional forms, now holds a significant place in all forms of popular media. Indeed, Reiner et al. (2000) have documented that crime news has increased dramatically since 1945 and has become a highly valued “commodity” that features in around 21% of news coverage. This public fascination with crime and crime news has led to a representation of criminality that often contradicts crime statistics (Fishman 1978; Ditton and Duffy 1983; Smith 1984; Reiner 1997; Howitt 1998; Potter and Kappeler 2006). The over-representation of crime in the media, particularly crimes of a
violent and personal nature (Ditton and Duffy 1983; Williams and Dickinson 1993; Reiner 1997; Lundman 2003; Potter and Kappeler 2006), has a significant influence on perceptions of safety and fear of criminal victimisation (Cornaglia and Leigh 2011). Bayley and Shearing (1996:598-599) assert that:

...whatever happens to crime objectively, the public’s fear of crime will certainly not decline. Because crime is fascinating, the media can be counted on to continue to exploit and exaggerate it...Unfortunately, because there seems to be no economic incentive, or political one either, for pointing this out (the exaggeration of actual crime statistics), the public will continue to be terrorized by the exploitation of crime news.

While academic attention on the subject of media effects on fear of crime has been mixed since the mid 1970s (Heath and Gilbert 1996; Ditton et al 2004), contemporary research indicates that there is certainly a significant link between media representations of crime, particularly those involving interpersonal violence, and a decrease in perceptions of public safety and a rise in fear of victimisation within local audiences (Chiricos, Eschholz and Gertz 1997; Potter and Kappeler 2006; Ericson 2007; Lee 2007; Cornaglia and Leigh 2011). This process has pertinence for the analysis of media depictions of policing and the NTE in Sydney, because the media have provided the central platform for political and social discussion regarding crime and safety in the city after dark.

The basis of this chapter is a media content analysis that studied newspaper representations of Sydney’s NTE and the ‘policing’ of Sydney’s nightlife settings from 1990 to 2012. 35 The media analysis concerns two major Sydney-based newspapers, The

35 The frequency of reporting in this area has proved a significant problem in attempting to finalise this chapter. Articles concerning Sydney’s NTE, particularly related to an ‘out of control’ drinking culture and associated violence and disorder, have featured in the Sydney press on an almost weekly basis over the last four years. However, the end of July 2012 has been selected as an end date for this analysis. The continuing frequency of articles related to these themes partly signals the failure of council, policy makers
Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph. These two papers represent respectively Sydney’s main broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. Historically, broadsheet newspapers have reported the news more ‘objectively’ \(^{36}\) than tabloids. However, one recurrent observation throughout much of the literature on media and media effects is that news articles, including those presented in broadsheet newspapers, have become more sensational or “tabloid” over the last three decades in their search for audiences (Blumler and Gurevitch 1995; Grabe et al 2001; Uribe and Gunter 2004; 2007). This “tabloidization” of news media has influenced news selection and production methods and has often detracted from the apparent objectivity of the news (Uribe and Gunter 2004; 2007) and influenced perceptions of particular topics. Turner (1999: 59-60) describes the process of tabloidization as follows:

There has been a shift away from politics and towards crime, away from the daily news agenda and towards editorially generated items promoted days in advance, away from information-based treatments of social issues and towards entertaining stories on lifestyles or celebrities, and an overwhelming investment in the power of the visual, in the news as an entertaining spectacle... tabloidization is framed as a broad-based cultural movement, most visible in certain media forms, which is made possible by the increasing commercialization of modern life and a corresponding decline in ‘traditional values’.

The media analysis undertaken for this thesis argues that the salience given to certain types of crime in the print media, particularly those involving interpersonal violence, have had a significant influence on the political and social environment surrounding Sydney nightlife. Not only have these accounts framed public opinion and political and regulatory and policing bodies, including NSW Police, to effectively address fundamental issues regarding problematic behaviour in Sydney’s NTE. It also is an acknowledgement of the high news value that nightlife disorder retains in contemporary Sydney.

\(^{36}\) Objectivity in relation to the media refers to a focus on corroborated ‘facts’. Broadsheet newspapers have historically favoured news stories that are supported by expert opinion rather than eye-witness and less reliable sources. This focus promotes greater impartiality than tabloid newspapers who often present news with an obvious bias.
The debate surrounding the NTE, but they have also had a notable bearing on the promotion of legislation and regulatory practices concerning its governance.

The period under observation was a time of increasing anxiety and sensitivity about the risks associated with the NTE. Central among these concerns were issues related to alcohol-related violence and disorder. However, while the media have frequently portrayed the NTE as ‘awash’ with danger, policing responses to nightlife disorder have received mixed appraisal. In relation to the policing and governance of nightlife, public police and private security are portrayed in contrasting ways. Regarding private security, the print media reflect public ambivalence, fear and insecurity by representing the industry as inherently violent, unregulated and with strong links to criminality. In contrast, media portrayals of state police frequently reflect the conscious effort that an increasingly media savvy NSW Police have placed on “image work” (Mawby 2002; Lee 2011). Here, large-scale police operations are given high prominence, with repeated reference to ‘positive’ outcomes, including high arrest rates of night revellers.

The first section of this chapter will introduce the media data that frames the NTE as a dangerous and risky environment. Central to this section will be an analysis of the case of Thomas Kelly, who was killed in July, 2012 following an unprovoked attack in Kings Cross. Media attention related to Kelly’s death provides a case study in the politics that surround Sydney’s NTE. This analysis will provide the foundation for the following sections that will navigate and analyse the data in relation to portrayals and emergent themes regarding both the private security industry and the NSW Police- the two major bodies involved in the regulation and policing of Sydney’s NTE.

Due to the large number of articles generated throughout the media search, the analysis of both the public police and the private security industry has been broken up into specific case studies that best illustrate the ways in which both parties are represented in the media. In relation to the private security industry, the death of David Hookes in
2004 has been the most significant event in the history of debates about the doorwork industry in Australia. Although this incident occurred in Victoria, its prominence in the Sydney press, and significance to the private security industry throughout Australia, should not be overlooked. Hookes’ death was a watershed moment in shaping popular perceptions of ‘bouncers’ and also in stimulating legislative amendments concerning the governance of the security industry. Other major Sydney-based incidents, including the death of Peter Dalamangas at Star City Casino in 1998, the death of Wilson Duque Castillo outside a Kings Cross nightclub in 2010, and the bashing of Nicholas Barsoum at The Ivy nightlife complex in 2011, will also be examined as significant examples of the way in which the media have represented the private security industry. With regards to the public police, the media attention surrounding Operation Unite, a nation-wide policing initiative targeting alcohol-related violence and disorder, was selected to illustrate the way in which the media have been employed to help promote police legitimacy and manufacture public confidence.

**Risk, Violence and the Politics of Night Leisure**

Based on the frequency and prominence that night-time violence and disorder receives in the news, it would seem reasonable to assume that Sydney’s NTE is full of inherent risks to personal safety and security. While it is true that in Sydney’s NTE the promise of a carnivalesque release from the routines of contemporary life sometimes results in alcohol-related violence and civil disturbance, media representations do not accurately reflect patterns of offending, but play a significant role in shaping public opinion and policy direction. Prevailing media representations of night leisure and its associated cultures of intoxication and belligerent performance were reported with increasing frequency over the course of the media analysis. The ‘risky’ environment of Sydney’s city after dark was a constant focus of news and current affairs programs. Both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers placed a high news value on the presentation of graphic images and texts concerning the volatile and violent personalities engaged in urban nightlife (see Figure 19).
Figure 19: Typical images presented in the print media concerning alcohol-related violence in Sydney.

Source: Daily Telegraph, Damian Shaw, Craig Greenhill and Gordon Mccomiskie.

The headlines below communicate a heightened sense of risk, fear and victimisation by depicting nightlife precincts throughout Australia as principally being ‘hotspots’ for crime, with particular reference to alcohol-related violence and disorder.
Alcohol Crackdown as Drink Crime Soars (Kamper 2003)

Just Another Drunken Night on the Streets- OUR DRUNKEN NIGHTLIFE (Blackwell and Watson 2007)

Never-Ending Violent Season Thrust Upon Us (Quigley 2007)

The Worse For Drink: Public Violence Soars (Braithwaite 2007)

Drunks Add to Social Fears (Narushima 2008)

Police Chief Calls for War on Drunks (Welch 2008)

We are Living in Fear of Drunken Violence (Sikora 2008)

Booze-fuelled Crime the Biggest Problem- COPS ON THE BRINK (Linnell 2008)

The article: Drunks Add to Social Fears (Narushima 2008:3) discussed perceptions of fear related to intoxicated persons and concluded that “...the most common flashpoint for alcohol-related violence was around late-closing pubs and in the heart of towns and cities where people congregated”. Similarly, the article entitled: Police Chief Calls for War on Drunks (Welch 2008: 3) presented an announcement from Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione, stating that “this [alcohol-related violence and disorder] is the single biggest issue I have to deal with...seventy-five percent of all engagements that NSW Police have are as a result of alcohol”. Similar sentiments were reflected in many articles throughout the media analysis. While it cannot be stated how an audience will respond to these media representations, a comparative analysis comparing the number of recorded incidents of assaults around licensed venues and the number of articles produced around the themes of violence, disorder, alcohol and licensed premises shows that the media is certainly over-dramatising and placing an increasing focus on the problem of alcohol-related violence. This exaggeration is part of the process of deviance
amplification\textsuperscript{37} that Cohen (1972) discusses in his seminal book \textit{Folk Devils and Moral Panics}. Figure 20, below, shows the dramatic increase in media reporting on the topic of “pubs and violence” between 2003 and 2012, peaking in 2008 when the state government and police declared their “war” on drunken violence. The increase in articles, however, contradicts the statistics produced by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (Table 3) that note that there was no statistically significant upward or downward trend in the monthly numbers of recorded criminal incidents for assault - non-domestic violence over the same period of time.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure20.png}
\caption{“Pubs and Violence”, by article by article numbers in the \textit{Daily Telegraph} and \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} newspapers.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Source: Factiva}

\textsuperscript{37} Deviance amplification refers to the process of media exaggeration that deliberately focuses on certain social issues with little consideration for objective facts that would present a more complete picture of a certain problem (Cohen 1972). For example, in relation to alcohol-related violence and disorder in Sydney nightlife settings, stories often inflame public perceptions of the likelihood of night-time violence and victimisation while rarely acknowledging that official crime statistics indicate that levels of violence have remained stable or shown modest declines over the past decade.
Table 3: Assaultive crime statistics recorded by NSW Police in Kings Cross and the Sydney Local Government Area between 2002 and 2012.

Source: NSW BOCSAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Kings Cross Suburb</th>
<th>Sydney Local Government Area</th>
<th>Sydney Statistical Division</th>
<th>NSW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2002 - Mar 2003</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>5335</td>
<td>38708</td>
<td>70978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2003 - Mar 2004</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>5030</td>
<td>37593</td>
<td>68345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2004 - Mar 2005</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>5128</td>
<td>37189</td>
<td>67422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2005 - Mar 2006</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>5213</td>
<td>38086</td>
<td>69265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2006 - Mar 2007</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>5099</td>
<td>38230</td>
<td>69668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2007 - Mar 2008</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>5558</td>
<td>39719</td>
<td>70468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2008 - Mar 2009</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>5403</td>
<td>39260</td>
<td>70290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2009 - Mar 2010</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>5170</td>
<td>38578</td>
<td>68753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2010 - Mar 2011</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>5125</td>
<td>38331</td>
<td>67406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2011 - Mar 2012</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>4926</td>
<td>35956</td>
<td>64320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trend^ and average annual percent change over 10 years: -3.3
Trend^ and annual percent change over 2 years: Stable

In particular, the over-representation of crime in the news informs a law and order view (Hogg and Brown 1998: 8) that frequently dictates public perceptions of particular social problems in the following way:

In law and order commonsense, crime is depicted as a problem of ever-increasing gravity set to overwhelm society unless urgent, typically punitive measures are taken to control or suppress it. It generates the aura of a permanent state of emergency in which extraordinary measures are needed to defend society against the exceptional threat of rising crime rates.

Hogg and Brown (1998: 18-21) state that popular views on crime and safety, constructed predominantly through media presentation of “authoritative” sources, produce a law and order “commonsense” that is often corrupted by “questionable views and
assumptions which have assumed the status of a set of givens within debates about crime”. The influence of these constructed realities stretch beyond the personal into the public and political domain, often framing public issues and, subsequently, setting a political agenda (Sacco 1995; Hogg and Brown 1998; Gilliam and Iyengar 2011). Furthermore, Hogg and Brown (1998: 4) argue that such commonsense “habitually confuses the public interest on questions of law and order with what arouses the interest of the public”, often resulting in short-sighted and conservative policy that fails to engage with the underlying factors that contribute to problems facing society. Such “commonsense” is marked by seven key themes: soaring crime rates, law and order nostalgia, the association of local crime with international examples, claims that the criminal justice system does not protect citizens, claims that we need more police with greater powers, calls for tougher punishments for offenders, and claims that victims should be able to get revenge through the courts (Hogg and Brown 1998: 22-41).

The NTE and issues of alcohol-related violence are both topics that frequently receive a high volume of social commentary that is often informed by anecdotal evidence and opinion. Consequently, commonsense about problems of incivility and disorder in nightlife settings can clearly be seen in the Sydney press. In the rhetoric of this commonsense, it is asserted that the lack of any full moral grounding or awareness among hedonistic young men and women has contributed towards a problematic “binge” culture that frequently results in outbursts of intoxication, disorder and violence. One recent event provides a poignant case study of this problematic culture as well as exhibiting the varied and often competing political agendas surrounding Sydney’s NTE and, in particular, the consumption of alcohol.

**The Case of Thomas Kelly**

The death of 18 year old Thomas Kelly in Kings Cross on Saturday the 7th of July, 2012 was the catalyst for an intense and dramatic public debate surrounding the state of
Kelly, who was visiting Kings Cross for the first time, was on the way to celebrate a co-worker’s birthday when he was ‘king-hit’\textsuperscript{39} by another reveller. The front-on punch, which occurred at 10.05pm, knocked Kelly to the ground, where he sustained a fatal head injury. He died on Monday the 9\textsuperscript{th} of July in St. Vincent’s Hospital after having his life support system turned off.

This tragic incident began a two week long media frenzy that catapulted Sydney’s nightlife scene into the media spotlight. Between the 7\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} of July, 2012, 110 articles were written in the Sydney Morning Herald and Daily Telegraph newspapers relating to Kelly’s death, alongside widespread television news and current affairs coverage. The range of debate covered in these articles, as previously stated, provides a case study of the various political agendas surrounding Sydney nightlife and the consumption of alcohol. The immediate coverage featured discussion about the arbitrary and senseless nature of the attack that took Kelly’s life. Embedded within these articles was an ominous warning about the inherent personal risks associated with late-night socialising in Sydney nightlife hotspots. These warnings focused on the violent and dangerous nature of Kings Cross and the drinking cultures which are seen to dominate the nightlife precinct. In an article appearing on the front page of the Daily Telegraph on the 11\textsuperscript{th} of July, the attack was described as “unprovoked, wild and cold-blooded” (Frost 2012). Another Telegraph article, titled Violence is Killing Our City (Devine 2012a), conveyed a tone of inevitability relating to violence in Sydney’s NTE. The article opened with the following claim:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Another Saturday night, another cohort of young men bashed, stabbed, even killed, as our streets become no-go zones...where an innocent word or a sideways look can}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{38} One of the major components of the debate surrounding Kelly’s death was the ‘Safer Sydney’ forum held on 17 July 2012. The forum, run by the Sydney Morning Herald, featured key political and industry personnel, including senior members of NSW Police, the City of Sydney Council, as well as prominent state and federal politicians.

\textsuperscript{39} A ‘king hit’ is a vernacular term describing a one hit sucker punch that generally leaves the victim unconscious. It is viewed in a particularly negative light given that a king hit is usually dealt upon an unsuspecting victim.
bring the wrath of the unhinged down on a young man out having a good time with his mates.

Other similarly dystopian articles conveyed concern about the prevalence of alcohol-related violence in Sydney, as outlined in the below headlines that featured prominently in the Sydney press.

*Cross Marks Spot Where Violence is all too Common* (Moore and McKenny 2012)

*Young Man Senselessly Murdered in Random Act of Madness - Kings Cross Bashing* (Frost 2012)

*Unprovoked: Teen Talking on Phone Fatally Punched on First Night out in Kings Cross* (Ralston and Kwek 2012)

*Enough is Enough with Kings Cross lawlessness* (Anon 2012)

*Crossing the Line into the Danger Zone* (Van Den Broeke 2012)

The media furore surrounding Kelly’s death presented a distorted view regarding the prevalence of violence in Kings Cross. Evidence from the author’s detailed experience of conducting fieldwork in key sites of Sydney nightlife, including Kings Cross, is far from the image portrayed in the media. While it would be remiss to describe Kings Cross, and indeed other key nightlife destinations such as George Street, Darling Harbour and Oxford Street, as completely safe, the author has never felt any acute concern for his personal safety in the ‘notorious’ precinct. It is also noteworthy that during the fieldwork component of this research project, as many, if not more, incidents of alcohol-related violence and disorder were witnessed in sites outside of Kings Cross, including Darling Harbour and Town Hall on George Street. Despite major incidents occurring outside the Kings Cross, media attention continues to be highly skewed towards reporting on the area. The frequency of this reporting, as previously stated, also
contradicts the recorded crime rates from the area. Although crime statistics are often prejudiced by a lack of reporting and recording, statistical evidence from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (2012) indicates that rates of alcohol-related violence and disorder in Kings Cross and Sydney have fallen and remained stable over the last decade. However, the ‘commonsense’ regarding Kings Cross nightlife, and Sydney nightlife more broadly, is that it is overwhelmingly the domain of “lawless” and “out of control” youth who drink at levels never before seen. This perception is perpetuated by views of a number of ‘primary definers’ who add further weight to populist law and order claims (Hogg and Brown 1998: 18; see also the seminal work of Hall et al 1978). Hogg and Brown (1998: 19) state that that these accounts are powerful for a number of reasons:

They emanate from agents of authority, agents who are perceived as neutral arbiters, and are seen as being ‘in possession of’ the facts. Secondly, their definitions serve to frame and establish the dimensions of the problem, identify the main issues and actors and provide the most ‘viable’ solutions…this framing capacity establishes the limits of the debate by setting the criteria by which all subsequent contributions are judged.

In debates concerning Sydney nightlife, two of the main voices contributing towards popular commonsense are members of the NSW Police and, interestingly, emergency room doctors. Inevitably, in the weeks that followed Kelly’s death, both groups had a significant media presence. For example, in the wake of Kelly’s death, Assistant Commissioner Mark Murdoch, central Sydney’s most senior officer, confirmed the inevitability of patron victimisation in Sydney nightlife hotspots when he stated: “Those

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40 Hall et al (1978) argue that primary definers are institutions and individuals that have expertise, power and authority to frame particular events as news. In relation to law and order, the primary definers of news events include politicians, the police and judges. In relation to the making of news, Hall et al (1978:648) state that “The media do not themselves autonomously create news items; rather they are ‘cued in’ to specific news topics by regular and reliable institutional sources”. Consequently, the media act as ‘secondary definers’ of news events, reproducing information provided from primary sources and frequently translating/ manipulating them into popular stories (Barker 2003).
who stay out after midnight are going to become one of two things; they are going to be a victim or an offender” (Ralston and McKenny 2012). Adding to this statement, and in a surprisingly defeatist tone, Murdoch also claimed: “You could have had 1000 police at Kings Cross on Saturday night. It would not have prevented this incident from occurring”. These comments will be addressed in the following section, but suffice to say that the fatalistic remarks indicate a resignation on the part of the police in seeking to implement the major changes needed to help reduce violence in Sydney’s NTE. In another display of police politics, Scott Weber, President of the NSW Police Association, wrote an article for the *Daily Telegraph* in which he lamented government inaction regarding the introduction of successfully trialled measures to curb alcohol-related violence. Weber (2012) claimed that:

*There are, day in and day out, people whose lives have been torn apart by some tanked up idiot... We’ve been telling the government what is should do to address the issue for years...but so far, despite all the calls for action and despite emergency workers being punched, kicked, spat on and abused, and innocent people being assaulted every single weekend by booze-fuelled thugs, Premier Barry O’Farrell has sat back and done absolutely nothing.*

Here, as with Assistant Commissioner Murdoch’s comments, blame for night-time violence is shifted away from the police and laid squarely at the feet of inactive politicians and irresponsible and dangerous revellers. Here we can see that ‘responsibilisation’ is being driven in part by the inability of policing strategies to address social problems – that is, the current state apparatuses cannot do what they claim they can do and police cannot solve the ‘problem’ of crime to the extent they want us to believe.

Throughout this media analysis, Dr. Gordian Fulde (Figure 22), head of St. Vincent’s Hospital emergency room in Darlinghurst, has also had a regular presence in the media,
frequently reporting about the increasing ferocity of violence in Sydney perpetrated by both young men and women. Over the course of this analysis, Dr. Fulde has featured in around 345 newspaper articles, the majority of which are concerned with the prevalence of violence and disorder in Sydney nightlife and the subsequent injuries presented to hospital emergency departments.

**Figure 21: Expert voice, Dr. Gordian Fulde.**

Dr. Gordian Fulde has featured prominently in the Sydney press as an expert voice concerning the rate and brutality of violence in Sydney’s NTE.

*Source: The Daily Telegraph.*

A more recent feature of Dr. Fulde’s articles is the nostalgic claim that Sydney is far more violent than in the past. In an article from 2010, Dr. Fulde stated:

*One thing that definitely is a trend is that we have become a lot more violent. Long ago, if someone went down from a punch, [the fighting] would stop. What happens*
now is when someone is down on the ground, it doesn’t stop. People stomp on heads and kick. We see some really horrible injuries (Weaver 2010).

While a degree of scepticism must be applied to nostalgia about the level of violence in Sydney considering major changes in reporting and recording practices (see Ringland and Baker 2009), Dr. Fulde is certainly in a key position to comment on the problematic cultures present within Sydney nightlife settings. However, his prominence may also be the result of the strong link between his individualising and pathologising message and the state’s neoliberal agenda. Here, it can be seen that Dr. Fulde’s experience and perspective on alcohol-related issues in Sydney furnishes public discourse with familiar notions of responsibility and shame that have been central to the state’s neoliberal strategy.

It is not surprising that the police exacerbate this dystopian view by projecting their own nostalgia (a key component of Hogg and Brown’s “law and order commonsense”) for a less destructive and more ordered past. In the media commentary surrounding Kelly’s death, Assistant Commissioner Murdoch drew attention to the violent predisposition of today’s youth, claiming that street violence is the worst that it has been in his 32 years of service. Murdoch stated: “young men go out with the intention of belting someone...they haven’t had a good night out unless they have been in a fight...people used to go out and have a drink, have a good time and go home” (Anon 2012). Again, there is strong evidence to suggest that we should be sceptical of these claims.

Interview material collected for this thesis suggests that public violence has long been a feature of the Kings Cross nightlife scene. The reality is that the various nightlife precincts of Sydney experience far greater participation and also a much stronger policing focus than in the past. At times of heightened police targeting of specific offences, police discretion, particularly “record discretion” (Nickels 2007), is often negated in favour of producing ‘positive’ statistical outcomes. With greater numbers of police on the street, crime statistics tend to expand, and claims such as those made by Assistant Commissioner Murdoch can appear valid. It is often not understood that, when
police numbers rise, particularly in targeted operations where discretionary powers are temporarily limited, a higher proportion of criminal activities are recorded (Boivin and Cordeau 2011). This process is rarely acknowledged by the police as it supports neo-conservative ideologies which favour the law and order agenda. Here, increasing crime rates and sensational portrayals of idealised victims can provide justification for the introduction of more restrictive legislation as well as increasing police numbers and powers in an attempt to produce a strong state that is ostensibly “tough on crime” (Garkawe 1995; Laster and Erez 2001).

The media attention surrounding Kelly’s death also featured a high degree of political posturing, most notably between the City of Sydney Council, the NSW Police, the state government, the Australian Hotels Association (AHA)\(^{41}\) and local resident groups. In the weeks following Kelly’s death, the print media became the key platform through which these parties projected their individual agendas. For example, the AHA, who still appear to have the backing of the NSW state government, were quick to shift blame away from licensed venues in Kings Cross (and Sydney more broadly). Instead, it attributed blame to broad cultural issues of violence as the underlying cause of problems in Sydney’s NTE. The AHA and state government also launched an attack on Sydney’s Lord Mayor Clover Moore and her ‘small bar’ initiative. Clearly protecting the interests of the AHA and its members, the Hospitality Minister, George Souris, claimed that the proliferation of small bars in Sydney was “one of the contributors” to alcohol-related violence in Kings Cross (Nicholls 2012a). He continued, stating that small bars have “a lower level of surveillance, a lower level of supervision, a lower level of compliance” and that large venues “are better policed, better supervised than those smaller venues” (Nicholls 2012a). Adding weight to the debate, local resident and former Prime Minister Paul Keating labelled Clover Moore “the Queen of Sydney grog” and blamed her for the proliferation of “massive bars” in Kings Cross that he claimed had led to an increase in

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\(^{41}\) As briefly discussed in previous chapters, the AHA is a political lobby group that represents the Australian hotel industry. It began operating in Sydney in 1873 as the United Licensed Victuallers Association (ULVA), before modernising and becoming known as the AHA (NSW) in 1959. Politically, they have had strong links with both the State and Federal Labor Party who have received considerable financial donations from the liquor and gaming industry.
violent behaviour and turned Sydney into “an inebriate’s spittoon” (Nicholls 2012b). Without apparent evidence, Mr Keating also attacked the small bar initiative, claiming that small bars simply provide “more places where people can get a drink” and failed to deliver the much-desired cosmopolitanism to Sydney’s nightlife scene (Nicholls 2012b).

These comments reflect a serious problem with the current politics surrounding nightlife in Sydney and show how the neoliberal agenda of stimulating economic growth in private markets can problematise effective social governance. Given that only five out of the fifty-eight small bars in the City of Sydney area were in or near Kings Cross, Mr Souris’ comments are clearly more indicative of the government’s concern with protecting the hotel industry’s market share than with the advancement of policies implemented to improve the overall dynamic of Sydney’s NTE. The small bar initiative, as mentioned previously, aims to introduce a more diverse patronage to Sydney nightlife, moving away from the large venues with which much of nightlife disorder is related. If key political leaders with significant authority to influence progressive policy relating to Sydney’s NTE continually ignore research findings in the interest of commercial viability, there seems little way forward. It is this short-sighted and commercially driven logic that has created many of the problems now facing NTEs around the world.

The media attention that surrounded Kelly’s death also encapsulated many of the more frequent themes that emerge from a study of the NTE more broadly. Fear of victimisation, perpetuated by media reporting, causes public anxiety as the reach of interpersonal violence and threats to one’s personal safety are presented as random and equally spread over class, age, gender and race. However, in contradiction to these prevailing representations, victim statistics indicate that violent experience in sites of night-time leisure are very specific to certain groups (Potter and Kappeler 2006: 35). Statistics indicate, for example, that young males are far more likely to be adversely affected by violence and abuse in the city after dark (BOCSAR 2011). The graph below (Table 4) shows the recorded rates of victimisation regarding selected offences by age.
and gender from the Sydney Local Government Area as recorded by the NSW Police. As can be seen, males aged 18-29 are by far the most victimised group in the category of ‘Assault- non-domestic violence related’. Males aged 30-39 years old experience less than half of the number of recorded non-domestic violence related assaults than 18-29 years, while 40+ years olds experience just over half as many as 18-29 year olds. A similar trend is evident for female victimisation, although the overall number of recorded female victims is considerably lower than the number of males who experience non-domestic violence related assault.

Table 4: Rates of victimisation of selected offences by age and gender in the Sydney Local Government Area, recorded by NSW Police.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim's gender</th>
<th>Victim's age</th>
<th>Assault - domestic violence related</th>
<th>Assault - non-domestic violence related</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
<th>Steal from person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0 - 17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 - 29</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1,576</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>222</td>
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<td></td>
<td>40 +</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>795</td>
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<td>208</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>301</td>
<td>3,219</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0 - 17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 - 29</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>1,247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 +</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>358</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>625</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>1,980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These statistics, rarely acknowledged in prevailing media discourse, have little bearing on the experience of fear and anxiety that is widespread among certain groups, particularly people who do not frequently use nightlife spaces. However, perhaps the greatest problem concerning the regulation of the NTE is that popular portrayals of the city after dark as a liminal and transgressive leisure environment can serve to amplify the attraction of nightlife spaces to revellers (Presdee 2000; Hobbs et al 2000; Winlow and Hall 2006), thereby enhancing the commercial viability of the NTE and further complicating government responses. Here, behaviour that is seen as largely problematic by the police and state leaders (i.e. violence, drug taking, binge drinking and sexual exploration) are often the very activities that appeal to revellers. For many, the NTE is a space in which the restrictive norms of the day-time might be forgotten, with freedom to explore the “carnival” of the night (see Presdee 2000). Indeed, qualitative responses from the City After Dark survey signalled a view about the irrelevance of regulatory measures in many nightlife settings that are experienced as an alluring mix of threat, risk and excitement (Tomsen 2012). Survey responses also indicated that active nightlife revellers are not in constant fear of night-time activities, even though they are realistically wary of potential incivility and disorder in specific environments that feature a high density of heavy drinking and intoxication.

Public Police in the Press

As expanded media platforms have presented global audiences with more crime news than ever before, police organisations have been subjected to increased public visibility (Mawby 2002). However, the crisis of contemporary policing (that is, police inability to address all form and incidents of crime), frequently played out in the global media has eroded levels of public confidence and legitimacy. The erosion of confidence in the police creates a significant problem for policing organisations because, as Lee (2011: 2) suggests, “to be effective, policing requires the ongoing support, consent and ongoing cooperation of the public. Such public support and cooperation rests upon the legitimacy of the police organisation”.
The media representation of nightlife as imbued with violence and disorder has coincided with media suggestions that safety and security demands are not being satisfied by traditional policing services. Public policing agencies have often been depicted as being incapable of regulating the night. Articles such as *Call in Clayton’s Cops* (Lamont 1999), *Thugs Lay it on the Line; Train Security is Being Fast-Tracker ... and Night Travellers Know Why* (Walker 1999), *Police Get Blame for Rise in Bar Violence* (Baker 2008a), *Private Army of the Cross* (Howden and Ralston 2011), *Kings Of The Cross Take Matters Into Their Own Hands* (Howden 2011) and *Real Crime is Police Inaction* (Devine 2012b) reflect this sentiment. Public policing services are often portrayed as ineffective around times of increased anxiety concerning public safety. The article titled *Call in Clayton’s Cops* referred to the need for privatised security to be introduced because “the police can't be everywhere and most government statutory authorities have a good reason to have [special constables]” (Lamont 1999). The article was written in 1999 at a time when particularly acute concerns about youth-related disorder were pervading the media and public domain.

The articles *Private Army of the Cross* (Howden and Ralston 2011) and *Kings Of The Cross Take Matters Into Their Own Hands* (Howden 2011) describe initiatives undertaken between the NSW state government, local council and key stakeholders in Sydney’s Kings Cross nightlife precinct. Here, as previously discussed, private security guards are being employed to police public property in an effort to curb alcohol-related street violence and disorder. In the first article, the leader of one security team, Nic Constantin, states that police have informed him that “they could not do it (police Kings Cross) without us”. The second article takes this position further, stating that the Kings Cross Licensing Accord Association, comprising key members of the Kings Cross nightlife community, cannot rely on NSW Police to maintain law and order. In the article, members of the Accord claim that the increased demands being made on licensees in relation to the conduct of patrons on their premises are not being supplemented with

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42 The “special constable” refers to a government sanctioned officer who is employed to satisfy demand for security in times of emergency. Dating back over a century, the last time special constables were employed in Sydney was when a 10,000 strong riot threatened Circular Quay in the early 1900s.
adequate support from the police. Both of these articles promote a sense of social vulnerability by highlighting the limited fiscal and corporeal resources of public policing agencies that are symptomatic of the nature of government in the neoliberal state. That the extended introduction of private security is not seen as necessary in other Sydney nightlife destinations such as George Street, Darling Harbour and Oxford Street is indicative of the overwhelming focus on Kings Cross in public dialogue concerning nightlife in Sydney. It is also an indication of the more limited policing responses that are applied outside of the high profile nightlife precinct. The articles also reflect the extent to which current regulatory mechanisms have alienated commercial operators. As outlined in the previous chapter, the system of calibrated punishments for non-compliance with RSA and recorded incidence of on-site violence has created discord between venue operators and state regulatory bodies, including the police. This friction, in turn, reduces cooperation between state and industry and diminishes the efficacy of regulatory policy.

For state policy, the focus here is on risk-based crime prevention in dealing with problems of crime and disorder. Privatised forms of security are seen as a legitimate solution to the fiscal crisis that grips many of the state governments across Australia. By encouraging private individuals to take up the mantle of security provision, the state is acknowledging its inability to provide effective governance (Garland 1996). However, given that Hough et al (2010) suggest that efficacy in dealing with crime leads to trust in the police, which in turn leads to enhanced legitimacy, it would seem likely that these neoliberal transformations partly undermine public confidence in the police.

In Sydney, this public scrutiny of policing is compounded by the lasting legacy of images of police corruption that played out in the Wood Royal Commission (1994-1997), which exposed the vice and corruption of Kings Cross Police officers concerning the regulation and policing of nightlife venues. As outlined in Chapter Two, the Commission uncovered institutionalised corruption and entrenched levels of police misconduct within the service that has remained at the forefront of the media and public consciousness.
through the airing of the highly popular ‘true crime’ series Underbelly on Australian television. It is major events and depictions like these, alongside the media manipulation of crime rates (see Weatherburn 2011), escalating fear of crime and public demands for improved public safety, that have placed increasing pressure on the police to promote positive images in an attempt to manufacture public confidence and legitimacy (Mawby 2002; Lee 2011).

The media, while simultaneously drawing out many of the problems concerning police legitimacy, have also provided policing organisations with a valuable medium through which positive symbolic images of the police can be promoted. This process has been evident in NSW with the establishment and increasing growth of the Public Affairs and Corporate Communications Branch of the NSW Police (McGovern and Lee 2010; Lee 2011). The Public Affairs Branch incorporates the Police Media Unit and is responsible for media and issue management; proactive communications and marketing projects; oversight of media policy, corporate image and branding and public relations work. Lee (2011) suggests that the establishment of the NSW Police Media Unit and Public Affairs Branch was/is symptomatic of the need for police to be seen “doing something” about crime, and that they play a key role in shaping the ‘corporate reputation’ of NSW Police. In controlling data and providing media training and expertise to the police hierarchy, the Media Unit ensures police reports are delivered in a way that produces the most positive public image. Examples of this process have been clearly seen in the ways in which police have responded to a number of public and media concerns regarding Sydney nightlife.

In 2008, during a time of increased public anxiety about violence and disorder in Sydney’s NTE, the NSW state government along with NSW Police, declared a “war” on alcohol-related violence (Welch 2008a). Since this time, the NSW Police have engaged in

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43 This conscious effort by the NSW Police to reinforce their public image and be seen as ‘in control’ comes in the wake of significant public embarrassment surrounding the dramatic increase in numbers of ‘drive-by’ shootings and gun-related violence in Sydney (BOCSAR 2012).

44 Source: www.police.nsw.gov.au
high-visibility, targeted policing operations focused on key nightlife hotspots. The largest of these operations, *Operation Unite*, was launched in December, 2009 under the mantra of “a blitz against drunken violence” (NSW Police 2009). Alongside these operations, a new policing unit, the Alcohol Enforcement Licensing Command (ALEC) has been established with the explicit task of driving down alcohol-related violence in NSW. The following section will analyse *Operation Unite* and its media treatment, and discuss the way in which media representations of the police can be used to promote public confidence in the police.

**The Case of Operation Unite**

*Operation Unite* is a nation-wide campaign against alcohol-related violence. Symbolically, the operation has become the cornerstone of police policy concerning alcohol-related offences in Australia. Since 2008, the NSW Police have frequently utilised the media to reassure the public that this “war on drunks” is being won by the police and that alcohol-related violence and disorder will not be tolerated. NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione, as the state spokesperson for *Operation Unite*, has faced television news cameras and released dozens of press releases concerning the success that the police are having. Headlines such as *Operation Unite- Times up For Drunken Thugs* (Fife-Yeomans 2009a), *Operation Unite Sends a Strong Message* (Anon 2009), *Reclaim our Streets- Police Across Two Nations Unite to Fight Violence* (Fife-Yeomans 2009b), *Police Chief Calls for War on Drunks* (Welch 2008a), *Police Get Tough on Alcohol* (Welch 2008b) and *Last Order for Drunken Aggression* (Weber 2010) encapsulate the messages that the police are projecting.

*Operation Unite* employs high-visibility street policing that aims to saturate nightlife precincts with police and prevent alcohol-related offences. According to a police media statement released on the 11th of May, 2011, NSW Police arrested 2,100 people (640 in December 2009, 737 in September 2010 and 723 in December 2010), laying 3,440 charges (1,025 in December 2009, 1,101 in September 2010 and 1,314 in December
2010) over three operations. These figures reflect the nature of the operation, which is employed both spasmodically and strategically to fuel positive public images of police control and order. Indeed, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) indicate that, since the inception of Rees’ war on alcohol related violence and the introduction of Operation Unite, recorded ‘liquor offences’,\footnote{According to the BOCSAR website glossary, a ‘liquor offence’ can include the “production, sale, purchase and/or consumption of alcohol in breach of licensing conditions/ regulations/ laws”. This definition can include the police incident categories of ‘consume alcohol in public by a minor’, ‘consume alcohol in an alcohol-free zone’, ‘Licensing Legislation Offences (e.g. offence by licensee/ employee/ secretary/ minor/ customer (not minor))’, ‘supply liquor to juvenile’ and ‘offence against registered clubs’. The vagueness of the term allows it to be packaged and presented to both the media and the public in positive ways, particularly surrounding the efficacy of major operations like Unite.} which have a very strong relationship with perceptions of public order, have dramatically increased. In 2007, prior to the Premier’s declaration, the number of liquor offences in Sydney’s local government area (LGA) was 1641. The following year 2513 offences were recorded by BOCSAR, an increase of 53.1%. Between April, 2010 and March 2011, 3,466 liquor offences occurred in the Sydney LGA, an increase of 111.2% since 2007.

While these statistics have dramatically increased over the period since Rees’ declaration, more serious offences, including ‘assault- non domestic violence related’, most commonly associated with alcohol-related violence, have remained stable and show no significant rise over the same period (3980 incidents between April 2006 and March 2007 and 3952 between April 2010 and March 2011). The hard-line, high intensity, approach taken by the police has provided a way to project positive imagery of police outcomes to the public. In this sense, the police can be seen as engaging with public demands for increased action on disorderly nightlife, or “doing something” as Lee (2011) put it. These actions placate public anxieties through ostensibly affirmative action and attempt to reinforce police legitimacy. Creating and engaging vague crime categories like “liquor offences” can be a facility through which this legitimacy is enhanced. However, as officers at the coalface reflected upon in interviews conducted for this thesis, operations such as Unite display the short-sightedness of NSW Police policy. While the statistical outcomes of such operations indicate effective political tactics, that major offences such as alcohol-related violence have remained stable since
its inception indicate that such strategies are perhaps not as powerful as may be projected in media discourse.

The use of statistics by police, politicians, and the media is part of a political process whereby selected views are popularised for strategic or political gain in what Hogg and Brown (1998:22) describe as “the first element of popular commonsense about crime”. Here, crime statistics are presented in the media, with little qualification regarding their limitations, as a means of validating popular perceptions of crime. Generally, these perceptions are an effective tool in public policy debates, mobilising political capital and setting a specific agenda. With the expertise of the new media units, and a greater pool of statistics to draw on, the police are in an unparalleled position to channel positive messages to the news audience. It is unsurprising that there is a tendency for the police to focus on presenting solved crimes, typically exhibited through coverage of arrest statistics and court proceedings, to the media as source material for popular ‘crime’ stories (Leishman and Mason 2003).

While the police have (largely) successfully engaged with the media as a means to deliver positive imagery related to their service provision, private security companies have not, and, as such, are presented in a wholly contrasting way. The following section will analyse media data regarding bouncers and doorwork, and draw attention to the vast difference in media treatment of the two policing segments.

**Press Depictions of Private Security**

While public policing agencies still occupy a significant position in protecting populations from the threat of crime, private security has taken up much work that police no longer have the resources or desire to do. This process of “load shedding” (Button 2002) has seen private security take over roles such as doorwork, venue control and guarding duties that are beyond the scope of the public police. Publicans, licensees and local councils have turned to the private security industry to prevent violence and placate the
concerns of authorities and local residents about violence and disorder in the NTE. Subsequently, the private security industry has now assumed the role of primary provider of safety and security in nightlife settings (Prenzler and Sarre 2008; Rigakos 2008). There is, however, very significant ambivalence in public and media discourse surrounding private security and its developing range of responsibilities.

According to this media analysis, the private security industry has been represented by the media as both a frequent cause of, and potential solution to, the crises of personal safety and fear in the city after dark. A number of high profile incidents involving private security employees have propelled the industry into the media and public spotlight and caused significant ruptures in public perceptions and confidence. These have included the death of Peter Dalamangas at Star City Casino in 1998, the death of David Hookes in 2004, the death of Wilson Duque Castillo following an altercation with venue security at a Kings Cross nightclub in 2010, and the bashing of Nicholas Barsoum at The Ivy entertainment complex in 2011. Throughout the media content associated with the above events are reports suggesting serious problems with ‘bouncer’ violence, underwritten by a distinct lack of regulation and training.

Images of heavily tattooed, hyper-masculine bouncers injuring patrons have been present throughout media coverage of the NTE over the course of this study. As previously stated, violent bouncer behaviour is commonly linked with articles claiming that the industry suffers a lack of appropriate regulation. Allegations of violence and criminal association among private security firms are supported by research that suggests that doorwork cultures place a high value on violent/physical reputation and behaviour (Winlow 2001; Hobbs et al 2003). The headlines below encapsulate common themes and sentiment concerning bouncers that have emerged from the media analysis.
Projected through Dasey’s article (2000) *High Risk People in Security Industry* are claims that people employed in private security are more likely to be psychopathic than other “unskilled” workers. The article is based on an academic study conducted by John Clarke and reports that the “security industry employs ‘significantly more’ dangerous personality types than any other unskilled field because it offers them access to positions of power”. Furthermore, it states that security workers have “a diminished sense of social responsibility and might commit violent and antisocial acts” (Dasey 2000). These claims, backed up by an ‘expert’ voice, send a powerful message to a target audience. Throughout the interviews conducted for this study with bouncers it was found that these messages were common in public perceptions of industry employees. Indeed, many bouncers claimed that the public treated them with contempt on the basis that they were simply “on a power trip” (Charlie- interview). As previously mentioned, there have been certain Australian events that have captured the popular imagination and created increased public concern about the private security industry. The most prominent of these events will now be discussed.
The Case of David Hookes

David Hookes was a former Australian cricketer who was known for his swashbuckling attitude on the pitch and his larrikin attitude off it. While socialising with current and former cricketers in 2004, Hookes became involved in a dispute with Zdravko Micevic, a bouncer from the Melbourne nightclub where the group was drinking. The ensuing altercation resulted in Hookes being seriously injured and later dying in hospital. Subsequent media coverage was full of opinion pieces vocalising disgust for the private security industry due to its lack of regulation and the violent nature of its employees. The incident had an extremely high news value (Palmer 2000; Brighton and Foy 2007) and, accordingly, some 1100 related articles have been written in major Australian newspapers since the event in 2004 (around 260 in the two sampled newspapers). Here, the social position and celebrity of Hookes as an Australian sporting icon impacted on the reporting of the event. Representations of the event varied widely, with police reports often contradicting ‘eyewitness’ depictions, a fact that only exacerbated community confusion and further encouraged commonsense opinion to become the source of knowledge for many. The association of Hookes with highly prized conceptions of Anglo- Australian national and sporting identity positioned him at the very top of a hierarchy of legitimate victimhood (Christie 1986; Greer 2007b) and media representations of his death certainly reflect this status. The images of Hookes below (Figure 23), taken from various online news sources, capture the sentiment that pervaded the media following the incident in 2004.

46 Correct as of 22 July, 2013.
These images, compared with the depictions of the demonised Micevic (Figure 24), accentuate the way in which the media chose to represent the involved parties.

While both sets of images depict the masculine identities of the two parties, there is a marked contrast in the way in which these masculinities are presented. Hookes is represented as a good-looking sporting icon loved by the masses and representative of many of the qualities associated with highly prized conceptions of Anglo-Australian national and sporting identity. Contrastingly, Micevic is portrayed without emotion and showing little remorse for his actions. Also captured in the images, is the strong...
emphasis that was placed on Micevic’s amateur, and now professional, boxing career. Media reporting alluded to the bouncer’s fighting prowess, which further contrasted the two masculine identities, adding to the negative image of Micevic. Hookes played cricket, historically seen as the gentleman’s game (Stoddart and Sandiford 1998; Vamplew and Stoddart 2008), which places a high value on sportsmanship and proper sporting etiquette. Micevic was an amateur, and is now a professional, boxer.47 His training, and resulting physical capital (such as size, weight, muscle build and fighting techniques), prompted the media to represent Micevic as unrestrained, highly volatile and dangerous. One element of the media reporting that is not directly conveyed by these images is that of the ‘foreign’ nature of Micevic’s ethnicity. Given Hookes’ positioning as a quintessential Australian, representations of Micevic’s non-Anglo ethnicity were imbued with undertones that suggested he had failed to understand Australian cultures of leisure and alcohol consumption. This lack of understanding, and the subsequent lack of bodily control, was often touted as the direct cause of Hookes’ death.

In many regards Hookes’ death was a ‘signal crime’ (Innes 2003; 2004) that fundamentally reconfigured popular beliefs related to those working as bouncers. The media attention and ensuing public reaction to Hookes’ death mobilised political support for industry reform that eventually succeeded in producing legislative change relating to private security in Victoria that continues to have significant ramifications within the doorwork and venue control sector throughout the country. For example, during an address to the Victorian Legislative Assembly on the 11th of May 2004 related to the Private Security Bill, the Hon Kim Wells, then Shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services, stated that, “the only reason the Minister for Police and Emergency Services acted at all [on promoting the Bill] was the tragic death of David Hookes- no other reason promoted this minister to move forward and do the right thing by the Private Security Bill” (Victorian Legislative Assembly 2004: 1091). Mr Wells based

47 Boxing, although reasonably popular, does not hold the same level of status in Australian society as cricket, and has been tarnished by links to drug use and the extreme violence of prominent boxers outside the ring.
these claims on the fact that a review of legislation governing those employed in private security had been established in 2000, but had failed to facilitate an industry overhaul. After substantial political and industry debate, new legislation, in the form of the *Private Security Act 2004* and the *Private Security Regulation Act 2005*, was introduced in Victoria. Subsequently, major industry reviews and legislative/regulatory amendments have also been undertaken in Western Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and NSW, most of which have referenced the death of David Hookes as a significant catalyst for reform. However, while Hookes’ death was by far the most high profile incident involving the private security industry, there have been a number of other notable cases that have featured strongly over the case of this media analysis. Three of the most prominent Sydney-based events include the death of Peter Dalamangas at Star City Casino in 1998, the death of Wilson Duque Castillo in 2010 and the assault of Nicholas Barsoum in 2011.

**Dalamangas, Castillo and Barsoum: Three Counts of Industry Failure**

Like Hookes’ death, each of these incidents occurred following altercations with private security guards working in venue control. For different reasons, all received high prominence in the Sydney press. In the case of Peter Dalamangas, who died following an altercation with security staff at Star City Casino in January 1998, a number of factors contributed to the high news value of the story. Firstly, during the inquiry surrounding Dalamangas’ death, stories of corruption and criminal enterprise emerged in the media relating to Star City. Included in the claims against the Casino were allegations relating to drug dealing, secret videotaping, prostitution and underhand dealings with politicians and police (Murphy 2000). While a coronial investigation later revealed that Dalamangas died as a result of an “unjustified” use of force by Casino security (Clifton 2000a), it was alleged that there was a deliberate attempt by Casino management to cover-up the

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48 Major legislative and regulatory amendments in these other jurisdictions include: *Security and Related Activities (control) Amendment Act 2007 (WA), Security Providers (Crowd Controller Code of Practice) Regulation 2008 (QLD), Security Providers (Security Officer Licensed Premises Code of Practice) Regulation 2008 (QLD), Security Providers Regulation 2008 (QLD), Security and Investigations Agents Regulations 2005 (TAS) and the Security Industry Regulation 2007 (NSW).*
incident in the weeks and months following the death of Dalamangas. Particularly concerning was the ‘loss’ of one minute and seventeen seconds of critical CCTV footage of the incident between Dalamangas and the security team at the casino. Adding to this inexplicable loss of evidence, it emerged that two senior casino staff members had allegedly discussed bribing police officers and the Minister for Gaming and Racing in the aftermath of Dalamangas’ death. Alexander Preston, a “disgruntled gambler”, alleged that two casino executives made light of the incident in the days following Peter’s death (Murphy 2000). Preston stated that he had discussed the “death of a Greek gentleman” with the casino executives and, when he asked how police were likely to respond to the event, they replied, “we don’t need to worry about the police, we throw them a few tickets to the shows and everything will be OK” (Murphy 2000). Similarly, when discussing government concern over the matter, it was alleged that one of the casino managers stated “that’s easy, all we do is invite the minister to a few functions, shower him a bit with a few gifts and we will be left alone until the next minister comes along” (Murphy 2000). While the claims from Mr Preston were candid, they aligned with revelations about casino corruption and gained traction in media and political spheres. Consequently, Morris Iemma, a local member of the Legislative Assembly and later Premier of NSW, made a long address to the NSW Parliament regarding Dalamangas’ death and the treatment of his brother, James Dalamangas, who was left in a coma following the altercation with Casino security. An excerpt of Mr Iemma’s speech is shown below:

*I ask the House to compare and contrast the lack of action and lack of interest on the part of police in bringing to justice those responsible for Peter’s death with the actions of police in relation to Peter’s brother, James...* I ask members to compare and contrast that with the lack of interest and lack of action by the police in bringing to justice those responsible for Peter’s death. *I am referring to the sorts of matters that hundreds of thousands of viewers have seen on A Current Affair [a popular Australian night-time news program] during the past few months. Other questions need to be asked in light of the Coroner’s decision to have the body of Peter Dalamangas exhumed. Who authorised the police officer on the morning of*
31 January to present advice to the Coroner that Peter had died of a heart attack? What was the basis for that conclusion and what medical qualifications or forensic skills did the police officer responsible for that report have to enable him to determine that death was caused by a heart attack? Why did the police fail to secure the crime scene, in contravention of standard police procedure? Why did the police fail to isolate witnesses, in contravention of standard police procedure? Why did police allow casino staff to order cleaners to clean away the crime scene and hence destroy potentially vital forensic evidence? Why did police wait until the appearance on A Current Affair of key witnesses to interview them even after they had been given their names on the morning of Peter’s death? Where are video cassettes CCA299 and CC299? During the past four months the police have promised on at least five occasions that the family and their solicitor would be able to view those two video cassettes... Have any of his officers who attended on the morning of Peter’s death received free show tickets? If so, are they being investigated by internal affairs? This whole sordid matter has resulted in the Coroner ordering the exhumation of the body of Peter Dalamangas because of the incompetent advice that has been provided by police from the beginning. This matter has caused enormous distress to the family. I ask the Police Integrity Commission and the Commissioner of Police to end the farce that has been called an investigation into the death of Peter Dalamangas, to intervene and get appropriate action under way.

Iemma’s unusually passionate address drew attention to the alarming circumstances surrounding the investigation of Dalamangas’ death. Police misconduct was consistently reported on and fuelled media speculation regarding the underhand strategies employed by the Casino in the aftermath of this incident. Such conduct also added some credibility to family claims that Peter was murdered by casino security. The Dalamangas family were very vocal in the aftermath of Peter’s death and challenged claims made by Casino management that he had died of a heart attack. The family insisted he was murdered by security staff who “strangled” Peter even after he screamed to them that he could not breathe (Walsh and Miranda 1998). Adding profile to the family’s public
outrage, local television star, Alex Dimitriades, a close friend of the Dalamangas family, spoke out against the handling of the incident in the days that followed Peter’s death. Dimitriades publically supported the family view, stating that he did not believe Dalamangas had died of a heart attack but from a result of security brutality. Dimitriades’ testimony and celebrity certainly increased the news value of the incident.

Throughout the coronial inquest into Dalamangas’ death and the various local court cases related to the incident there were multiple and contradictory reports about the conduct of casino security and the role of the ejected group, including the Dalamangas brothers, in provoking security retaliation. According to media reports, during one case relating to the assault of Konstantinos Artakianos, a friend of Peter Dalamangas and member of the group involved in the incident in which Peter Dalamangas died, Crown Prosecutor Sarah Huggett suggested the security team administered their own form of “kerbside street justice” in retaliation for the trouble instigated by Dalamangas and his group of friends (Peterson 1999). It was also stated that Alexander Sheldon, a former national judo champion and Casino security staff member, kneed Mr Artakianos three times in the back while two other guards restrained him (Peterson 1999). Similar treatment was said to have been administered to James Dalamangas who, as previously stated, was left comatose following “unnecessary and aggravated” handling by casino security (Cooke 1998a). After provoking the security team with verbal taunts and physical violence, James Dalamangas, like his brother and Mr Artakianos, was restrained by staff and summarily beaten. John Petterson, a guard of seven years, kneed James Dalamangas twice in the head as he lay restrained by two other guards (Cooke 1998a). However, during the coronial inquest into Dalamangas’ death, security staff at the casino displayed a resistance to implicating co-workers with any wrong-doing. Far more common was a deliberate focus on framing other parties as the instigators of any violence. Evidence given in testimony regarding the incident was often ‘coloured’ to
portray the Dalamangas brothers and their group as violent and aggressive and as provoking the response from the security staff (Clifton 2000a).

The death of Wilson Duque Castillo on December 18, 2010 was the second major Sydney-based incident to be selected as representative of ways in which the private security were represented during the media analysis period. Castillo, a Colombian immigrant, died after being assaulted by a number of nightclub bouncers in Kings Cross. According to reports, Wilson and his younger brother, Wilmer, were refused entry at around 11pm to a prominent Kings Cross nightclub - The Trademark Hotel - sparking a verbal exchange between the brothers and venue security. According to CCTV footage captured of the incident, Wilmer threatened the door staff with a bench seat before dropping it and leaving the immediate area (Coote 2011). Wilson Castillo was seen attempting to resolve the conflict between his brother and the security staff before becoming embroiled in the conflict himself (Fife-Yeomans 2011). According to witness reports, the security team from The Trademark Hotel then “chased [Wilson Castillo] 150m down the road...and allegedly bashed [him] into a coma” (Hills 2011). Wilson died from his injuries in hospital on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} of January, 2012.

The Castillo incident brought about significant public protest led by Wilson’s wife and family, culminating in a public rally held outside The Trademark Hotel on the 14\textsuperscript{th} of January 2011. This highly unusual demonstration featured criticism of the “pack mentality” among bouncers and called for significant review of legislation governing the industry and training standards surrounding appropriate physical intervention skills. A video of the rally, which was supported by representatives of the local residents

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49 Another reason the incident remained in the media was subsequent revelations concerning James Dalamangas, Peter’s older brother, who had instigated the brawl which led to Peter’s death by breaking the nose of a casino security guard. James, as noted, was left comatose following the incident in which “his face was pushed into vomit and his head banged against the ground when he was handcuffed” (Walsh and Miranda 1998) and was arrested in the days that followed for assaulting a casino security guard. However, years later James was implicated in two murder cases as the key suspect and currently sits atop NSW’s most wanted list (Lawrence 2009). James fled to Greece following the second murder and, ironically, is believed to be working as a bouncer in Athens (Lawrence 2009). It has also been claimed that he is involved in an organised crime gang which extorts nightlife businesses for “protection” in the notorious suburb of Kypseli (McCabe 2001).
association, was posted on various social media outlets under the banner “Justice for Wilson Duque”. Currently, the YouTube videos have been viewed more than 3,700 times and the Facebook support group has over 23,000 ‘likes’. However, the feature to receive the most prominence in relation to Wilson’s death was the involvement of former National Rugby League player turned heavy-weight boxer, John Hopoate, in the incident. Hopoate was working at The Trademark Hotel as an RSA Marshall and was involved in assaulting Wilmer Castillo. Hopoate has a long history of violence and controversy that spanned the course of his professional rugby league career. He was known as an aggressive and confrontational player who was frequently involved in on-field fights with opposition players. Indeed, Hopoate finished his career as the “most suspended player of the modern era” (Mascord 2005). However, beyond his violent reputation, Hopoate is remembered most distinctly for his actions in a rugby league game in 2001 during which he inserted his finger into the anus of an opposition player. This incident, beyond all that Hopoate was involved in, has left an indelible mark on the former player’s reputation. While on-field violence and aggression is normalised and almost celebrated in rugby league, the famous ‘hoppa’ incident alienated support for Hopoate. Consequently, Hopoate developed a loathed public reputation that contravened publically accepted norms of masculine sporting violence (for discussion of masculine violence in sport see Messner 1990).

In the newspaper coverage surrounding Castillo’s death, Hopoate was depicted as acting with malicious and excessive force in seeking retribution against the actions of Wilmer Castillo. He was found to have punched Wilmer twice after he was restrained by security staff (Davies 2011). Although Hopoate pleaded guilty to the charges relating to the assault of Wilmer Castillo, he showed little remorse in the court room. According to one report, Hopoate was “undeterred by the seriousness of his situation as he faced three charges linked to the fatal brawl his massive frame blocked the entrance to Downing Centre Court 4.4 as his case was being heard” (Fife-Yeomans and Dale 2011). During the hearing, the magistrate, Janet Wahlquist, remarked that Hopoate’s actions were “completely unacceptable...there was no purpose [in what you did] other than to give

50 Accurate as of 23rd January, 2012.
him a hiding, which was...well beyond what was a reasonable response [to his attack on you]” (Davies 2011). Magistrate Wahlquist also made reference to his ‘bodily capital’ (see Bourdieu 1986), stating that from his experience of playing professional rugby league, he should have been able to exercise more self-control (Hall 2011). Given Hopoate’s violent sporting history (as outlined in Figure 25) and vexed reputation, it begs the question as to why he was employed by the venue in the first place. Confusion surrounding Hopoate’s role at the venue is exacerbated by the fact that he was employed as an RSA marshall, a position that specifically excludes any security tasks. It seems highly likely that the venue sought to take advantage of his physical and cultural capital in promoting a sense of dread among potentially problematic patrons, thereby regulating future behaviour.
Figure 24: Images of John Hopoate.
Clockwise from top left: John Hopoate, as presented throughout the various stages of his sporting career as a rugby league player and professional heavy-weight boxer and outside the Downing Centre Local Court following his involvement in the Wilson Castillo incident.

Source: Clockwise from top left: Brad Hunter, The Daily Telegraph; Craig Golding, The Newcastle Herald; The Daily Telegraph; Adam Head, The Daily Telegraph.

The third and most recent incident to feature in this analysis was the assault of Nicholas Barsoum at The Ivy bar on George Street in Sydney’s CBD on August 28, 2011. According to media reports, Barsoum was ejected from the venue before returning with a group of friends and throwing ‘witches hats’ (plastic traffic cones) at venue security (Dale, Davies and Chambers 2011; Howden et al 2011). It was then alleged that Barsoum was “held down, kicked, punched and gagged then separated from his friends and taken to a basement room where the onslaught continued” (Howden et al 2011). The media coverage of the incident, like all of the above cases, made reference to the physical
capital and fighting prowess of the security staff involved. Implicated in the assault of Barsoum was 30-year old cage fighter\textsuperscript{51} Emmanouil Ntaras, who was charged with causing grievous bodily harm with intent following the incident. While the original assault was described as “vicious” (Howden \textit{et al} 2011), “gruesome” (Olding \textit{et al} 2011) and an “aberration” (Nicholls and McClymont 2011), the events that followed were equally disturbing and highlight the vexed relationship between police and security, as well as broader problems with the regulatory mechanisms governing licensed venues in Sydney’s NTE. When police arrived at \textit{The Ivy}, venue security seemingly deliberately diverted them, stating that the group had fled the venue while Barsoum was still in the basement being assaulted by security staff (Olding \textit{et al} 2011; Dale, Davies and Chambers 2011). Adding to malicious intent shown by \textit{The Ivy} bouncers, police investigators, upon viewing CCTV footage, observed the “blood spattered” crime scene being cleaned-out by venue cleaning services (Dale, Davies and Chambers 2011; Olding \textit{et al} 2011). In later investigations it emerged that the cleaning team was ordered by venue staff to clean out the basement and not to talk to police (Olding \textit{et al} 2011). While there is no doubt that security staff were attempting to hide their criminal behaviour from police attention, the involvement of venue staff in the clean-up is perhaps indicative of an increased awareness of the potential repercussions for breaching regulatory standards introduced by the state government. The calibrated punishments associated with incidents of alcohol-related violence and disorder on a licensed premise (discussed in Chapter Four) have significant financial implications for venues, and often results in licensees directing security staff to move problems off-site or, as may have been the case in the Barsoum incident, venue staff covering up serious criminal acts committed by bouncers.

\textsuperscript{51} It has been claimed that the emergence and exponential world-wide growth of various no-holds-barred combat sports such as the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) and Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) is indicative of an emergent trend in the commodification of masculine violence (Salter and Tomsen 2012). The increasing popularity of these events, now streamed throughout the world on mainstream cable and pay-per-view television channels, has led to a proliferation of less-regulated forms of competitive violence (\textit{i.e.} cage fighting) that can be seen via online media sharing sites and many other private online sources. These events are frequently promoted as being without rules and attract an audience because of the extreme levels of interpersonal violence and the likelihood that participants will sustain serious injuries (Van Bottenburg and Heilbron 2006; Garcia and Malcolm 2009). The lack of adequate governance surrounding many of these engagements promotes a problematic culture of unregulated masculine violence that has the potential to move beyond the private sphere and into the public domain.
Another key feature of the media coverage surrounding this incident concerned failed regulation of the security industry. Media reporting highlighted a series of legal loopholes which allowed security staff to work in NSW without passing the more strict training and probity standards that govern the state. According to reports, Ntaras obtained a licence in Queensland which was transferred to NSW under the *Mutual Recognition Act* (Olding and Nicholls 2011). According to an article written by Olding and Nicholls in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} of September 2011, “the practice of circumventing NSW regulations is widespread. Nearly half of all NSW licence applications are made under the act...licences are obtained in other states where criteria are less strict”. Also in the article, a security guard commented on the practice, stating “you just get people coming straight off the boat, paying a couple of hundred bucks and then working straight away. In licensed venues...the whole idea of tightened regulations was to weed out the ratbags”.

Media attention since the death of Hookes has been predominantly negative in its portrayal of private security employees in doorwork and venue control. Figure 26 (below) shows the rise in negative representations of the private security industry in the media since the death of David Hookes. The search, conducted on the online media database ‘Factiva’, was framed using the search terms: “pubs”, “violence” and “security”. The dramatic increase in negative articles reflects the prevailing social sentiment that materialised following Hookes’ death in 2004. The above case studies demonstrate the high priority that the media give towards reporting on the violent and dangerous nature of ‘bouncers’. Beyond this representation, security staff are frequently presented as engaging in retaliatory forms of ‘justice’ with a ‘pack mentality’ that frequently resolves in brutal and premeditated violence, but is also marked by an embodied sense of loyalty in protecting co-workers from criminal implication. While these representations may skew perceptions of industry workers, they are frequently based on actual incidence of violent behaviour. The behaviour of the security staff in many of the above case studies indicates the distance the industry must travel in order to placate public anxiety about their role in the policing of nightlife. The media focus on
individual ‘bad apples’ (i.e. Micevic, Hopoate, Ntaras) is critically narrow and fails to engage in a discussion about the flawed regulations governing the industry.

Figure 25: “Pubs, violence and security” by article number.

Source: Factiva

However, as Fishman’s (1978) article argues, negative media attention can have a significant influence in shaping public policy through affecting and mobilising public consciousness. This process was certainly evidenced in the public outcry, and subsequent community and political mobilisation, which occurred following the death of David Hookes. As a result, legislation concerning the governance of the doorwork industry was reviewed and eventually amended, concluding with the introduction of Security Industry Regulation Act (NSW) 2007. The changes introduced by the new legislation have increased the number of probity and background checks to ensure that those persons with a recorded history of violence cannot enter the industry. Licensing processes have also been significant altered, making training programs more demanding. A probation period of one year has also been introduced to ensure that those with no experience in the industry are subject to more rigorous operating standards. Having said this, as previously stated, the above case studies highlight the limits of the legislative and regulatory mechanisms which have so far failed to stop major abuses and incidents of violence. A whole of industry approach is required to
ensure the level of change is significant and relevant and establishes uniform standards across the country.

**Conclusion**

Media attention surrounding Sydney’s NTE is commonly focused on major incidents of night-time, alcohol-related, violence in the city after dark. However, analysis of the emergent themes from Sydney’s two most popular newspapers provided useful insight into the state and politics of Sydney nightlife. The contribution of this lucrative economy of leisure to the state of NSW ensures a vexed political response to issues of heavy drinking and violence which are problematic features of Sydney’s NTE. This response limits long-term strategy regarding the policing and regulation of Sydney nightlife. With the state government reliant on financial investment from alcohol and gambling related markets, NSW continues to employ short-sighted strategy rather than to engage fully with measures aimed at decreasing incidents of late night, alcohol-fuelled violence and disorder.

Drawing on the negative public perceptions of Sydney nightlife, the NSW Police has focused on high-visibility, problem-oriented policing strategies that produce ‘positive’ statistical and symbolic outcomes, but can alienate and marginalise nightlife revellers. Police engagement in these high-profile ‘blitzes’ can be understood as part of the legitimising process that promises to address popular community concerns, thereby increasing public confidence in both the police and state. However, the tangible outcomes of these methods are questionable, as statistics from BOCSAR and survey results from the City After Dark project indicate. If serious about addressing alcohol-related violence in Sydney’s NTE, the police, and the state government, need to move beyond superficial and symbolic rhetoric and engage in a sustained campaign that combines policing strategy and critical policy with community engagement.
While private security is required to combat and placate anxieties concerning the threat of interpersonal violence associated with the night-time economy, the discretionary nature of private security decision-making and the perceived lack of regulation and governance of its employees continues to cause public concern. With prevailing media representations reinforcing societal concerns relating to urban night-time leisure and the private security companies and employees who regulate it, there continues to be a strong sense of ambivalence concerning the industry’s position as key agents in the provision of personal safety and security in the city after dark. The constantly negative representations of ‘bouncers’ engaging in aggressive and violent conduct further undermines efforts to bridge the divide between state-based and private policing forms. The media and political debate reflects this limited focus on imagery and fails to engage fully in a more critical analysis of the industry and the regulations that govern it. Unfortunately, however, media depictions of problematic security staff working in licensed venues often align with perceptions of the young, male, aggressive offender, characteristics that Christie (1986) argued make them more “ideal” and, consequently, visible for negative public opinion.

The discrepancy between the presentation of public police and private security damages (attempted) transformations taking place in the policing of contemporary society. While neoliberal policies promoting a retraction of state fiscal responsibility and an increasing reliance on the private sector are evidenced in public-private policing shifts, they require public approval and support to be successful. Negative portrayals of private security promote public anxiety concerning the role of private actors in the policing of Sydney nightlife and, therefore, inhibit support for their increasing presence.

To some extent, the focus on major individual cases, notably the recent death of Thomas Kelly in Kings Cross, has actually been superseded by a more critical debate about problems of bouncer violence and the availability of alcohol. The fever pitch of coverage around Thomas Kelly has been very similar in that it is melodramatic and focused on the individual, but it has stimulated critical debates about the structure of
nightlife. The Kelly case was unusual for its resulting outcry on regulatory practice and calls for more security despite their popularly attributed violent disposition. Unexpectedly, and in a welcome evolution from past debates, the media allowed and promoted space for discussion about the structure of nightlife that moved beyond common claims regarding security and arbitrary masculine violence. While this dialogue was/is beneficial, it is still limited in its frequency and remains exceptional to high-profile cases. The situation remains that years of ‘new’ reforms have failed to address underlying issues within the private security industry located within the NTE and its resulting media depiction.

While this chapter has analysed media data, the following chapter will examine material that has emerged from a range of formal and informal interviews with both security staff employed as doormen and those working in management. Analysis of this content will allow for greater insight into the operational cultures of bouncing that will be seen to both align with and differ from media representations of the private security industry.
Chapter Six: On the Door: Private Security in Sydney’s Night-Time Economy

Introduction

Private security, in the form of door security and venue control,\(^{52}\) comprises an increasing majority of ‘police’ work in the night-time economy (Hobbs et al 2003; Rigakos 2008; Sarre and Prenzler 2011). Doorwork is performed at the interstices of public and private realms and between state-based legal regulations and the commercial imperatives of private and commercial operators. This thesis has argued that the growth of this form of private security can be understood as an outcome of expanded night-leisure and an increasing focus on neoliberal governance that fosters “load shedding” (see Johnston 1991) of onerous policing tasks from state-based agencies to private individuals and industries. In a recent project undertaken to provide a comprehensive study of the development of the private security industry in Australia, Sarre and Prenzler (2011:5-8) stated:

...the security industry is growing at a faster rate than both the increasing growth in police numbers and the Australian population, and available figures\(^{53}\) indicate the

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\(^{52}\) ‘Door security’, ‘doorwork’, ‘venue control’ and ‘bouncing’ are all used interchangeably in this chapter to denote the work of private security working in venues located within the NTE. Although the term ‘bouncer’ is an internationally recognised colloquialism for doorwork, its use has been limited to attempt to remove the negative connotations associated with the term. Having said this, the term is often held as a badge of honour by many who feel they have ‘earned’ it through years of experience in the industry. For this reason, the term will be used when the participants themselves have indicated that is the way they wish to be titled.

\(^{53}\) Although difficult to discern specific numbers of personnel employed in doorwork and venue control due to changes in census categories, numbers produced by the Australian Bureau of statistics suggest that in Sydney the ratio of security to police numbers in 2006 was 1.79:1, with 12,316 security personnel compared to 6,865 police (ABS 2006). However, evidence submitted by Sarre and Prenzler (2011:13) suggests that security numbers are far higher than recorded by the ABS. Indeed, they provide figures from
industry is now larger in numbers than conventional police personnel (indeed, perhaps twice the size). Indeed citizens are far more likely to encounter security personnel than police in their day to day activities. Citizen dependence upon private security for their safety is thus increasing.

Hobbs et al (2003: 119- 120) remark on the context of doorwork that:

*The police enforce the law, but the bouncer, although like any other citizen subject to the law, operates according to a highly ambiguous cocktail of extra-legal maxims, occupational codes, and personal discretions, underpinned by an interpretation of what is good and what is bad for business.*

The complexity of these often competing forces presents significant challenges and tensions regarding the regulation of this often unsupervised domain of privatised policing. Known historically as an industry with strong criminal association and influence, doorwork has an unregulated, hyper-masculine, and often violent past. This lack of a positive reputation is said to be challenged by a new wave of what is loosely termed as ‘professionalism’, driven by key industry bodies and major security operators.  

Recent changes in legislation, including introduction of the Security Industry Regulation Act 2007, buoyed by a groundswell of media and popular concern, have exerted

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Regulatory data that states that security numbers are almost double that provided by the census (36,654 security staff in NSW according to Regulatory data in 2008, compared to 18,437 security suggested by the 2006 Census data).

Professions and professionalism are frequently used as terms to refer to attempts to lift the status of various occupations. This usage is an ideological claim about emulating the form and work of the small number of occupations (such as physicians, lawyers and priests) that have a mix of narrow recruitment, an esoteric knowledge base requiring detailed and long-term study, as well as effective occupational self-regulation (see Larson 1983; Freidson 1985;1986; Abbott 1988). With the traditional ‘ideal type’ of professional in mind, it is hard to imagine how modern security work is not highly removed from a professional work setting.
pressure on the industry to improve operating standards and practices. These legislative amendments have introduced more demanding training and probity measures that have sought to placate public anxieties concerning the possible violent behaviour and criminal histories of industry employees. However, as this research has found, the occupational culture within doorwork is saturated with deep-seated nostalgia for a past in which ‘bouncers’ were both unregulated and (allegedly) respected by the public. This level of respect is something that, according to those interviewed for this thesis, has changed in contemporary Sydney. While not universal, the presence of these sentiments has certainly affected the successful assimilation of new policy into the industry. This nostalgia, and the subsequent continuation of traditional aggressive masculine cultures of practice surrounding security work in licensed premises, is indicative of a limited reform process. While industry employees still revere a violent and less regulated past, it is unlikely that major change can be made concerning workplace standards within doorwork, and the industry will continue to be plagued by high-profile incidents of violence and criminality. This chapter will explore the informal work strategies employed by security staff that are removed from formal training and are the result of collective occupational identity, masculine honour and gendered performance. It will also examine claims that increasing regulation and scrutiny have had a negative influence on the quality of personnel employed as bouncers and the ‘mentality’ with which they approach their work.

This chapter is based on an analysis of fifteen in-depth interviews conducted with men employed in either the management or performance of doorwork. Interview participants ranged in experience from ‘rookie’ guards to forty-year industry veterans. Beyond the interviews, this chapter will also integrate data generated from thirty-eight fieldwork observations conducted between December, 2008 and June, 2010 in selected

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55 The research sample was limited to male security staff due to availability. While attempts were made to locate and approach female door staff, many of the companies and channels used in recruitment of participants did not employ or know any female bouncers. The lack of female participants was disappointing as there are claims of a growing female role in private security work. However, it must be stated that in most of the nightlife spaces observed during this research, female guards were almost completely invisible, apart from a number of female ‘hosts’ outside exclusive nightclub that play a regulatory function that is more in line with brand management than overt physical policing.
key sites of Sydney’s NTE (outlined in Chapter Four). By moving beyond the official rhetorical claims of training and policy which govern doorwork, this chapter will explore the coalface realities of an industry that has undergone profound change in the last few decades and have become an integral part of policing in the NTE.

The first section of this chapter will analyse interviews with veteran doormen who reflect upon changes in the industry over the past four decades. This analysis will explore industry change and its relationship with both transformations in nightlife and regulations governing the security industry. Included in this analysis will be an examination of the key discourse of ‘nostalgia’ that emerged from the interview data. The second section of this chapter will explore the symbolic and physical importance of ‘the door’ in the performance of doorwork. This examination will include an analysis of the role that this gateway to the licensed environment plays in Sydney nightlife, and the attraction and status that ‘working doors’ affords security staff. It will also look at the different strategies used by doorman to ensure compliance with the ‘rules of the house’ and the importance of the relationship between security, bar management and licensees.  

The third section of this chapter will look more broadly at the gendered social practice (see Butler 1990; 1993; Connell 1996) of doorwork and its relationship to themes of violence, risk and respect. This analysis will present the views of doormen on issues of masculine status and how it is grounded, circulated and challenged in the city after dark. Central to this discussion will be an analysis of how (dis)respect, pride and honour can shape interactions and relationships between doorstaff, licensees and patrons. Alongside this examination will be an exploration of the influence of regulatory initiatives have on the performance of doorwork, and how many of the schemes, notably the ‘P-Plate system’ for new recruits and the new training programs.

56 The symbolic importance of the door, especially its position as a micro-site of power that assumes the form of a node of emphasised cultural style, has been detailed by Hadfield (2008). However, this analysis explores these concepts in relation to the local circumstances of Sydney’s NTE.
implemented under the *NSW Security Industry Act 2007*, were conceived in a way that fail to understand their impact on doorwork.

The final section of this chapter will briefly introduce emergent themes relating to the relationship between state police and private security, a subject which will be further expanded upon in the following chapter.

**A Note on Access to Security Staff**

Accessing participants who work in the security industry, particularly those working the coalface of security in the NTE (doorwork) has been a testing and difficult task. The workplace cultures of doorwork are highly conscious, cautious and paranoid about contact with outsiders, particularly those seeking information about the industry. While many company executives are eager to talk about their part in the push for ‘professionalisation’ of the industry, their agenda usually involves self-promotion. While this information is valid for a study of this nature, the information held by those working the coalface was the core of this research. On many occasions during my research potential participants have been turned away from any involvement in this study by colleagues or managers who thought I was ‘suspicious’, ‘dodgy’ or ‘out to get them’. At other times participants have been reticent in answering any questions above and beyond the superficial. This hesitation can be understood as a defence mechanism that protects the participant from vilification or reprimand by senior industry members or others working alongside them. As will be discussed throughout this chapter, workplace cultures of camaraderie extend to protecting others from numerous forms of liability, be they criminal, social or professional. One example of this culture of protection came from an interview with a highly experienced doorman with whom I had a relationship over a significant period of time. After completing a recorded interview at the participant’s house I was told in no uncertain terms by the participant’s boss, who happened to be his cousin and was at his house at the time, that I must delete the recording. Even though the participant vouched for me and explained what I was doing,
the boss was adamant that I delete the recording. While the content of the material did suggest that criminal elements are still active within the doorwork industry, none of it could be traced to actual persons or places. However, as is understood from these objections, fear of implication in criminal matters or with criminal subcultures is a strong current that flows throughout the interviews conducted for this study and certainly affected efforts to recruit participants.

‘The Times, They Are A Changin’: Reflections on a Transforming Industry

A key source of data for this chapter was the interviews conducted with doormen in order to analyse their views concerning the transformation of bouncing in the face of regulatory and social change (see Table 5, below, for brief descriptions of interview participants). The bulk of this section will draw on five ‘interviews’\(^{57}\) with Jerry, Bill, Brendan, Dennis and Steve, all veterans who have worked in security\(^{58}\) for more than thirty years. However, augmenting this data is material collected from interviews with Andrew, Nass, Isaac and Charlie, all of whom have ‘worked doors’ for between five and eighteen years.

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**Table 5: Interview participants from the private security industry.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlie, 29</td>
<td>A Lebanese- Australian with nearly ten years experience working in venue control/ doorwork and operations management of a Sydney-based security company.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{57}\) While a number of formal and recorded sit-down interviews were conducted with all of these men, this section also draws on a number of less formal conversations that were not recorded with digital recording technology. Instead, these conversations were recorded in field notes and later transcribed.

\(^{58}\) With the exception of Bill, who has been a country and Sydney-based publican for over thirty years, but who has worked through a period in which, as a licensee, he was responsible for maintaining security inside his venues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jerry, 60</td>
<td>An Anglo-Australia former professional rugby league player with over thirty years’ experience as a bouncer and head doorman. A career bouncer, Jerry was involved with the first organised doorwork company to establish itself in Kings Cross.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill, 61</td>
<td>An Anglo-Australian with over thirty years’ experience working as a publican in pubs and clubs around Sydney. Bill is a former professional rugby league player who has ‘seen it all’ and worked at a time when bar managers were also bouncers/cleaners/cooks and local amateur psychologists.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis, 55</td>
<td>An Anglo-Australian with thirty years’ full-time experience in the security industry and who currently runs a Sydney-based security training company.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve, 50</td>
<td>An Anglo-Australian with over thirty years’ full-time experience working in the security industry. Steve worked as a bouncer and head doormen for almost twenty years before moving into management. He now runs a large Sydney-based security company.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac, 33</td>
<td>A Polynesian with twelve years’ full-time experience across a range of roles in security, including doorwork,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>An Anglo-Australian with five years’ experience working the door/hosting a prominent Kings Cross nightclub. Andrew only worked in security on weekends because he loved the ‘social aspect’ of the job and was completing university studies during the week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mika</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>A Lebanese-Australian ‘P-Plater’ with eighteen months’ experience working in security. Mika has worked at a number of nightclubs in Kings Cross and also at major events around Sydney. He is currently at university and mainly works on the weekends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>A Lebanese-Australian with six years’ experience working in security who, due to the introduction of new regulations, is currently working as a ‘P-Plater’. George has worked at a number of venues in Kings Cross and the Rocks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nass</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>A Polynesian with over fifteen years’ full time experience as a doorman/head doorman in Sydney. Nass has worked in a number of nightclubs in Kings Cross/Sydney CBD. Recently stopped working doors for a role in security management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the first veteran doorman interviewed was Jerry, a career bouncer turned security operator and carpenter. I was introduced to Jerry by Bill, a close friend and former team-mate from his professional rugby league career in Sydney. Bill described Jerry to me as “as hard as they come”, someone who “had seen and done it all”. Jerry has worked in security for close to forty years. He is Anglo-Australian and comes from a traditional working-class background. He initially worked doors to supplement his income from football, but when injury ended his sporting career he assumed a more full-time role and started his own security company. He is a hard man and suspicious of outsiders, as are both Brendan and Steve, and it took considerable time to convince them that I was not a police officer or journalist despite the support and guarantees of mutual friends and other industry contacts. Jerry’s views, like those of both Brendan and Steve and many others who have been around the industry for significant time, were characterised by years of physical and verbal abuse. Jerry’s physical appearance is marked by scarring from a number of “major scuffles” as he described them. His nose was broken, as were most of the fingers on both of his hands. While not overly tall (particularly in comparison to others who work in this industry) at about 6’0, Jerry has an aura of resilience with a hardened physical capital immediately apparent. Indeed, none of the veterans were remarkably large men, but all embodied a tough manner and physical competence inherited from years of exposure to violence (see Monaghan 2008).

At my first ‘interview’ (actually a free flowing conversation) with Jerry, at a local pub in a South-eastern Sydney suburb, he arrived wearing mirrored aviators, a dusty t-shirt emblazoned with the label of his construction company, a pair of cargo shorts and Dunlop Volleys as his footwear. On entering the venue, he shook my hand, put his car keys on the table and abruptly said: “I don’t have too long, so what do ya wanna know?”. He presented a traditional or even rather dated image of working class masculinity. Just before he arrived, Bob Dylan’s famous 1964 anthem of social change

59 ‘Football’, in Australia, can refer to a range of sports, including ‘Aussie Rules’ (AFL) and ‘soccer’, but in this context it is used in relation to rugby league. Rugby League has traditionally had a working class following in Australia.
“The Times They Are A Changin’” had been playing in the venue. On reflection, it could not have been more fitting for the occasion. What came from the interview over a couple of beers was a not-so-brief depiction of an industry that had fundamentally transformed under the pressures of expanded nightlife, changes in drinking culture, and as a result of increased industry regulation. Emerging from this material are three central themes surrounding social and industry change, including changes in the nature of doormen, in industry regulation and in the job. While I have focused on Jerry in this brief introduction, his views were not unique and were certainly shared by the other veteran doormen interviewed for this thesis.

One of the more prominent discourses to emerge from these interviews concerning the changing landscape of security in Sydney was a distinct nostalgia for the industry’s past. Jerry, Steve, Dennis and Brendan all spoke at length about what they referred to as the “glory days” of doorwork, in which they were afforded greater levels of discretion and respect in the performance of their duties. This was a time when security staff were “hard men” (Jerry) and when “some of the best bouncers were hardened criminals” (Steve). These ‘old-school’ bouncers embodied a very narrow and almost caricatured ideal of what ‘real men’ ought to be (see Connell 1995). This masculinity is culturally inherited in local communities (see Hobbs 1988), and learned through exposure to aggressive male conflict in social as well as work settings. As many other studies (see Winlow 2001; Hobbs et al 2003; Monaghan 2008) have noted, the resulting physical ‘capital’ of bouncers is central to the projection of masculine identity. However, this is masculinity in evolution. While these violent histories are often shared by the “new breed” (Brendan) of doormen, the new generation of security are frequently referred to in gendered ways as inferior by ‘old school’ bouncers.

So there were a lot of people around then who wouldn’t be able to work today because of their [criminal] records, you know...old school bouncers, blokes who knew how to take care of themselves and really keep a tight ship... not like some of the tarts you see on the doors these days... it is just that the people aren’t as good,
the pool of good people is drying up or getting kicked out, or too old (laughs)... it’s just people are moving on and not being replaced by (good) younger people.

(Brendan)

Here, Brendan defines his version of a hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) and contrasts it with the strangely feminised and sexualised “tart”, referring to a number of inexperienced and “soft” (Bill) doormen working in contemporary Sydney. These doormen were often described as “all show” (Jerry), more about the image of toughness as mere muscle than any actual embodied competence. In doorwork cultures, the respect of other co-workers is earned through experience. This respect is no longer an absolute, but much of contemporary security culture and practice can be understood in relation to the position that experienced guards hold in the hierarchy of the workplace. On one particular fieldwork experience in late 2010, I witnessed the usually closed initiation ritual of a doorwork team following a particularly rough night at an inner-city nightclub. Having spent an entire night inside this venue, named ‘Tarzan’s’ (for anonymity), I managed to join the security team for ‘knock-off drinks’ once the venue had officially closed. This informal, but widely practised tradition is used as a time to vent and circulate stories about the night and to assess the qualities of new recruits. This practice is performed in a way that still positions violence, or at least a collective interest in violence, as a central aspect of the informal culture of doorwork. On this occasion, a rookie guard at the venue, who happened to be a relative of the most senior guard, had been involved in his first altercation with a patron. The following is an excerpt from field notes taken on that night:

I sat around the table with six giant Polynesian bouncers wondering how I had managed to work my way into this tight-knit group. My fieldwork companion, being a Kiwi himself, definitely had something to do with it, as did our banter about the rugby game that had been playing on the big screen throughout the night. The knock-off drinks were a chance for the guys to vent and joke about the events of the night. One particular incident, involving a rookie guard who was working his second
weekend shift at the venue, was the centre of a lot of conversation. ‘Books’ was the younger nephew of the head doorman at Tarzan’s, ‘Richie’, a highly respected veteran. Books had been involved in his first major on-the-job altercation with a group of rowdy patrons who had been causing a stir on the dance floor. While the whole team had responded to the calls over their radio system, Books was the first on the scene. While attempting to pacify and move the trouble-makers off the dance floor with the help of two other guards who quickly responded to the call, Books had been punched in the face. He responded accordingly, grappling with the belligerent patron and eventually succeeding in placing him in a restraining hold. The commotion died down once the trouble-makers were removed and ejected from the venue. While the talk about the incident involved a lot of mockery and was compared with a first sexual encounter (“looks like Books just had his cherry popped”), it was evident that this was a significant milestone for the young bouncer. He had been initiated and this was his official ‘coming of age’. He had passed the test, standing his ground and ‘getting the job done’. One of the guards had commented “another couple of thousand [fights] and you could be Richie”.

Throughout all the exchanges, Richie sat at the head of the table, and was referred to with apparent reverence. I estimate he is aged between forty and fifty years old, but it was hard to tell. He, like Jerry, had an aura. However, Richie clearly put significant time into his physical appearance as he was very muscular, something that Jerry was not. His physical and fighting prowess had earned the respect and admiration of his colleagues. However, while bodily technique (see Monaghan 2008) is highly regarded within doorwork circles, a number of veteran doormen remarked about the impact of regulations (in the form of licensing and other legislative amendments) upon the use of violence inside the licensed venue:

"Back when I was working in Kings Cross [the 1960s and 70s] things were different, you didn’t have all the rules and regulations that you do today...they were simpler times. We could go about our work in the way we thought best, because we had the
control...if someone was causing a stir you could give them a clip and send them packing. You just can’t do that these days. (Jerry)

This nostalgia for an imagined age of heightened “respect” is often really more like nostalgia for violence with less interference from the police and regulation from the state. The introduction of regulations curtailed the wholly discretionary application of bouncer ‘justice’, particularly violent forms of retaliation. These “simpler times” refer to pre-1985 NSW, before the most basic form of licensing was a requirement to work in security, and before “insurance and lawyers started giving [bouncers] too much grief” (Jerry). These periods were reminisced upon by a number of the veteran bouncers as a time in which bouncers were treated with “respect” because they had the ability to enforce compliance among troublesome patrons. Increased regulations can be seen to limit the performance of highly symbolic masculine acts, changing the way gender was and is “done” (see Butler 1990; 1993; Messerschmidt 1997; 2005). As Brendan suggested, these limitations result in the production of facade by bouncers who “tart” themselves up through steroid use and excess body-building, but who do not have a proven fighting history.

The real meaning of “respect” in these accounts is fluid and subjective, sometimes meaning nothing more than physical intimidation and the imposition of fear and conformity by verbal threats. While all of the veteran bouncers spoke about occasional acts of violence, more emphasis was placed on controlling a pub or club through “presence” (Charlie), reputation (Bill) and, as was a frequently alluded to, “respect” (although many of these traits were gained through violent acts). “Presence” was not an explicit manifestation or threat of violence, but an understanding of violent potential, what Monaghan (2008: 321) labelled a “technique of the body”. And although physical size was listed as a significant and central characteristic of presence, a credible symbol

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60 The lack of reality in these sort of claims, and the memory they are based on, can be contrasted with the local situation of frequent conflict, argument and violence between security and patrons witnessed by researchers in the late 1980s (see Tomsen, Homel and Thommeny 1991).
of physicality (Hobbs et al 2002), many of the veteran bouncers remarked that communication skills were equally as important in regulating potentially problematic customers. Being able to “talk someone down” was clearly seen as a reflection of physical competence. Interestingly, this focus on communication skills is a central part of the push to improve standards of security work, as advocated by key industry bodies and companies:

If guys can’t talk to customers then they are useless to me. There are a lot of guys out there who have no ability, they just rely on violence to keep customers in line. Don’t get me wrong, there are plenty of people out there who deserve it [a beating], but we can’t do that. If you can talk someone down without all that then you get respect [read coercion], that’s the sign of a good bouncer. (Dennis)

This claim about further restraint is also a reflection of the increasing prevalence of litigation and legal sanction against doorstaff and security companies. As previously mentioned, Jerry had ceased his violent ways when “insurance and lawyers started to make life difficult”. This reality aligns with Monaghan’s (2002: 407) claim that “although such ‘restraining judgements’ formed during processes of symbolic interaction may cause personal strain, the possibility of instant dismissal by club management and/or legal sanctions render diplomacy more or less situationally appropriate for these workers”. Although it is difficult to locate specific evidence to verify claims about increasing legal sanction and litigation against security personnel, it seems from interview data that a new awareness about the financial ramifications of overt aggression has a strong relationship with the evolution of general standards of practice and image within the industry.

The ability to control aggressively a volatile environment was shaped by a number of mitigating factors, including the capacity to employ trusted doorstaff, the absence of surveillance, and a close relationship with the police. All five veterans, as well as both
Isaac and Nass, asserted that the expansion of nightlife and the growth of licensed premises has had a detrimental effect on the quality of people employed in doorwork in Sydney. Further, it was claimed that regulatory shifts, including the introduction of licensing and more demanding training programs and probity checks on potential staff, pushed many with the required physical capital out of the industry. As Steve pointed out “the pool of security officers has really shrunk; that makes it much, much harder because you know that the demand increases and yet the supply dwindles...we’ve got a real issue”. Here, increasing demand for security is seen to limit the resource pool of quality doorstaff and to place strain on experienced guards who are placed in precarious positions with new and incompetent doorstaff:

*Look, all that these regulations have done is limit the amount of good blokes out there...the more work you get the less you can control that. I mean, you get put in a situation where you employ the best of the worst, guys who don’t speak great English, guys who have no idea about drinking, some who have not been around big fights before... It’s bad on all fronts because we get teamed up with them and all the pressure is on us if something kicks off (Brendan).*

These comments might seem like fairly commonplace resentment about public regulation and the oversight of private business and complaints about the inadequacy of the contemporary workforce. Yet, in the pronouncements of security staff, these views are deeply rooted in a defensive masculine occupational ideology that mythologises a well-organised past of supposed order and respect. One interviewee, Andrew, who described himself in rather grandiose terms as a “weekend warrior” (not for his violent abilities or desires, but because he worked as a doorman of a trendy inner-city bar/nightclub on a casual, but semi-permanent, contract while still maintaining a nine-to-five job during the week), stated that the new regulations and demands on people seeking out easy weekend work in the industry was “pushing good people away”. Contrasting training and skill, Andrew stated that the increased training demands and costs of licensing added barriers to entrance that many felt negated the benefits of working in
security. Importantly, increased regulations and demands for potential industry recruits provided a disincentive for personnel who are highly valued in security work, those with other “life skills” (Dennis). Many of the veterans said that the benefit of these outside labour sources was that they allowed a degree of “distance” from the industry and that they were often less interested in aspects of the industry related to “masculine reputation” and, therefore, were able to approach the work with a greater degree of objectivity. To these groups it was “just a job” (Andrew), not to be taken too seriously and, as such, something that does not require the type of immersion that leads to people taking offence to taunts that come from the public. By having supposed distance from the industry and other social influences, such as other forms of employment, Andrew said that he did not feel like he needed to take offence to taunts that he “constantly” received. The discouragement of these potential employees, according to many of the veterans, was having a detrimental effect on the quality of people working in the industry. Isaac, a doormen turned operations manager with a leading Sydney security company, stated the following regarding the impact of legislative change:

...yeah, it definitely has changed. The legislation has also changed over the past couple of years. A lot of them [competent guards] have dropped off, because there’s a lot more training requirements to meet as well, and so old school bouncers and that sort of stuff, they just don’t want to go through the whole training process again.

Steve also asserted that security companies were also afforded higher levels of control in recruiting staff they deemed appropriate in the past. Both increased regulation and high demand with limited supply have limited this practice:

we tried to surround ourselves with the right type of men – men that sort of had some good values, who cared for people and looked after people; but at the same token, too, men that could also look after themselves, and look after your back. So
that was sort of the culture that we were aiming for... Going back maybe ten, fifteen years ago, you were much better to have the expertise in-house, to hire, you know, the people, but have them in-house. The reason you can do it in those days – you had your plumbers and electricians and your carpenters – all wanting to work on Friday nights and Saturday nights as casuals; but today, you don’t get those people coming in, because they’d never spend a minimum of two weeks [training], then you’ve got to get a first aid... And then they find that two and a bit weeks out of their employment, and then the costs associated with it as well, and then they have to have a big red ‘P’. And then the clients don’t want the person! So that’s really contributed to a lot of people not wanting to be in the industry now, so that’s had an impact... What you see is a lot of people coming through at a lower level, that they can’t get a job somewhere else – basically uneducated people coming through that don’t have a good command of the English language, you know they... you know, those sorts of things

Interestingly, Steve again asserts the position that supposed measures related to ‘professionalisation’ within the industry have had the opposite effect by limiting the quality of security staff.

Another important factor central to maintaining “control” was a cooperative relationship with police. Unwanted police intervention in security work was historically minimal (creating significant problems with unregulated violent behaviour), and generally security took a less suspicious view of law enforcement bodies than is currently the case in Sydney (and will be discussed later in this chapter):

The scene in the early days...there seemed to have been an acceptance that if someone played up or someone did the wrong thing and they got whacked, then the police would kind of be the adjudicators – they would sort of listen to what took place, talk to a few witnesses, and they would tend to say, “Oh well, you know, the
guy deserved it” and it would go from there. As time went on a little bit and things started to change, then obviously the police were no longer the adjudicator; they had to investigate and then decide whether like, you know... They’d refer it to the DPP and then went through the judicial system. (Steve)

In the above extract, Steve discusses the changing relationship between security and police that can be understood as a result of the transformations in policing practice in NSW since the mid 1990s. Steve makes reference to a period of laxity and corruption in relation to police practice surrounding nightlife venues in Sydney (as discussed in Chapter Three). Here, violence was normalised and informal “justice” was arbitrarily enacted by security. In this setting, police acted as “adjudicators” of this kerbside justice and summarily validated security action with the same discretion with which security administered it. This relationship is heralded as the ideal situation for the NTE, as it empowered doorstaff to assert their authority with or without direct violence and affirm their dominant masculine status. This was the way that Jerry “thought best”. It was a highly controlled environment in which both patrons and bouncers “knew their place” (Jerry). Indeed, the production of order was noted as a source of pride for all the veterans, and reflected not only their embodied authority, but also a shared respect between patrons and security.

Part of the process of engendering respect from patrons was getting to know the “locals”. Dennis claimed that developing a familiarity with patrons was critical in maintaining order in a venue. He also claimed that this focus on “community” has been lost in contemporary Sydney because companies now move their doormen between venues on a regular basis:

Because these days security companies have a heap of venues they do work for, it is hard to keep the same guys on the doors. A lot of the companies don’t like to do that anyway because they think it can lead to problems with drugs and all that...but
that was always one of the things that we were really big on, you needed to know what your locals were like, how much drink they could handle, what they were like when they were pissed...that way they knew when to cut people off...people are more responsive when they know you, when they respect you.

While this sort of movement was once a strategy to deal with difficult and problematic situations of violence from specific doormen, the new impersonality in relation to patron groups is now a reflection of the large and corporatized patterns of work in private security that requires staff to operate in a range of different drinking and non-drinking leisure and entertainment, shopping and transport settings. Arguably a further reason for this loss of community is the changing nature and scale of nightlife, as witnessed through the dramatic expansion of high-volume licensed venues and the decline in the numbers of ‘traditional’ pubs catering to regular and local drinkers, and often with one set of in-house staff performing the entire range of bar and security functions. In new nightlife settings where strangers converge in high numbers, the risks for doorstaff are perceived to be much higher, and a heightened sense of trepidation accompanies this “unknown” (Brendan). Further, it was claimed by many of the veteran doormen that the transformation of nightlife has had a tangible influence on the nature of violence in Sydney:

You just don’t know who will be trouble these days...before, it was like: big guys punched on and little guys stayed away. Nowadays, little guys front up because they have a knife in their pocket. I have never heard of so many people getting killed after being punched...that never happened before. Nowadays, you hear it at least once a year. (Jerry)

Most of Jerry’s claims about who will or will not be involved in fights and with what weapons seem very subjective. Nevertheless, the expanded nature of nightlife has placed increasing pressure on security staff to regulate potentially unruly bodies, and is
made more complex by regulation concerning the range of techniques that can legally be employed by doorstaff. In this new domain, ‘the door’ has become a central focus in the battle to control problematic behaviour, as is discussed next.

**The Door: Gateway to the Licensed Environment**

As studies concerned with doorwork have noted, ‘the door’, both symbolically and physically, is of critical importance to the safety and commercial success of the licensed environment (see Hobbs *et al* 2003). It is also a site of significant personal and social contestation in which both revellers and security staff perform and often challenge each other from within gendered orders (Winlow 2001; Tomsen 2005). This section will explore the importance of the door as a central gateway to alcohol-and drug-related leisure and a key site of importance in the policing of nightlife.

Controlling the entrance to a pub, club, bar or nightclub is a vital response to problem behaviour both within licensed premises and the NTE. ‘The door’ is a key site for social sorting in which security staff are given the power (and are often explicitly ordered) to include or exclude specific patron groups based on a range of demographic categories including age, sex, class as well as ethnicity, sexuality and physical appearance. Such sorting practices are seen as a means of shoring up venue status as well as protecting patrons and security staff from potential violence:

*Obviously the starting point is the door, if you can control the door well you go a long way towards keeping the peace. I mean, that’s common sense right?! If you don’t want trouble inside a place, you keep the troublemakers outside...If you know someone is going to cause trouble you don’t let them in, it’s as simple as that.*

*(Nass)*
Sorting practices are frequently based on limiting the potential for future violence. As Hobbs et al (2003: 120) acknowledge in their study in Northern England, doorstaff devise and implement informal strategies for controlling the door that are generally informed by personal and vicarious experience. Through this acquired work experience, a number of doormen stated that they had developed an important mental checklist of character traits that were likely to signal “trouble”:

...You kind of get a sixth sense for these things when you do the work for a long time... Yeah, I guess it’s just one of those things...like it is not something you can really put a finger on all the time. There definitely isn’t a real ‘type’ of person that is always going to cause trouble. Most people are good, no problems, and it’s usually just a few people who cause trouble, I suppose that’s like security too, like everyone thinks that we are all thugs but it is only a few people around who cause that, you know?... But I suppose there you are more likely to have trouble with large groups of guys, then you have the guys with clear gang links and all that, a lot of tats, rats tails...but it’s hard, I know a lot of guys with heaps of tattoos who are as chill as it gets, they just like tattoos...I guess it’s just one of those things you get an eye for, it’s not something you can really put into words, you just, yeah, get a kind of sense (Nass)

The often vague and subjective aspects of these supposed signs of risky patrons and troublemakers do not block security officer claims about their continued importance, as it is declared that sorting strategies are based largely on the bouncer’s abilities of surveillance and assessment (see also Hobbs et al 2003). It was frequently stated that these skills were developed over time and only through experience “on-the-job”. For bars, pubs and nightclubs, the queue outside the venue is the most strategic site in the process of risk management. Here, doormastaff can assess potential patrons before they enter the premise, looking for signs and characteristics that may pose a threat to the success of the night. In Sydney’s NTE, success in this regard is defined by the absence of
problems, most commonly in the form of violence, and by preventing official breaches\(^{61}\) enforced by the various sections of NSW Police\(^{62}\) and other enforcement agencies such as OLGR (the Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing). In the licensed venue, violence and other problems of disorder are seen as “bad for business” because they potentially distract or deter patrons from spending their money at the bar and, therefore, must be shaped and constrained to maximise the profit potential of the venue:

...if we keep a tight ship, keep the trouble out, then the patrons are going to have a good time...and the chances are they will come back. If they come back the licensee will be happy...that’s the circle of life for us (laughs)...we want to keep the licensee happy because he pays the bills, if we keep him happy by keeping the patrons happy, it’s all good, everyone spends their money and we get paid at the end of the night. (Nass)

Restricting access to those deemed to be a threat to the commercial success of a licensed venue (i.e. violent, unruly or undesirable patrons) is a central feature of ‘brand’ management, which is pertinent to elite venues that work harder to maintain a particular image and patronage through exclusionary policies (Hadfield 2008). In such venues, the aim is to attract elite consumers, those who supposedly possess social and economic capital and seek to display it through high spending:

You know right off the bat who is going to be good for business, the way they look, the way they dress, the way they hold themselves... we have a girl on the door who helps make sure we only let in right kind of people, you know, the ‘beautiful people’ (laughs)...it’s a giant balancing act, you need to make sure that there is a balance

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\(^{61}\) Generally, in Sydney, a breach involves a monetary penalty based on the severity of an incident.

\(^{62}\) All officers within NSW Police are capable of performing a ‘business’ inspection within a licensed premises. However, NSW Police also has a number of units directly concerned with the licensed environment, they are: ALEC (Alcohol Licensing Enforcement Command) and the Licensing Branch.
between the beautiful people and the people who will spend big to be around them (Andrew).

Maintaining “the balance” inside a venue is critical in establishing a venues’ reputation, which in turn can play a strategic role in regulating consumer behaviour. In Hadfield’s (2008) article on the rise of “member-based” nightclubs in Central London, he asserts that exclusive nightclubs move “beyond bouncers” and traditional, reactive controls, and are largely self-regulating. Hadfield’s argument suggests that creating highly exclusive and desirable venues commodifies the nightlife experience, so creating “ideal” consumers who not only contribute financially towards a business, but also serve as crime-prevention subjects. The importance of ‘fitting-in’ to social and aspirational status claims ensures that these responsibilised patrons regulate their own behaviour for fear of being marginalised, labelled or alienated (ejected) from the commodified arena (Hadfield 2008). In Sydney, processes of gentrification in nightlife settings have coincided with a shift in clientele. As prices are increased to boost profit margins and cover renovation expenses, many urban venues are effectively becoming cost-prohibitive to working-class populations.

Partly because of the increasing costs of leisure in Sydney’s NTE, a recent trend has emerged that has significant implications for security staff. Pre-drinking, also referred to as ‘pre-loading’, or ‘pre-gaming’, has become a pre-city ritual in which revellers will meet at a residence or suburban pub or club (that have cheaper drinks), consume high volumes of cheap drinks and then venture into the city for the rest of the night (see Wells, Graham and Purcell 2009, Miller et al 2013). As a result of these unregulated consumption practices, security staff may be confronted with patrons who are already close to being intoxicated or are actually so but who have not spent within their venue:

Mate it is so hard these days because we have no idea what everyone has had before they turn up to our doors. When you are working the city, most people have
already been on the booze or whatever else before they come in, so we are faced with that. It’s even harder when you have a whole group of girls in the line who have clearly been drinking but your manager has told you to let them in...what do you do? We have laws that say we can’t, but we also have a manager telling us otherwise. (Brendan)

The tension between commercial and state agendas is obvious in the above excerpt. Security staff are caught between the demands of the law and the interests of their employer. This struggle is present on an ongoing basis in Sydney, and it was seen on many weekends during the fieldwork component of this research. More often than not, the manager wins and intoxicated revellers are allowed into venues, particularly if they have the desired cultural, physical or sexual capital. Indeed, the licensee’s direction is often highly influential in dictating the approach of the security team. Steve, an ex-bouncer who now runs a security company and has worked in security for just on thirty years, explained:

I was hired by the manager and that very night, the owner pulled me into the office and he said, “Look Steve, I don’t know you, but you come with a big reputation that I don’t want in my nightclub,” he said. “You know, we’re about looking after customers and caring for customers.” And this was the first time I’d ever really came across someone who was saying, “This is how we want you to operate”...So anyway, I said to him, “Well look, that’s how I work anyway. I want to look after people, care for people, so I don’t know what you’ve heard. Yes, I’ve had to do what I’ve had to do in those days, but it was done as a last resort.”

It is uncertain whether Steve’s new boss was issuing a warning about security violence against patrons, security blocking a liberal drinking environment and preventing high levels of consumption, or both. Yet this excerpt demonstrates how the commercial imperative of the venue often requires a degree of control from security staff, whose
over-zealous approach in enforcing regulations about drinking can compromise the profit of a licensed venue. Steve’s violent reputation, while still underpinning his ability to “keep a tight ship” (Brendan), was a concern for the manager: bodily control was required:

[the managers] view was: it don’t matter if someone was pissed, it don’t matter if someone’s an idiot, if they’ve played up or whatever – he still wants them to be a customer, so if you look after ‘em, if you care for ‘em, and if you see that they get home, then they will come back tomorrow night and the next night and their friends will come back. So from a business perspective...I think, [the manager] had it switched on. So that really gave me the opportunity to rise to the top and be his head doorman because we shared like his philosophies on business and the values that I had. And we were able to create that type of security culture. (Steve)

Here, the importance of the relationship between the security team and the licensee/bar manager is made apparent. In this case, the relationship produced a ‘positive’ outcome for both parties- Steve kept his job and the licensee maximised their profits. However, it also displays a liberal and highly problematic approach towards intoxication and disorder. The bar manager had a strong business plan that relied heavily on ‘customer satisfaction’ and was strongly influenced by commercial imperatives that neglected concerns for patron safety and well-being. By fostering a strong relationship built on a mutually beneficial business model, the security team had an investment in the success of the venue. Following this employer-compliant strategy, Steve was able to rise through the ranks of the security industry, gaining experience and reputation that he now claims is the reason for his current company’s success, central to which was the fostering of a positive workplace ‘culture’. This ‘culture’ was produced by “having the right people around” (Steve) and building a team that was experienced and understood how effectively to deal with the complex relationships and situations that one is confronted with in the semi-regulated, highly discretionary, world of doorwork.
When a licensee challenged or disrespected security staff or insisted on strategies that were in very direct conflict with their own, this relationship broke down. Charlie, a doorman and operations manager, reflected upon this tension when he stated:

I remember once I kicked out the CEO of [a major Sydney sporting club]. I tried to kick him out, should I say. I remember he was walking up to the bar, mangled off his face, he grabbed his schooner off the bar, turned around and literally poured half of it onto the floor. He was blind. I just walked up to him and I said, “Give me your beer, make your next one a water or you’re leaving.” [mocking authoritative voice] “Oh, you don’t know who I am!” I said, “I don’t care.” I looked at the bar and I said, “This guy’s cut. His next one’s a water or he’s out.” I was trying to be nice. I knew they were celebrating. They’d just won. The manager came up to me and said, “Look, that’s our CEO. He’s not going anywhere.” I said, “Really? OK.” I left the club. I actually called the cops and said, “You might want to go and have a walk through.” Because I don’t like being put on show, especially when we’re running the show. I don’t like a manager saying to me, “No, mate, he’s alright. I’ll look after him.” (Charlie)

In this instance, Charlie’s authority and status were challenged. While his actions were undoubtedly shaped by a loss of face, and certainly involved a degree of retribution, it must be noted that this action is certainly the exception to the norm. When their authority was eroded by management, it was far more common for doorstaff responses to be aimed at exacting revenge on non-compliant or rebellious patrons.

The queue and front of house are often the stage for these types of individual and collective performance from both security staff and patrons. Here, there is a constant audience, most of whom understand the unwritten rules that govern access to the licensed domain. This audience of patrons is both potentially disruptive, but is also a key aspect in the regulation of people who are or are not rewarded with entry to a venue.
Hadfield (2008: 438) states that queues “allow the business to announce its intentions, establishing architectural and semiotic barriers that are simultaneously aesthetic and social. They denote the status of provider and consumer alike, acting as signifiers of inclusion to the few, of aspiration to the others and of exclusion to most”. While Hadfield was speaking in reference to highly exclusive, member-based nightclubs, his characterisation of the queue still rings true for many more accessible venues.

Alongside strategies of surveillance, almost all interview participants stated that they employed “door” or “front of house” strategies that incorporated a physical, often intimidatory presence that was said to be one of the most effective means of decreasing the risk of physical violence:

When I was in the role (head doorman). I had a guy who was huge, he was probably 1.2 metres wide! Seriously. He had no neck! He was this big guy, an Islander guy. Not the most intelligent guy, but you put him at the door and people will not muck around at the front door. Because, number one, you’re not going to get past him because he’s blocking the entrance! But he could grab guys and throw them around. He was just a big guy....Perception, I feel, is everything. If you walk up to a door and, again, you’re a troublemaker, let’s say, but you weigh 60 kg and the bouncer weights 160 kg...the chances of you mucking around are going to be a lot less. And if you do muck around, you know you’d cop one. So I guess that intimidation factor was big. And...We used to pay for it. We’d put big guys on the door for a reason. They’d be manned by someone like myself who has got a bit of intelligence – if I do say so myself! – who can defuse the situation with my mouth...without having to resort to violence. That’s some of the techniques you’d use were big guy, small guy. Why? Because the small guy would be the face on the door, and the big guy would be purely for intimidation. (Charlie)
It is hard to see how the verbal insinuation of violence is a sign of intelligence in security work, yet nightlife venues that want to signal that they are chic and desirable to more cashed-up consumers will baulk at using bouncers who embody nothing more than open physical menace. However, while an increasing focus on communication skills is reflective of a conscious effort to move away from violence as an overt technique of control, it seems that these methods cannot be fully abandoned. It is claimed that communication is the first line of defence against problematic patrons, with empathy, humour and reason being used to attempt to diffuse any conflict before needing to resort to physical means. Mikas, however, argues that not all security staff get this right:

*I reckon most security guards get stuck because they can’t talk to people. They do not know how to talk to people. They go in there, and they go “Mate, you got to go”. No reason, no nothing. If you talk to someone and explain it, usually even if they’re drunk, I’ve found that probably seven or eight times out of ten, they reason with you.* (Mikas)

Charlie takes this statement further, claiming that communication skills and an understanding of local drinking cultures are central to success at the door and inside venues:

*Language being the biggest thing...especially when you’re communicating with patrons who may be intoxicated. That’s very important. I’ve seen security guards get made fun of trying to give people directions when they’re pissed. Footy games, for example. Just doesn’t work and there is never a good outcome... I don’t care how big you are: if you can’t speak clearly and concisely, they’re going to get up you. That’s just the Aussie way. We have a laugh and get up people. But at the same time, you’re doing a job where if the shit hit the fan, or there’s a fire, and you’ve gotta get everyone out safely, and you can’t communicate properly, then you’re stuffed.* (Charlie)
According to these doormen, communication was most effective when it was sensitive to the patron. Being “reasonable” (Duncan) and trying to limit the embarrassment to the patron was seen as key to ensuring that the risk of conflict was minimised. Here public face and honour could be preserved with a concerted effort to avoid insulting troublesome revellers. One interview participant, Andrew, who worked at an exclusive nightclub in Kings Cross, said that using the words “you have had too much” was something that he tried not to do or, if he had to, used away from groups of other people. This allowed the patron to avoid the public humiliation or embarrassment in front of friends or prospective sexual partners, often suggested as a common causal factor in violent incidents. However, Nass, a thirty-seven year old Polynesian doorman who has been working doors for between fifteen and twenty years, differed:

*The only real deterrent these days is size. That’s why you see a heap of us Polynesian boys out there working the doors, we may not be the smartest on earth but we are big, heavy, and can usually take care of ourselves. I mean, who are you going to mess with?? Not the guy who looks like a fridge that’s for sure! (laughs).*

(Nass)

The insistence that “these days” are worse and more dangerous is, in part, a self-justification about resorting to violence and perhaps often failing to be effective communicators that defuse incidents. However, there is a marked contradiction in claims about the position of violence in the occupation. Varying views are presented that range between explicit insistence and denial of violence, while there is a new stress on talking that can be seen as the insinuation of violence and violent potential. To add to the confusion in understanding these various attitudes, many of the doorstaff interviewed frequently traversed these subject positions in a single conversation. It must also be noted that many of the doormen interviewed seemed oblivious to or reticent about the ongoing history of bouncer aggression and violence in escalating serious incidents in NTEs. Nass continued, saying that size was an in-demand commodity in Sydney’s NTE, usually earning someone more pay. The increasing number of Polynesian
doormen is evidence of the commodification of physical capital. Often possessing the requisite body size, Polynesian males working doors have become a ready-made resource of security companies. Here, one can again see conflict, this time between industry bodies attempting to improve standards and clean up the perceived image of the security industry, and the physical demands of the job. As has been outlined in the above quotations, physical size does not necessarily make someone a ‘good’ doorman. However, it is almost universally acknowledged that “when the shit [inevitably] hits the fan” (Charlie), size matters and a physical and intimidatory presence is required. Nass stated that the need for “big men” often caused problems associated with steroid use as part of “that competitive side” of the industry and the desire to “be the biggest”:

“That’s why you get a whole bunch of these apes on the door who are on too many roids and can’t control themselves, they are too wired up from all the shit in their system that they can’t even take a guy asking them where the bathroom is. (Nass)

“Roid rage” from local bouncers abusing steroids is frequently mentioned in discussions and debates about the causes of violence in the NTE, but the means to tackle this problem are not clearly articulated by security staff. More generally, bodily control was something to be respected within doorwork circles. The use of drugs (including steroids and stimulants), while accepted as part of the industry, was often seen as problematic due to its effect on one’s temperament, influencing the ability for other door staff to trust in the affected person’s actions and judgements. Indeed, trust was outlined to be one of the most critical components in the work of venue security:

*I mean you have to be able to take care of yourself, sure, but you have to be controlled. I mean, we get people being dickheads and talking shit all night to us, I need to know how people are going to react, we can’t have guys losing it at customer ...So yeah it’s definitely important that we can trust people, and you only learn that if you get to know the guys...Yeah, I reckon trust would probably be one
of the more important things. I mean, we need to know that we can trust people to
do the right thing, if that’s jumping in and getting a fight under control then that’s
what we need to know someone can do. You also want to know that someone
won’t go starting fights just because they are bored or because they have home
troubles or stuff like that. There is a lot you need to know about. If you can’t trust in
a person like that then the other guards are going to pay for it. I mean if one guy in
a team is having a bad night and goes and works over a patron then the rest of the
team have to deal with that you know?...I’ve seen guys get hurt because of other
guys who have done something stupid and started a patron up. (Nass)

This is an ambiguous position in stating that it is necessary to trust others on the job to
both be violent and/or non-violent depending on circumstance. Naturally, due to this
confusion guards often fail to apply appropriate discretion and cannot agree on what is
the right moment for talk or action which can have implications for team harmony. Nass
makes reference to the importance of this camaraderie in the face of danger. Security
staff frequently discussed this mutual reliance as critical to the success and safety of a
night. In the following passage, Nass outlines the basic necessity of fighting skill to
doorstaff. Without the requisite physical skills, or the willingness to acquire them, a
bouncer was deemed a liability to the rest of the team:

It’s just proving your worth- showing that you are good for it ya know, that you can
be trusted...You need to know that you can rely on other guys you are working with.
I mean, if something starts up you need to know that the other guys aren’t going to
run for the hills. I suppose that’s one of the things that us senior guys need to look
at really early on, because you can’t have a guy working who is afraid to get
involved, and there aren’t too many who won’t but I have worked with some new
guys, especially more recently, that wouldn’t have a clue, they have never been in a
fight, never been anywhere near one...I know that’s probably not the right thing to
say, but it’s true. Even if you aren’t a fighter you need to be ready for it, I mean
that’s the work we do, it happens all the time and if you are all shocked and don’t know what to do you are pretty useless out there. (Nass)

Problems of ineffective door/security strategy, including overly aggressive approaches or lax intervention, were seen to have a direct link with problems inside the licensed venue. According to most of the respondents, problems not solved at the door are far more difficult to manage once inside. The following interview excerpt presents one example of how an incorrect choice on the door can quickly cause trouble inside the venue:

...We had this young guy come in, he gave a bit of lip at the door because we had let some people in front of him in the queue, you know, locals or whatever, and he was a bit pissed off about it. Anyway, we let him in eventually, probably a stupid idea now that I look back at it. He was by himself, looking to pickup probably...anyway he had caused a bit of a stir at the door with one of the guards, just talking shit, but we calmed it down and let him in...about an hour later we get a call that there is a blue near the dance floor and surprise, surprise, guess who is involved...the dickhead had started on some other guys missus and, as you would expect, started trouble. A couple of guys had got involved...turned a bit ugly because the place was packed and this guy was copping it a bit. Of course, we had to jump in and sort it out but it’s just one of those things where you look back and say...this guy is an ass, he probably deserves a good flogging, you really think about holding off helping out but you can’t, there are others involved and it’s bad for business...It’s that type of thing you know that we do day in day out...helping out people who have been cunts. (Brendan)

Brendan presents a notion of “deserved” violence for patrons. Again, this is a very fluid concept that is rarely agreed upon by different guards. In discussion of such themes, there is a marked difference between supposed ‘new school’ doorstaff who are much
more aware of potential legal (and consequently financial) sanctions for unreasonable use of force against patrons. The risk of violence, while thrilling for some security staff, was something that, over a period of time, had negatively affected the mindset of many doormen interviewed for this project. Paranoid about “revenge” attacks by disgruntled patrons who felt they had been mistreated (that do sometimes occur in the NTE), or scarred by the build-up of violent experiences, many of the doorstaff interviewed had taken action to avoid the doors later in life, usually leaving or taking up other security roles including a management position in security companies:

_When I was young I didn’t care about any risks, I liked the idea [of fighting]. Plus all my mates were in it as well and we used to always talk about it, you know, the good fights and all that whenever we caught up. A lot of us didn’t work at the same bar but most of us worked in the same area most of the time so we would sometimes meet up after work and share our stories…I remember one of my mates telling me about a fight he was in where a group of 8 guys took on him and one other bouncer at a club….My mate is a big white boy and can take care of himself but he took a fair beating that night…he ended up in hospital because one of the guys had bitten his arm and one of the other guys had hit him in the back of the head and he hit the corner of a wall and split his head open._ (Nass)

Here, the usually gleeful ‘war stories’ become warnings in a process that had a profound effect on Nass. He went on to recount a similar story involving himself and how one night, when he was sitting in a bar after work having knock off drinks and reflecting on workplace dangers, he realised that it was all too much and that he needed to do something about it before he was seriously hurt:

_I remember one night, I think it was a couple of months after I had my daughter, just thinking that this was fucked and I couldn’t bring up a daughter right knowing that I could end up in a hospital any night I went to work._ (Nass)
[Was there any particular incident that influenced this change?] (Phillip)

There were plenty - personally, I've had glass smashed over me, had guys threaten me with knives and said they would kill me or mates of mine because we had thrown them out or whatever. (Nass)

But the interviewee seemed far more affected by what he had seen or heard of, more so than what had actually happened to him personally, although it is apparent that his new role as a responsible father underlined his concern:

I guess it is just the build-up of everything you see on the job, not too many nights go by when something doesn’t go down you know! Most of my mates have been seriously assaulted, with weapons, glasses, you name it and I can probably tell you a story about it...so I guess it was just the fact that I have been pretty lucky not to be really badly hurt like some of my mates that made me realise that I am testing fate you know. (Nass)

It was at that point that the interviewee took on a more senior role, usually away from doorwork in a managerial position. Similarly, Charlie commented on the build-up of anxiety related to threats to his body when he stated:

It always was in the back of your mind. I’m the type of person, though, if it’s going to happen, it’s going to happen. So whether I’m walking down the street in Castle Hill or three in the morning at Kings Cross, people off their face, whatever the case is...I had a few intravenous drug users, junkies, lunging at me with syringes...That’s happened a few times. The good thing was that they were always off their face, so it was sort of slow motion for me. [makes hand gesture of tapping someone on the shoulder] Tapping away going...that’s nice, I know what you’re doing, and then doing what you have to do. But it’s something that sticks in the back of your mind.
It’s bad when they say, “I’m going to come back and get you.” You sort of sit there and go, “Well, OK. He might not come today, he might walk out and totally forget, but there is that chance that he might come back.” So I carried a baton for a pretty good time in the Cross, which was OK, but again, I’m the type of person that if it’s going to happen, it’s going to happen. (Charlie)

In the above extracts, violence can be seen as a desirable and feared presence. Charlie’s usual complacency about risk is overridden by irrational fears about infected blood and sinister hidden threats to life from people with no moral standing in conflicts that are well removed from the realm of fair and open masculine bouts that he imagines are more typical of the NTE. There is a significant ambivalence concerning the position of violence within the security industry. On one hand, violence is a commendable and respected skill, while on the other it is a major occupational drawback. However, even though many security staff experienced fear and trauma associated with violent experience, they were very quick to protect their masculine status by laughing off the threat and treating it as trivial or asserting their physical competence as a foil for any anxiety. These gendered performances are a ubiquitous sight in the NTE, and will be explored further in the following section.

‘Egg on Your face’: Performance, Masculine Identity, Violence and the Night-Time Economy

The licensed venue, and NTE more broadly, as previously mentioned, is the site of a great deal of gendered performance by both revellers and doorstaff alike. These performances (see Butler 1990; 1993) are acted out in front of a ready-made audience of doorstaff and other revellers. While the objective of these practices may differ depending on the individual, doorstaff are often vying for attention in one form or another. This routine was witnessed on many occasions during the fieldwork phase of this research and has been written about in other similar studies (see Winlow 2001; Hobbs et al 2003; Tomsen 2005). Violence in the NTE is often at the core of these
performances. Rarely random and unprovoked, the violence witnessed during fieldwork and discussed during the interviews was almost always acted out as a defence mechanism to perceived threats to social or masculine status, positions of authority or occasions in which pride, honour, or one’s ‘face’ or reputation were challenged. Steve confirmed this point when he stated:

*there’s a lot of security people that are out there that are big on their own ego that actually cause problems, because the situation happens, they come over, they handle it, you know, the wrong way – you know, they inflame the situation. You then get two males like bulls, butt heads, and then you get a security incident. So, you know, I think that is a problem, and again, a lot of the good security officers that I’ve worked with, they’re at peace with themselves – you know, they have nothing to prove to themselves or to their fellow...So it’s about being able to calm people down, negotiate and talk, and do anything you possibly can while you still maintain control.* (Steve)

Again, there is a sharp contradiction about violence and non violence in how security staff speak about their work. For the doorstaff interviewed for this research, frustration borne out of disrespect was a commonly experienced threat to occupational status. However, as Steve implies in the above quote, this status is always defended in the context of a history of ideal masculine identity with which the industry is associated. The contemporary move from blue-collar industry creates a broad spectrum of nostalgia about past forms of male work (Connell 1995:45). The ostensibly true masculinities of real men defined in a previous era (the era of Jerry, Brian, Steve, Brendan and Dennis), have a notable bearing on the way in which contemporary doorstaff behave. Brendan explains:

*It is not really something that anyone focuses on, but there is a real respect for the older guys, the guys who have seen and done it all. And you will see it to, the older guys often are on the door, and all the younger guys are clamouring to be around*
them, to hear all the stories about this and that, about what it was like to work the Cross back in the good old days. Of course, most of the times the stories are a bit exaggerated, but that doesn’t matter, the kids love it (laughs). (Brendan)

The dialogue and storytelling that Brendan refers to was certainly seen in Tarzan’s with Richie and Books (discussed earlier in this chapter). Storytelling plays a significant role in the circulation and maintenance of occupational identity, which, in this case, can promote practices that compete directly with the industry’s push to improve behavioural standards within doorwork. The nostalgia for a past time in which bouncers were allegedly well respected and given far more license in the application of their discretionary power is perhaps one of the biggest obstacles standing in the way of true and lasting industry change.

A lack of respect for doorstaff and other security roles that amount to little more than simple guard duties is nothing new, but the illogical reverence for this imagined period is placed in the context of a changing environment in which security teams are now not afforded enough respect from the general public and state officials, including police and regulatory agencies. In the following excerpt, Brendan expressed frustration that was based on negative perceptions that the ‘majority’ of people held towards doorstaff:

...most people don’t get it, if there is one thing I really wanna say it is that people give security all the grief in the world when they hit someone and they say that security are all violent and blah blah blah but really, most people out there haven’t had to deal with anything like what we have to deal with on a daily, or, you know, regular, basis...so it’s really hard to take when you get all these people out there judging you based on your work or what you are doing when they have no idea[off] the type of stuff we go through.(Brendan)
In the following interview passage he even became irritated at my response to his statements about a period “before licensing” that appears to refer to a time of more lax police application of a licensing system that already did exist in NSW:

...I mean I have mates who I have worked with since before licensing came in...that’s a long time...you go through a lot together...see a lot of things and do a lot of things that most people have no idea about, and it’s not always pretty, but someone has to do it...that’s one of the things people don’t realise about doorwork...we get a bad rap sometimes because of violence and all that but people don’t realise the world we work in. People need us, I mean a lot of people wouldn’t go out in places like the Cross if we weren’t around, it can get pretty hairy...and well, if bouncers weren’t around what would they do? Very little I think! (Brendan)

[Maybe...] (Phillip)

Not maybe mate, definitely...you see, we see what people are really like, when shit hits the fan and they are in trouble we are the first line that people turn to. Sometimes it’s funny because we get a bad rap and people are always worried about the type of people working doors and all that but then whenever someone is worried we are the first people they come up to for help. (Brendan)

These remarks also reproduce the frequent argument about indispensability and public safety that is raised by police who feel wounded by public criticism of their work. Brendan underlines quite commonly acknowledged feelings among doorstaff. He asserts that security staff are not appreciated for the work they do, the “dirty work” (see Hughes 1962) that no one else has the desire to undertake. Here, the way in which the hyper-masculine respondent positions himself is of particular interest. Brendan feels that the position of security is trivialised by revellers and not given the proper respect until trouble arose. This is a common belief among guards. What runs through such comments is security staff confusion about the contradictions of their real but limited physical power over people. Muscle and threat do not logically lead to any real social
respect and the incomprehension about this point was evident in interviews with security staff. Limited social respect is not an ongoing concern for many other people working in less skilled and physically difficult manual work, but what is distinct here about security work is the friction that arises in social interaction between security staff and a mix of different patrons from a more diverse (and sometimes higher status) social position in the expanded NTE. It is this ongoing friction and typical failure to elicit a real acknowledgment of respect that becomes a draining form of emotional labour for doorstaff that their comments reveal can be even worse than any physical risks. Interestingly, the interviewees do not show any appreciation of other occupations in similar straits (nursing, emergency services workers etc.), but do instead claim that this is a fairly unique feature of doorwork:

I mean I guess most security guards get pretty pissed when drunk idiots are always questioning them, you know, like when they have been asked to leave and then they go into that thing where they are trying to tell you that they haven’t had anything to drink and then they always end up telling security that they are wrong and stuff, little things like that are often the start of trouble. (Nass)

Nass continued, stating that the lack of respect shown to security from most patrons in nightclubs is due to the fact that security guards are seen, stereotypically, as “big idiots who just want to start fights”. Here, non-violent approaches from security are expected to be met with immediate obedience:

It’s really frustrating when you are trying to do the right thing, not being rough with a guy, telling him he has had too much to drink or whatever, and then he arcs up at you and starts calling you a ‘wanna-be cop’... (Nass)

As Tomsen (2005: 292) states, taunts such as being called “plastic cops” (in his example) are particularly insulting or emasculating “in an occupation with a very fragile sense of
professionalism and limited social status”. The emotion conveyed by both Nass and Brendan in relation to this topic provides clear evidence of this process. In many cases, this lack of respect leads directly to confrontation, either as actual physical violence or of verbal exchanges that seek to reassert position and authority:

...you definitely do get tired of it...same as anyone else would. When you get people trashing you all night and having a go and a laugh at you, it grinds down on you and sometimes you just don’t have the patience. Some nights nothing will happen, but if you are having a shit night, you are frustrated, tired, whatever, it only takes one dickhead to tip you over the edge...one smartarse who thinks he is Mr Big and you can boil over. You see it happening all the time...it’s happened to me plenty, but that is the job. No one has a job that they love all the time...(Brendan)

Compounding issues related to these fragile identities, new regulatory initiatives introduced to monitor and maximise compliance with new industry standards have failed to understand doorwork cultures. The P-Plate initiative, designed to introduce and mark a probationary license for new security employees, requires new recruits to display a license emblazoned with a large red ‘P’ on their body. According to Mikas and Joe, the outward display of their inexperience was deeply demeaning and frequently met with ridicule from patrons:

It’s on display for everyone to see. It is sort of like, it’s a big red P, and it’s sort of a target. I have experienced previous times where people undermine you for being that. Sometimes they take advantage of that, probably trying to push the barrier a bit further than they would maybe for licensed guards (Mikas)

The red P is sort of symbolic to the view that people have on their car plates, you know? And obviously there’s a lot of negative hype with P-platers on driving cars at
the moment, and sometimes, I don’t know- people are maybe transferring it over...they definitely treat you differently. (Joe)

These status threats were also occasionally tied to action and words calculated to annoy and inflame patrons – some guards talked about testing people at the door of a venue as a means through which they can exert their sense of masculine authority. Thus, Charlie claimed that being able to goad a patron (“give them a bit of an egg on if you want”) was the ultimate show of his authority.

These actions clearly define the physically dominant position of doorstaff over patrons. However, patrons often retaliated in their own attempt to save face (see Cunneen et al 1989). This could happen both at the door and inside the venue, but usually occurred when security intervened in a patron’s night. Andrew, a doorman/host at a more exclusive nightclub in Kings Cross, said that this usually happened with “knock backs” at the door when security decided that a patron was not the “type” that suited a particular venue, and was also common when a patron was asked to leave a venue. Andrew said that his knowledge was based on his personal experiences of going out and “knowing Australian drinking culture”, which places a high value on drinking capacity to achieve social and masculine status. Consequently, telling someone they have “had too much” was always going to challenge that status. This process, according to most of the doorstaff interviewed, often causes patrons to “act out” against security as a way to reaffirm their status.

The pride thing is massive. Being able to sit there and go, “OK, you know what? I was in the wrong.” And smile and nod, whereas other guards would say, “No, I’m right!” and cause fights because of it – throw people out, and things like that. There’s always that – for me, anyway, there was that rational side of things to say, “Look, use your brain a bit. What’s really going on here? Is he egging you on because he’s pissed off his face, or is he egging you on because he wants to fight, or
is he egging you on because he has a gun?” For me, it was, like, pride stays outside when you’re at work. Simple. Other guards would go, “Nup, it’s my way all the time, or the highway. “They’re generally the guards who...maybe not the hard nuts, because they’ve experienced it and they were over it, but more I’m sorry to say – the younger guys, who were keen to fight and show their macho side. “I’m a security guard, look at me!” type thing. (Charlie)

As stated in the previous chapter, the division between the hyper-masculine stance of ‘bouncers’ and the regulations that govern their actions, in an environment seemingly premised on the pursuit of free leisure, provides a context of immense tension. New legislation governing the environment of doorstaff and venue controllers has increased the regulatory controls governing the industry. But sustained supervision of this occupational domain is largely non-existent in Sydney and many other global locations of extended nightlife including a number of cities throughout the UK (see Winlow 2001; Hobbs et al 2003) and North America (see Rigakos 2008).

Australian states appear to have a longer history of official concern and faltering efforts at regulation concerning the private security industry. Yet Sydney, like many cities throughout the UK, has experienced similar processes of neoliberal deregulation of drinking and leisure at night where “control strategies and regulatory attempts to incorporate the night time population rely heavily upon intimidatory devices in the form of commercial security staff” (Hobbs et al 2005:169). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, many of the doormen interviewed referred to the changing nature of patrons in Sydney. Combined with a nostalgia for when “things were simpler” and the nonsensical claim about a time when “men would duke it out then sit down and have a beer together” (Jerry), there was a shared sense that extreme forms of violence (i.e. including weapons and involvement of large groups) were far more prevalent in contemporary society. Accordingly, physical responses from security staff were required to be equally violent in order to subdue increasingly dangerous threats:
...if you are getting charged at by a drunk you are going to do anything you can to get them down...it’s simple preservation...no one wants to get hurt...so you do what you have to do...if they have a glass or a knife or a chair...whatever...you are going to do whatever you have to...most of the time that’s not pretty you know?!

(Brendan)

Violence, while not always readily discussed, was generally viewed as “a part of the job” (Jerry). With limited training in physical intervention, apart from whatever martial arts or other physical skills individual doorstaff possessed, it was generally agreed that you “do what you have to do” (Brendan/ Jerry/ Charlie) to ensure the safety of both security and patrons. As Brendan suggests above, “most of the time that’s not pretty”. In discussion regarding the limits of violent conduct, respondents were commonly wary of their responses, and often took a great deal of time to justify their answers with reference to the danger they had to deal with on a daily basis. Charlie, when prompted on these self-imposed limits, responded:

Nuh. Nuh. It’s never specified. At least in a training course it might be, but not in the field, the licensee won’t talk about it, your fellow security guards won’t talk about it. It’s a “do what you have to do” mentality...So, it’s never clear-cut. Common sense should prevail, but common sense isn’t so common! I learnt that!...there are those people who need to be able to go, “Hey, I’m a big boy and I can look after myself,” but the smallest guy continually picks on them. The guy inside – you know I can do some damage to you, but that little person’s drunk and they’ll continue to do that. So it’s a matter of saying: do you not defend yourself? If you do try and defend yourself, are you a thug? As long as you can say its self-defence...I guess you weren’t the instigator, but even then, the police would still come around and go, “No. You’re at fault. You’re the security guard. You should know better. He’s intoxicated.” Well, if I give him a slap across his head, and tell him to wake up to himself. No, I can’t do that. He threw a punch, I threw a punch. “But you knocked him out. You’re three times his size.” “I have to defend myself.” So where do you
draw the line?...Well, what’s the guy supposed to do? Sit there and smile all day and say, “Yeah, I’ll be your punching bag all night! You can throw your slurs and whatever else you want at me. I’ll just smile.” To what extent? (Charlie)

Charlie distances himself from involvement in violent incidents by speaking as an observer in his example of people retaliating to verbal taunts. By doing so, he could maintain his status as controlled, intelligent and respectable, something of which he was very proud. Others thrived on talking about their enacted violence, “punching people on principle” (Bill) and dishing out their own forms of “justice” when they felt it was necessary. What emerges overall from these accounts and the situational context of doorwork in the NTE is a sense of the frequent absurdity of new pressures towards training for communication and sensitivity before immersion in situations of high drinking, volatility and sometimes inevitable conflict. The final section of this chapter will explore the relationship between private security staff and police working in the NTE.

Security and Police

The relationship between public police and private security is varied and dependent on the type of guard and security setting in which they work. In many cases there seems to be an almost inherent distrust between the two parties. One the one hand, many police have long-standing and often justified views that security staff are violent and the cause of trouble in nightlife settings. These views can be confirmed and circulated through word of mouth, actual experience or other outside influences. This process will be further discussed in the following chapter based on interviews with members of NSW Police. This section addresses this relationship from the side of security. The frequent criticism of police by security and security animosity towards state police unearthed in this research must be acknowledged. Nevertheless, it must be understood and contextualised within an appreciation that these are rival segments of the entire “policing” occupation. There is ongoing occupational dispute about levels of authority
and use of force in the NTE as regards which segment should monopolise this legitimate position.

Relations and perceptions regarding police varied dramatically between doormen. Some interviewees had generally positive relationships with police, while others felt they undermined their authority by involving themselves in affairs that they claim could be easily dealt with by an effective security team. This action causes indignation and recalls what Tomsen (2005: 292) stated about the “fragile sense of professionalism and limited social status” that security often experience. Police involvement in incidents often left security feeling powerless and emasculated even if police appeared to be merely performing their duty and refusing to offer automatic support:

...I feel as though if every particular site or club, if you had one person trained in verbal negotiation – if it was a doorman and they were always at the door, and the police were aware of this, the police could rock up and stand there and shut their mouth. Shut their mouth, because generally they get straight in there, especially in the Cross...They just walk in and get in front of a patron and say, “What’s going on here?” Ra-ra. That just aggravates the situation. I’m sure they know this, because I know they go through psych training as well, but they still do it. I don’t know if it’s a pride thing, or stamping their authority, or whatever the case may be... [it would be better if the Police] literally stand there and be that back-up, or that aid, as opposed to getting in there and maybe aggravating the situation. Or making the security guard look a dickhead in front of the patron, because that patron will be back there next week. The cop might not... (Charlie)

Many doormen interviewed stated that police officers treated security staff like “second-class citizens” (Brendan), which further strained the relationship and detracted from their sense of worth. In the following excerpt, Brendan asserted that, while there should be a degree of respect from police for the role that security undertake, police
often assume the worst about doorstaff in the contemporary situation of major police restructuring and the breakdown of personal relations between officers and doorstaff:

Cops are funny though, you still get a lot who treat you like a second class citizen...I mean it is not so bad with me, not when I was working anyway, because a lot of them knew me from around the clubs and so they knew that I was OK. But you see the way a lot of them treat the younger guys and you wonder where they get that from. You see coppers who are younger than guards coming up and talking to them like they are in primary school...It’s really tough, respect is a big thing in security, there is nothing more frustrating than a power tripping copper who thinks he is king shit and speaks to you like you are a kid. It happens all the time though...and they assume that you are a trouble maker, a lot of the time anyway. (Brendan)

Implicating other security staff by assisting police in the investigation of criminal incidents is a violation of the unwritten code of conduct that exists in parts of the security industry. In one conversation, Charlie noted a fear of retribution from other venue doorstaff who were involved in a shoot-out outside a Kings Cross nightclub for involvement with the police investigation. Charlie shows his reluctance in assisting police with matters that did not directly concern him:

I was there the night there was the shooting at [a nightclub] across the road [in Kings Cross]. I was actually in the laneway when the shooting happened, and it was more of a gunshot – you look up and people are coming towards you so you just sort of put your head down and look the wall, because technically I didn’t see anything, and that’s how it was. The police came around the next day and we gave them footage from our cameras, and I was actually asked, “Why did you put your head down?” I said, “Look, I didn’t see anything.” Simple as that. I must say, I did not know the people who were involved, but it was more of a – you see something
and you implicate yourself...from what I’ve learned, you really do just keep to yourself. It’s better that way. (Charlie)

The above quotation signals one of the major difficulties confronting the police and, more generally, the policing sector concerned with regulating and preventing criminal behaviour in Sydney’s NTE. As two segments of the policing occupation, it is worrying that communication is often limited due to fear of reprisal from within the security sector. While conscious efforts have been made to improve the working relationship between the two parties, Charlie’s comments indicate that there is still a long way to go.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored doorwork as both a job and a facility through which masculine identity is constructed, performed and circulated. In Sydney, contemporary doorwork cultures are shaped partly by referring to a revered past in which doorstaff had significant autonomy and were respected by nightlife revellers. Throughout this history, “real men” worked doors and were able to control their licensed venues through the discretionary application of both physical and verbal threats and, on occasion, acts of violence. This action was deemed necessary to prevent future violence and to limit disruption to the profit potential of a venue. However, as has been outlined throughout this chapter, changes in the scale and form of the NTE and regulation of the private security industry can be seen to have had a notable bearing on the way in which doorwork is conducted, with considerable contradictions existing between official claims of ‘professionalisation’ by leading industry bodies and the lived experience of doing security work by those ‘working the doors’. Resistance to industry change is evidenced by an occupational nostalgia and fascination with violent masculinities that were accommodated in a less regulated industry. The esteem of experienced and hardened veterans has been shown to influence less accomplished doorstaff in a way that is fuelling this adherence to old patterns and so hostility to regulation.
The growth of nightlife (expanded venue numbers, venues types and a wider social range of patrons), facilitated by the deregulation of drinking and leisure at night, has placed increased stress on the resource pool of competent doorstaff. This stress has been compounded by the demands of more stringent probity, training and licensing standards. Not only are those with the requisite physical and social capital (more often than not, justifiably) being ejected from the industry, but new recruits are said to be of an inferior quality. It is said that this “new breed” of doorman, often claimed to be “soft” by veteran guards, limits the capacity of security teams to adequately regulate the licensed environment. Many security operators who insist on the financial benefits of ‘raising the bar’ in terms of training, safety and conflict management claim that it is increasingly difficult to recruit new guards because they do not have the experience to undertake the roles that the job requires. They also claim that this trust is critical to providing a safe and responsible security team and environment, and is part of the shifting mentality of security providers. Such imagery sits oddly alongside an awareness that doorwork is still “dirty work” (with the hours of patrolling, guarding and physical surveillance and handling of crowds that are now more beyond the remit of state police), and with the unresolved dilemmas regarding occupational change and reform that underlie ‘waving’ discourse and claims about violence, respect, regulation and occupational standards. Interestingly, many of the same themes arise from the interview material collected from members of the NSW, something that will be explored in the following chapter.
Chapter Seven- The Thin Blue Line: Public Police in Sydney’s Night-Time Economy

Introduction

The emergence and expansion of (largely) alco-centric NTEs has exerted considerable pressure on public policing agencies. The promotion of relief from restrictive day-time norms as a means of capital accumulation has created spaces in which industry regulation and governance of behaviour are complex and riddled with inherent challenges. Hobbs et al (2003:269) argue that “the quasi-liminal zones that have developed in our urban centres are essentially non-conducive to normal comportment”. This view might exaggerate the extent of widespread transgression in nightlife, yet it is the potential absence of civility and disorderly behaviour that make the policing of nightlife spaces particularly topical and demanding.

Magnifying the scale of the policing task is the fundamental change to public police organisations under the pressure of modernity. The police no longer- if, indeed, they ever did- have the capacity to sustain the demand for security in contemporary society (Garland 1996). Consequently, state-based police do not dominate the policing occupation, and this transformation is acutely evident in the NTE (Rigakos 2008). The emergence and increasing popularity of neoliberal ideology has provided the backdrop to the recent growth of the private security industry, which has assumed roles beyond the scope and, increasingly, ability of state-based policing agencies to undertake.

As discussed in Chapter Six, doorstaff now provide a more visible corporeal presence concerned with the regulation and management of revellers in sites of night leisure. The
general physical disparity between doorstaff and public police is a marked divergence from a past in which recruits to the NSW Police were required to meet minimum physical standards (including height, weight and general fitness) and selected in a way that ensured many serving officers were physical imposing. The introduction of NSW anti-discrimination legislation in 1977, and a push to soften the hyper-masculine image of the state police, has seen these requirements dropped, and so opened up the force to a range of new recruits, including more women. While these changes may have helped transform the image of the police, within the NTE this shift can mean further reliance on officers who are often physically smaller than private security and many members of the public. It is within nightlife spaces where the new discrepancy in physical capital is most visible. A key part of the movement towards a mixed public/private policing occupation has been the emphasis on physical bodily strength from the private sector. It is frequently claimed that, with a lack of body size and hand-to-hand fighting competence, public police have suffered a crisis of confidence and, consequently, police have become increasingly concerned with the projection of armed collective strength to reassert control in spaces of embodied risk. This trend, as outlined in Chapter Five, has led to the adoption of a new style that is more closely modelled on military or paramilitary uniforms (see McCulloch 2001) that is combined with the adoption of frequent gun wearing accompanied by a new range of less-lethal weapons such as OC (capsicum) spray, extendable batons and taser guns.

The projection of collective strength and visible weaponry has developed alongside important shifts in the forms of public policing that are adopted in NSW. There has been a movement away from previous “community policing” strategies that actively pursued individual and organisational engagement in risk management within local spaces (see Segrave and Ratcliffe 2004; Skogan 2004). Local policing strategies now favour highly public and targeted “hot-spot” operations that concern manufacturing general public (rather than minority group) confidence. These measures, as already noted, are often highly symbolic publicised acts that are unlikely to producelasting change in behaviour and criminal patterns and can prove alienating to the communities in which these

63 Interestingly, this trend has also been echoed to a degree in some doorstaff uniforms.
operations take place. A key example of these practices can be seen in the heavy-handed use of large teams of aggressive uniformed officers and sniffer dog teams in streets, pubs and cafes in nightlife spaces. The operations of these squads has fostered high levels of local resident and community resentment about the intrusive and hyper-aggressive nature of these actions that, more often than not, target minor incidents of drug possession. Further, it is evident from the interviews conducted for this study that many police working as part of these operations are increasingly frustrated and disillusioned by the highly politicised nature of what they see as *ad hoc* campaigns which are ineffective in reducing long-term crime rates.

This chapter will analyse related themes that emerged from ten interviews conducted with members of the NSW Police Force. The gender ratio of interviewees was nine-to-one, with nine male officers and one female officer taking part in the research.\(^{64}\) Participants ranged in age and experience from Probationary Constables to seasoned veterans who hold senior positions within the NSW Police hierarchy (see Table 6, below, for brief descriptions of interview participants).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stuart, 40</td>
<td>A high ranking official in the NSW Police hierarchy with eighteen years’ service, many of which were in licensing in prominent city commands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ned, 28</td>
<td>A former general duties (GD) officer of two years standing who has now worked a further two years in the drug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{64}\) Significant effort was made to recruit female officers throughout the data collection period. Unfortunately, only one female (Carly) accepted the various invitations to participate. To compensate for the lack of female officers present in the research sample, more time was given to Carly’s interview to ensure that content was thoroughly covered in at least one case.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Experience/Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>A former GD officer of three and a half years standing who has worked in the Operational Support Group (OSG) on city tasks and is now a detective in a Sydney suburb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derrick</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>A senior officer in a prominent city command with sixteen years’ service in a range of roles including GD, detective work, and a number of street/plain clothes/community policing units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carly</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>A junior female officer with three years’ experience working in GD at a prominent city command.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trent</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>A detective with six years’ experience working in GD, drug squad and specialised operations in a city command.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>A senior licensing officer with twenty three years’ experience in a number of prominent city commands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>An officer with six years’ experience working in GD at a prominent city command.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>A junior officer with twelve months’ experience working at a prominent city command.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alf</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>A retired officer who worked for the State Crime Commission for twenty years until the early 1990s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By conducting interviews across this spectrum of experience, greater insight can be made into operational strategies and policy directives, as well as perceptions of their efficacy from the ‘coal-face’. The first section of this chapter will feature an analysis of the perceived and actual levels of risk with which members of the NSW Police are confronted while working in the NTE, and an examination of the reasons why interviewees believe the city after dark is such a difficult occupational domain. Also critical to this discussion will be an exploration of changing trends in policing recruitment standards and the influence of these changes on policing cultures, practices, and the broader occupation.

Following on from this analysis, the second section of this chapter will examine forms of occupational nostalgia that emerged from various interviews conducted with members of the NSW Police. Similar to the nostalgia presented by members of the private security industry, this section will focus on themes of respect/disrespect and on widespread officer desires for a less-regulated occupation in which discretion can be applied with minimal official intervention. Again, these desires indicate the persistence of a workplace culture that contradicts official reforms aimed to ensure work discipline and to limit public complaints about police. The third section of this chapter will discuss NSW Police policy concerning the policing of the NTE in Sydney. It will investigate police views on operational strategies currently employed to curb problematic behaviour in nightlife settings, as well as their implications for the overall dynamics of ‘policing’ in the city after dark. Central to this examination will be an analysis of the contradictions and ambiguities surrounding police management and those working at street level. Here, official claims of success are rejected by general duties and operational officers, who claim that short-sightedness and over-politicisation of serious public and crime issues is further compromising police legitimacy and providing momentary, ‘band-aid’ solutions to longstanding problems.

The last section of this chapter will analyse police views regarding the role of private security in the policing of the NTE. Beyond this analysis will be an exploration of the
vexed relationship between the two major forces engaged in the policing of nightlife. Of particular focus will be an investigation of the ambivalence that police hold about ‘bouncers’ and their position as the most prominent and vital policing presence within the environment of after-dark leisure precincts.

**A Note on Access to NSW Police**

It is well established that policing organisations have traditionally been very difficult research settings (Fox and Lundman 1974; Punch 1993; Dixon 1999; McGovern 2011). In the ‘post-corruption’ era where police transparency and accountability are promoted as central to the cause of ‘professionalisation’, there exists a culture that is still largely resistant to outside access. Much of this difficulty is due to an inherent suspicion regarding ‘outsiders’ who are often perceived as a threat to the police (Reiner 2000; Silverman 2001). Dixon (1999: 94) supports this view when remarking on the need for administrative openness, stating:

> [openness] continues to be a problem in Australian police services: some officers still apparently believe that the sky will fall if...researchers have access to the institution. It finds expression, not so much in flat refusals to cooperate, but rather in seemingly endless swamps of bureaucracy and responsibility-shifting.

This resistance was certainly experienced in attempting to gain access to members of the NSW Police for this thesis. The nature of this research, including participation from members of the NSW Police active within nightlife precincts, has presented unique challenges in relation to participant access for the researcher. Central to these challenges is the fact that this research project is very topical and highly politicised. Subsequently, the NTE, issues of alcohol-related violence and matters of policing in nightlife precincts, receive a great deal of media attention (see Chapter Five). This attention exerts significant pressure on both the NSW Police and the private security
industry. As a result, many within NSW Police and the security industry have been hesitant to go ‘on record’ about issues that are critical to this research. While many of these concerns were placated by guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality, a number of prospective participants declined access simply because they feared an institutional backlash for speaking to an outsider. However, as McGovern (2011) noted about her experience attempting to research the NSW Police Media Unit, many of the issues faced in terms of access with the NSW Police are themselves a source of information about the institution of the police in contemporary society.

This resistance provides further evidence of the shifting nature of police in contemporary society. Increasingly aware and concerned with public image and the politics of public opinion, police fear exposure to independent sources that are outside of direct control. This extended wariness regarding ‘outsider’ research and reporting is now apparent in all ranks, including new and young recruits. Police are generally suspicious of outside judgment and often block or limit research. This distrust is even more extensive in the sensitive atmosphere of post-Wood commission NSW Police and also in relation to forms of work about which there is much public division and disagreement. The policing of a NTE filled with venues that encourage private profits through substantial alcohol consumption and the dependence of the NSW state on the resulting tax revenue is a striking example of a contentious area of policing with much public, political and media division. Accordingly, members of NSW Police seem to be even more reticent to be subject to researcher scrutiny. The following section will analyse interview material concerning the experiences of policing Sydney’s NTE and the themes of risk and danger that emerged from the data.

**The Night-time Economy, Risk and Policing**

Aspects of security and policing in the NTE are of concern as a source of potential political embarrassment and occupational weakness for serving police officers. A full-page article written in 2011 and appearing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Humphries
2011:6) reported that 564 members of NSW Police were assaulted in alcohol-related confrontations between 2009 and 2010. The article, titled *Punch Drunk and Looking for Answers*, concerned itself with the high number of violent alcohol-related assaults that occur in NSW on a yearly basis. Supported by a selective use of statistics from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Humphries’ article highlighted the violent nature of Sydney’s NTE and the problems that this created for police. According to the article, one particularly problematic development relating to assaults in NSW is the increasing ferocity of violence and the growing prevalence of weapon use among offenders.

It appears that the media discourse of danger and risk in the NTE, as well as from private security, spills over into concern with direct threats to the well being of police. Members of the NSW Police interviewed as part of this research mirrored many of the concerns presented in Humphries’ article. Police officers frequently presented the NTE as a difficult and risky domain which represents a major occupational threat. Central to these concerns was the risk/threat of physical violence that one faced in the “bedlam” (Stuart) of the NTE. Many of the interviewees who worked in general duties, or were at a level in which they were still heavily involved in operational duties in nightlife areas, had experienced significant physical violence and verbal abuse. Trent, a detective who has previously spent time in general duties at the city’s Rocks command, recalled the following:

*(I’ve) had a few huge, serious matters... I’ve broken my hand, and been punched in the face by drunk people who can’t control their alcohol. One incident in particular was at a nightclub, which got shut down last year... Sketchy place... And it used to be well-renowned for RSA [responsible service of alcohol[^65]] being just out the window... And this particular night, we went there, and there were- not*

[^65]: RSA guidelines set out the legal requirements governing the service of alcohol in NSW. RSA training is a requirement of all staff working in licensed premises. The general topics covered by the RSA guidelines concern the sale and service of alcohol; the signs of intoxication in patrons; and the strategies and legal responsibilities for dealing with problematic and intoxicated revellers.
exaggerating, there were eighteen year old kids vomiting on the dance floor, and the bouncers weren’t doing anything. So we got called there because there’d been a stabbing. Guy got glassed, and another guy got stabbed. And so we got there, and we were dealing with that. And then whilst we were there, a guy was arguing with his dad or his uncle or something... Anyway, he was a big boy – twice the size of me and my partner – and he started trying to punch on, so we tried to stop him, and he turned on us, and my partner tried spraying him [with capsicum spray]- this guy just put his head down... and it turned into a massive all-in brawl. We were getting punched from a whole bunch of people in the crowd behind us...it was pretty intense.

Similar incidents involving intoxicated night revellers were recounted by other interviewees and each recollection underlined the inherent risks associated with police work in nightlife spaces. Many of the officers conveyed a sense of fear about volatile and dangerous situations arising in the city after dark that mirrored the experiences and feelings of security staff discussed in the previous chapter. Almost all officers interviewed detailed episodes in which they had been placed under extreme physical duress by drunk and drug affected patrons, often resulting in personal injury. While some passed these off as simply “part of the job” (Jarred), it was clear that others were deeply affected by the constancy of violence and physical risk:

You just really get sick of it, it is relentless...you can’t avoid it, not a chance. That’s one of the things about working in the city, you know that this is what you will face every single night. Some people aren’t bothered by it, but really, when you have done it for a while, it starts to get to you, like it’s always in the back of your mind...[you are always thinking] is this the time someone is going to pull a knife or something like that. (Jason)
According to Derrick, a senior officer in a prominent city command, these risks have a flow-on effect regarding the attrition rate of police working in city commands:

*I think it has quite a high mortality [sic] rate on police in those areas because it’s very...physically tasking, and it’s draining as well. I mean, psychologically, when you’re dealing with angry people and violent confrontations every Friday and Saturday night, at least once or twice an evening, it has a physiological and psychological effect on the police who have to do it. There’s no doubt about that. The burn-out rate in the city and the CBD I think is far greater than anywhere else.*

(Derrick)

Here, the frequency of violence and abuse with which city-based police are confronted has a significant influence on the sustainability of policing numbers. Beyond this claim, it was also stated that city officers tend to hold an occupational jealousy towards their suburban colleagues, resenting (often long) travel times to and from the city.\(^\text{66}\) Subsequently, senior police interviewed claimed that city commands are typically very junior, something that compounds issues of safety and risk for officers charged with policing such critical areas and places increased pressure on the remaining senior staff. Senior officers interviewed regarded this lack of experience as the biggest problem facing NSW Police in the fight to effectively regulate the behaviour of revellers in Sydney’s NTE:

*[It’s] the biggest problem I can see for the Central Met: you’ve got the high incidence of activity which needs strong policing, experienced policing, and large numbers of police with experience...but...everyone is very, very junior. Nobody really knows what they’re doing. And when they do finally cotton [sic] on to what it’s all about, they want to get out and go somewhere a bit quieter...make a bit

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\(^\text{66}\) This is a familiar problem for many public service workers whereby inner-city gentrification makes housing largely cost-prohibitive.
more money like their mates who are doing the same job but without all the stresses of the city...so retention is a big issue. (Derrick)

High turnover is now a general feature of state policing as an occupation. Consequently, there is a very limited historical memory of former police practices, but it seems likely that in the “Darlo Days”, the dominant period of central CIB detectives in places like Kings Cross prior to anti-corruption reforms, a higher number of senior and middle aged officers would have been attracted to the many corrupt opportunities around liquor licensing, gambling, vice and prostitution in the inner city.

The majority of police interviewed presented the emergence of the ’24-hour city’ in relation to liquor venues as the underlying cause of the majority of issues facing Sydney’s NTE. Stuart, a veteran of sixteen years in NSW Police, a high number of which have been in licensing, suggested that since the introduction of 24-hour licensing there had been a proliferation of venues in Sydney which had created a more problematic environment for NSW Police:

(When) we went to full 24 hours...that was just the city in bedlam, where it didn't matter where you were in the city, you could always get a drink...extended trading times means more intoxication. If people say they'll just get their alcohol from bottle shops and drink in parks, drink in the home: all those issues can be managed like that. But when you have a large group of people that are all consuming intoxicating liquor in a confined environment, it leads to disaster...There's never a good drink after midnight. (Stuart)

The high density of licensed venues, particularly in nightlife precincts such as Kings Cross, George Street and Oxford Street, places considerable strain on both police resources and officers themselves, with the number of revellers who visit Sydney
nightlife hotspots frequently registering around six thousand per hour (City of Sydney Council 2011). In a report into the relationship between liquor outlet density and alcohol-related neighbourhood problems, Donnelly et al (2006) found that people who live in areas with a high concentration of venues were more likely to experience and report problems related to drunkenness and associated disorder. Similarly, a report by Burgess and Moffatt (2011) found evidence that increasing outlet density in Sydney had a significant effect on the incidence of alcohol-related violence. They concluded that, on average, each additional alcohol outlet per hectare in Sydney results in an additional 4.5 assaults per annum. David, a senior licensing officer who has worked in almost every prominent city command, further supports this claim:

...one of the biggest challenges and obstacles is the amount of premises...(in) the Rocks, there’s over four hundred licensed premises. City Central has up nearly four hundred. Kings Cross has – I think they’ve got about two fifty or two sixty premises now, it’s the sheer volume. So...that in itself poses quite a considerable obstacle. Because- there is such a small window of opportunity in terms of the issues at licensed premises, and generally speaking, our issues occur between 12am and 3am...So, in that three hour period, for us to look at, assess and evaluate the operation of our problem-premises is quite difficult, when we have so many of them. If you had one or two, that’s easy. You could be there at the big times, and having a good look, making sure they’re doing things right. And, you know, doing all those things which assist the premises in reducing their problems. But in the CBD, I’ve always found it so difficult [because] there’s so many premises, and it makes it quite hard to really keep on top of all of them. (David)

The challenges of policing expanded nightlife precincts involve both the increased density of venues and the temporal dynamics of alcohol-related disorder. Here, the concentration of violent incidents exacerbates pressures on the limited corporeal resources of the various city-based commands. In the NSW Police Strength Statement released in August 2012, it was reported that between the four major city-based
commands (City Central, Kings Cross, Surry Hills and The Rocks) there were 604 assigned officers. This number is three higher than the number of officers authorised for these commands, presumably meaning the major commands are slightly above their allocated numbers. However, another document released by the NSW Police Human Resources Office is more telling. The Operational Capacity statement lists the number of officers working in full-time equivalent positions and excludes the police who are suspended, on long term sick leave (i.e. those hurt on duty, on worker’s compensation, or on sick leave that is not work-related), are on extended leave, maternity leave or leave without pay, and those who are on external secondment. While the Rocks was operating above capacity at 102%, all three of the major remaining city-based commands were functioning below 100%. The lowest operational capacity of the three, Kings Cross LAC, was running at 94%, while City Central and Surry Hills were running at 96% and 95%.

Chris stated that the lack of resources and strain on personnel has a marked influence on the efficacy of policing, arguing that limited resources and police numbers in the city contribute significantly to problems of public disorder in Sydney’s nightlife areas:

> There’s times where we have heaps of jobs outstanding... You’ll have like, you know, five city cars off at a brawl; all these other jobs are happening but you can’t do anything. And there might be five cars involved in one arrest, and that might be half of your GD staff for the night... And you can’t really do too much about it, you’ve just got to do what you can....there’s not a lot of GDs in the city on the weekend. You get smashed, and you get back at 7am in the morning at the end of your shift, and you’ve got like five or six jobs to write up that you did during the night. And you know, you’d end up coming in the next day on your own time to get it done. Because, you know, the last thing you want to do is overtime, to sit there for a few hours with your head fucked. (Chris)

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67 The breakdown of the major city-based LAC numbers is as follows: City Central (199); Kings Cross (146); Surry Hills (162) and The Rocks (97) (NSW Police 2012).
There is an interesting reference here to additional work pressures created by a new adherence to guidelines for recording incidents, something that might be favoured by senior officers in their efforts to justify further resources claims, but is generally disliked by general duties officers who do not see a large amount of “paperwork” (often in digital form) as real policing. Indeed, according to a study by Donnelly et al (2007: 17-18) into the short term costs of policing alcohol-related crime in NSW, police spend an average of 2.2 hours dealing with a single alcohol-related assault and an average of 1.65 hours completing paperwork for such offences. Paperwork specific to dealing with licensed premises took even longer, with an average of 3.36 hours spent per incident. The above quote, referencing both the physical and psychological demands of working in a city command, returns to Derrick’s comment about the strain on city-based officers. There is also a degree of fatalism in Chris’s words that reflects a common sentiment held by officers. Carly, a junior female officer, shares similarly pessimistic views about the ability of the police to manage nightlife disorder to their level of satisfaction:

*It’s very frustrating. There’s nothing you will ever be able to do to stop it. Nothing. Absolutely nothing...I mean, you throw one idiot out of a club and there’s always going to be a thousand more. There’s nothing going to stop people from fighting, there’s nothing going to stop them from drinking too much...yeah. Even these lock-outs, it’s just...what’s the point of having a lock-out? Everyone’s just going to pile onto the street and punch each other. It’s just going to move the problem back an hour, or whatever. Every time I go to something at a licensed premises where there’s drunk people, I just...it’s so frustrating and annoying, trying to deal with people who are drunk, and they’re just...you can’t reason with them. It’s annoying. (Carly)*

Here, there is another division of views between police management and junior officers. At the coalface there is less or little faith in prevention measures and planning that appear to be central to the beliefs and careers of senior staff and policy makers. Accordingly, Carly asserts that violence, while seemingly a natural occurrence, will persist if very late trading is the norm.
The fatalism reflected in the above excerpt closely parallels the experience of UK police officers depicted in Winlow and Hall’s (2006) work on violent urban cultures in Britain. In Sydney, as in the United Kingdom, many general duties officers working at street level seemed resigned to the continuation of alcohol-related violence. Trent associates the lack of resources and capacity to effectively police nightlife settings with a rise in levels of risk to the public: “as a State Police, we’re really under resourced...We’re overwhelmed with work in all areas. And at whose expense? The public’s”. These claims are significant as it seems that the dramatic imagery about an out of control nightlife position the NTE as a type of mirror of a range of occupational grievances about different aspects of policing that are ostensibly unsupported by politicians.

Many senior officers also make the dubious claim that contemporary Sydney is a far more violent city than in the past. According to an interview with Stuart, this claim is validated by the alleged increasing ferocity of violent altercations that occur within the night-time settings of pubs and clubs in Sydney’s nightlife precincts:

I noticed back then [1990’s], alcohol-related violence was quite accepted, and on top of that too, it wasn't as violent. Um...And that’s not a broad statement, it's actually a factual statement. We can see that now, because...and slowly, over my policing career, where we attend brawls or we attend fights at licensed premises, where two people are intoxicated: by the time we get down there, it’s finished and they're having a beer. They’re laughing about it, one’s come off better than the other, and when that bloke’s fallen down, they've picked him up. Now when we attend, the bloke’s on the ground, covered in blood and has a glass smashed through his face. They’re different extremes where sixteen years ago – or even ten years ago – when someone was involved in a pub incident, especially in a licensed premises, the first thing they would do is protect their beer. They’d move their beer or their drink, and make sure their wallets and everything was fine, and then they’d be involved in the altercation. Didn’t happen all the time, but most of the time. Now we see that the beer is a weapon of choice...And on top of that too, when people
fall down, they don’t let them stay down. They kick them and they jump on their head: really severe violence. (Stuart)

Stuart makes a contradictory claim that violence in the past was less harmful but more accepted. He gives yet another apocryphal story about men fighting and then afterwards forgiving and sharing drinks, which are common for anyone conducting research on the NTE to have to hear about. These claims are not only at odds with statistical evidence of an almost doubling of police recorded violent crime between 1990 and 2001 (Ringland and Baker 2009), but also ethnographic research conducted in Sydney by Tomsen in 1989 that clearly showed widespread violence around licensed venues that frequently resulted in injury. Stuart’s reference to the “acceptance” of alcohol-related violence seems to allude to periods of complacency and inaction concerning drunken violence and fits uneasily with his alarm about contemporary levels of violence. While changes in reporting, recording and definitions of certain offences make it difficult to reach a definitive conclusion about the validity of his claims about the severity of violence, long term, state-wide, trends in ‘violent crime’ produced by BOCSAR do indicate real increases in recorded violence. However, any declarations about rises in serious violent crime must be viewed with a degree of scepticism. While violent crime levels in NSW more than doubled between 1990-2007 (Mofatt and Poynton 2006; Ringland and Baker 2009), a number of major changes, including the introduction of the Computerised Operational Policing System (COPS) in 1994 which digitised police reporting procedures and the introduction of legislation requiring mandatory reporting of child abuse, have all inflated crime statistics. Further evidence that supports a wariness in accepting these claims is the statistic that between 1990 and 2007 recorded cases of less serious assaults (i.e. those not involving weapons) increased at a greater rate than more serious recorded assaults. During this period police assault records also included a greater proportion of less serious matters, and victimisation rates shown in crime surveys increased at a greater rate than hospitalisations for assault. Further, there have been

68 Violent offences, as defined by BOCSAR, include murder, assault - domestic violence related, assault - non-domestic violence related, assault police, robbery without a weapon, robbery with a firearm, robbery with a weapon not a firearm, sexual assault and indecent assault / act of indecency / other sexual offences.
real increases in use of surveillance systems on particular premises that have improved levels of recording and reporting (Ringland and Baker 2009: 8). More relevant statistics, including assault rates involving weapons such as knives, also show declining incidence. It is also worthy of note that major violent crime categories such as homicide, attempted murder and manslaughter have all declined or remained stable over the same period (BOCSAR 2010). A key element of the above discourse, however, is the presence of nostalgia that mirrors the sentiments expressed by doorstaff.

The contradiction between official recorded statistics and police discourse concerning violence is not surprising given the ‘siege mentality’ that is often perpetuated by both the police and media in relation to violence and disorder in the NTE. These perceptions add apparent weight to political claims that law and order is under threat. As noted above, a further difficulty of dealing with this problematic social environment is the fact that the physical requirements for recruitment into the NSW Police have been changed to adapt to contemporary society. Initially, these changes were promoted in the late 1970s and early 1980s against the backdrop of the second wave Women’s Movement (Nixon, 1991) and, later, under the direction of Police Minister John Avery as a response to the Anti-Discrimination Act (NSW) 1977 (Sutton 1996). As noted earlier, the anti-discrimination legislation and progressive police administration set about transforming NSW Police into a more inclusive ‘service’ that was removed from the hyper-masculine image that had long dominated perceptions of the state police. However, police interviewees suggest that one outcome of this transformation is that many police no longer have the physical capital to satisfy many of the corporeal demands of regulating unruly and violent intoxicated bodies:

*Back before I joined...there was a physical requirement. You had to be a certain height, 178 cm, with a certain chest measurement and certain weight. Certainly the physical agility test was a fair bit harder as well...the type of person who’d join the police was hallmarked as a big, solid male. And that’s all completely changed. They dropped all that. And the number of women coming in increased dramatically,*
different cultures as well, different ethnicities came into it, and so because of that you’ve got someone who’s a lot smaller in size, and it is an equaliser. Sure, we all use voice control and that’s your first port of call, but at the end of the day that’s not going to make a difference. (Derrick)

In a similar claim to what is contradictorily said to have occurred in the private security industry (as was discussed in the previous chapter), anti-discrimination legislation in relation to recruitment is seen to limit the physical capacity of police and to produce greater risk to officers in nightlife settings. Along with changes to the physical requirements of bodily size, more women were accepted to operational roles with NSW Police following the legislative changes made in the late 1970s, and Derrick maintains that the abandonment of rigid body-size and fitness standards has been an “equaliser” in terms of the embodied risk facing the occupation. Surprisingly, the female officer interviewed for this study supported this viewpoint. Carly admitted to the physical difficulties of performing regular police tasks, particularly in nightlife settings where belligerent and intoxicated patrons are frequently dismissive of her official authority:

It’s very hard to stand your ground as a female. I’m quite small. A lot of people don’t take me seriously. I find I have to, sort of, get more aggressive or more assertive towards these people in order for them to think that I’m being serious with them. I find that if I’m with a guy partner, generally they’ll listen to him more than listen to me, even if the male officer is junior to me. Yeah. It’s frustrating, but that’s the way it is. People still don’t like the fact that there are female police officers telling them what to do. I mean, a lot of the time I’m much younger than these people. And I’m telling them what to do, they don’t like it at all. They won’t listen to me...[and] obviously I don’t have the physical strength to control somebody four times my size. I just hope my partners are there to help me, but obviously they’re not always there, so I need to obviously use something else to subdue them. I find I’m justified in using most things [weapons], apart from my gun, obviously, just because I have no other way of controlling them. (Carly)
There are a number of issues in Carly’s quote that require unpacking. Firstly, as outlined in the previous chapter, in the space of pubs, clubs and bars, physical prowess is a respected commodity. As with doorstaff, it seems that for police official and legislated authority is rarely respected without physical presence. Carly states that her lack of size and embodied competence force her to “get more aggressive” when seeking compliance from unruly revellers. As a result of her lack of physical capacity, Carly feels justified in using her lesser weaponry when dealing with larger males in nightlife settings. From these statements it is possible to associate adoption of recent developments in police technology and gadgetry as a direct result of the decreasing size and strength of officers. As previously stated, these changes have coincided with an increasing focus on projecting might and potency through the transformation of police style and image. In nightlife spaces, almost all police officers now regularly patrol in semi-paramilitary style uniforms, complete with utility vests that hold a new array of non-and less-lethal appointments, including capsicum spray, extendable batons and taser guns (see Figure 5 on pg. 105 for example of the new uniforms). Officers also now regularly patrol in larger groups to exert an image of intimidation and united strength. Jacob, a constable of six years’ service in general duties, stated that the increased numbers in city patrols also serves to limit the risks to officers:

*We do have different strategies in the city, because there’s a lot more people condensed in one area, and obviously it’s a higher risk...you do go in with more people. It might seem more intimidating, but it’s more of a safety concern for the officers involved...most drunks don’t really know what they’re doing and they’ll strike out at us...so [the higher police numbers] it’s a bit of self-preservation thing. (Jacob)*

This practice is a real problem for ongoing grassroots surveillance and policing as it stretches physical resources. The fear driven insistence on large groups of police for the purposes of safety limits many opportunities for watching and policing by single dispersed officers, thereby decreasing the capacity of police to regulate urban nightlife
spaces effectively. There is a real belief that many of the difficulties police face in nightlife spaces are an outcome of social change, and this is reflected in a nostalgia for a past in which policing troublesome revellers was much easier than it is in contemporary Sydney. The following section will explore this law and order nostalgia and the implications it has for the future of policing practice.

**Law and Order Nostalgia**

Adding to the difficulty and risk of police work in the NTE is the perception that the public are less respectful towards members of the NSW Police and are more likely to “act out” (Stuart) violently against officers as a result. Throughout almost all the interviews conducted, interviewees made reference to a disrespectful/disreputable public. However, it was claimed that this disrespect was a recent phenomenon that was borne out of a reduction in police “authority” (Chris):

*Police don’t have the authority we used to. We used to – like, we’ve got the powers, but back in the day, I guess they used to go beyond their powers...[in] dealing with things. And people kind of knew that, and they respected that to a certain extent. But now these days, obviously there’s cameras everywhere in the city. Police are a lot more careful in what they do, and how they treat people...Which is, I guess, a good thing, but in certain situations, you could do with that bit of respect. Because at the moment, we don’t really have any respect. People just [call us] “Pigs! Dogs!” Every day, you know...Even decent people on the weekend on the piss, in the city, especially if they’re with a group, they’ll do the whole, “Pigs!” thing...[But if they did] that same thing, like, probably thirty years ago...a cop would probably go up to them, take them around the corner and give them a slap. And they’d probably be crying, and say sorry, and that’d be the end of it. These days, they do it [yell abuse]; five metres down the road, next group of people do it; next few people do it. It kind of affects your...I guess your...Um...Your appearance to the public...It puts us down.*
Like, no one really cares about the cops, but that image it gives us to all the other drunks, you know, they just don’t care, they have no respect. (Chris)

Just as with security, this nostalgia is not about real “respect”, but about longing for a capacity to intimidate with violence. The above anecdote is extraordinary for its discussion of an exemplary illegal bashing as a form of good policing that police have supposedly ‘lost’ the authority to perform. In a similar vein to bouncer nostalgia, this police nostalgia reveres a past in which the arbitrary application of rough justice was the norm and sanctions for physical interventions were non-existent. Other officers wished to be afforded the licence to “give ‘em [drunks and non-compliant revellers] a clip across the ears” (Jacob) to establish order and to assert authority. Again, there is a highly gendered component to these desires. Public ridicule and humiliation, which compromise masculine status, can be overcome by acts of real or threatened violence towards the offending parties. However, increased surveillance and institutional restrictions on physical intervention are stressed as significant factors in fuelling this widespread public attitude of disrespect. Subsequently, disrespect is alleged to detract from compliance and further increase the likelihood of altercation between members of the public and police, as Stuart explains:

Now, and you see this across the board, is that even if it's a small brawl, or just in a pub – people are more likely to have a swing at you. If you do grab them on the arm, and they don’t know who you are, they’re more likely to turn around and swing. And on top of that too, if they do see blue uniforms, they are more likely to stand up to authority...[T]heir respect for authority has gone down. (Stuart)

The alleged lack of respect afforded to officers is intertwined with concern about a general decline in moral standards in contemporary society. Adding to levels of frustration from within the police, officers are routinely told that they should expect to receive obscene verbal taunts when on the beat:
I get a lot of disrespect. I’m meant to take swearing and abuse, and told that I’m a slut, and what not, and I’m meant to take that just because I’m a female police officer. I should be used to it, apparently. That seems crazy to me, we were always taught to respect the police growing up, but that’s not how it is now. (Carly)

There have always been groups who detest and are in conflict with the police, but the challenge to those working in nightlife spaces is that such behaviour is more common in a developed NTE setting. As a further catalyst for police frustration, the expectation of acceptance of abuse that Carly references now has legal precedent. In 2005, high profile NSW magistrate Pat O’Shane dismissed charges of offensive conduct against a drunken man who swore at police, calling them “fucking pigs”. She claimed that there were no longer “community standards” governing such behaviour and that such profanity was not offensive and was “to be expected” late at night (Clifton 2005). While this decision was a landmark ruling, a more important consideration is that the ability to charge many people with a range of minor public order offences including obscene language has long been attractive to police. This history can be seen in the high level of political mobilisation against the Wran Labor Government over short-lived changes to summary offences legislation in the 1970s. At the same time, this criminalisation of swearing appears to be unfairly targeted at working-class and indigenous communities and sits oddly with the very high level of use of profanity often observed in police workplaces.

The frustrations of members of the police are very similar to those shared by bouncers. The nature of complaints from the police almost identically mirror those voiced by private security personnel: levels of respect and nostalgia for a less-regulated and surveilled job in which discretionary application of ‘justice’ could be summarily administered free from potential reprimand and/or legal sanction. However, these similarities are rarely acknowledged in discussions with both parties. Very few of those interviewed for this research reflected or even commented on the shared difficulties of their occupation. Indeed, this lack of acknowledgement is symptomatic of the
dysfunction of the “policing family” that will be discussed further later in this chapter (see Johnston 2003).

Policy, Politics and Frustration from the Street

Police policy concerning the regulation of nightlife in Sydney is a source of frustration and confusion for operational officers. The lack of coherence and lasting application of various strategic and regulatory initiatives has left many general duties police officers disillusioned with police management, believing that policy direction is based more on law and order politics and media driven panics than true concerns about crime problems. Ned, a former general duties officer in a city command, said the chopping and changing of squad focus was like “following a bouncing ball”, leaving officers frustrated and confused about their roles as media and political pressures constantly “swayed” policing focus:

At the end of the day, that’s contemporary policing. It’s very short-sighted. I think probably since the [Wood] Royal Commission, that’s what we’ve been focusing on...it’s very politically and media influenced, our strategies towards things, and even, say, having a Media Unit now. I know that most stations use them when we do a big job, or a big job’s coming up. That’s the first person they call...it’s frustrating. Things like Operation Unite – I guess it frustrating for someone like me, because it takes people off the truck, [gives us] more paperwork to do, and you know it will be all over once the headlines die down. (Ned)

With media and political pressure on particular crimes, Trent and Derrick both indicated that police resources are constantly shifting for brief periods to placate public concerns. In what they describe as “knee-jerk” reactions, policing agendas can be seen to address public perceptions and fear of crime, rather than addressing underlying factors or engaging in long-term strategy. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that
coinciding with the changing approach of policing organisations has been a parallel development of more sophisticated forms of structural control, seen in the example of the NTE through increasing industry and drinking regulations via liquor accords, RSA standards and increasingly stringent venue licensing conditions. It appears that the hidden form of these new controls by audit is behind the need for a far more public and spectacular depiction of police activity. This spectacle is also, to some extent, an unintended acknowledgement of the impossibility of full and sustainable control of public order in urban nightlife spaces.\footnote{69}

\textit{In order to take the focus off themselves and [show] that they’re doing something-they [police commanders] just do it [change strategic focus] with a knee jerk reaction, and that’ll satisfy the public. And I mean, we did get some resources to investigate particular crimes, but for a short period of time, other categories were forgotten about entirely. (Trent)}

\textit{On the street level, we see the reaction – you’ll have a particularly bad Friday or Saturday night in the city. Borne out of that is suddenly Operation Unite...[P]olice are very good at knee jerk reactions, absolutely! That’s what Operation Unite is, it’s a knee jerk reaction to political pressure and pressure from the media. Absolutely. (Derrick)}

Once again, interviewees who referred to staffing suggest that a key part of this problem is the turnover of commanders in city-based commands and what they claim is the very demanding nature of this type of law enforcement:

\footnote{69 The dramatic NTE police initiatives might also be seen as a counterbalance to the local Sydney police force’s inability to fully deal with several examples of high-profile crime, including the startling ‘bikie gang’ brawl and killing that occurred at the crowded domestic airport terminal (Welch, Kennedy and Harvey 2009), the spate of one hundred plus ‘drive-by’ shootings in Western Sydney (Ralston and Kwek 2012) and the ongoing problem with ‘ram raids’ in the CBD (Gardiner 2012; van den Broeke 2012).}
...With police, there’s a high turnover rate for commanders as well as region commanders. I’ve been there [working in one city command] four years, and we’ve had six region commanders at least. Everyone’s got their own idea of the perfect business plan, and what they’re going to do. The direction keeps changing and it keeps going like that. (Derrick)

While it is not explicitly stated in the above quote, other conversations with Derrick, Stuart and David indicated that running city stations places local commanders under considerable pressure, with their managerial direction being heavily scrutinized by police leaders and media sources. Failing to produce “positive” outcomes (generally and rather simplistically understood in the form of quantified declining crime rates) can feed turnover of senior staff and prompt more uncertainty about policy direction:

It’s all stats-driven now...There’s an expectation now that apart from dealing with the first response core work, there’s also now corporately built in quotas...or maybe...benchmarks for interactions with the public...They’re trying to achieve a certain outcome by coming up with some sort of a system by which to achieve that, but ultimately, at the end of the day, if you speak to the people in the hospitals, the A&E, the nurses and people where these people who are victims of alcohol-related assaults come in, I don’t know if it’s having an effect...What I basically think has happened is that it’s not affecting the outcome, the end result, too much at all, but it’s giving a perception that it’s driving it down, and it’s making police look like we’re doing more. (Derrick)

Large-scale operations like Unite, in which all of the current officers interviewed had been involved, were particularly frustrating to interviewees as they were seen to be reflective of a cycle of police politics that favours media-friendly and symbolic operations as opposed to more sustainable crime prevention:
...[so what] we did was saturate the areas [of the city deemed to be “out of control”], and it didn’t seem like anything was happening at all, in the whole city. But of course, when that happens, they think, “Well, we can’t justify putting all those police on if nothing’s happening, so we’ll take them off”. And then they take them off and shit starts happening again. So it’s a lot more...Either the cops need to make a commitment and say “Well, we will put this many police on the street every week” – but as soon as they do that, they get crime down, and they go “Well, there’s no crime happening, so we can’t justify the police,” so they pull them away, and it’s a shit cycle. I guess the superintendents or the commanders have got to justify themselves to the region and to the commissioner, and...It’s all about what happens now. I guess only short-term strategies are really in their head. I mean, they talk about long-term strategies, but I mean, they can easily be swayed. I’ve seen it- they fiddle with figures, you know what I mean? Like change an assault to an occurrence only when it suits – like if there’s no offender or no person that wants to go on with it, and so it’s an occurrence only, so they get their assault stats down. You know, and it makes the boss look good. (Chris)

The focus on reducing crime rates in NTEs encourages area commanders to alter recording practices and promote assertive policing at street level. It is on the street that police are pressed to produce complementary statistics, either up or down depending on the specific aim of a particular operation or commander (the “crackdown” versus the “solution” phases). During Operation Unite officers are charged with generating high arrest rates of drunken revellers which can then be used to promote policy efficacy in police and media reports. These practices do not only have significant implications for the legitimacy of crime statistics, but they may also alienate revellers and local communities by endorsing intimidatory methods. In the following excerpt, Trent outlines a particular example of the approach that these policing operations encourage in officers:
The problem is, cops get bored. You put them in a big group, and get them like that to saturate an area, and they create drama for themselves, because they need to create some sort of recordable outcome...You know, they’ve got to do their job. So they think, right, OK, let’s saturate it, and if there’s not enough jobs to keep us going, sometimes it can make things worse than what they were. I can remember going out in The Rocks, around the same time as Operation Unite, and I was out having [drinks] with work colleagues, so it was a bunch of cops who were out off duty, and there was a brawl in the club. We didn’t even know what it was about. So security were kicking everyone out, so we left- and as we were leaving to go outside, a bunch of about 25 cops who were there for that operation just came in there and saturating the area. Someone asked a question, “What’s going on?”. These cops came over and they started forming a riot line against us, and we- like, there’s no way we were going to cause any trouble, they were just overreacting, and I think that these sort of policies can actually cause a problem...I mean, the cops themselves need to take individual responsibility but the police themselves, they need to think about the negative effects as well as the positive ones...If you’re going to saturate cops in a certain area, I mean, I’m a cop myself and I’ve seen it plenty of times. They get...they overreact, [because] they’re being told we’ve got this problem with crime, the “war on crime”. What the fuck? The war on crime? The war on crime! We need to do something. We’re going to flog some people so they know what’s going on. Bullshit! What are you doing on the weekend? Going out and getting pissed, just like everyone else...Ridiculous. (Trent)

Trent continues by stating that part of the reason why officers engage in such antagonistic behaviour is the culture operating within the police. Here, young recruits are eager to impress their senior officers, so when they are told to tackle alcohol-related violence they do so with vigour and little individual thought as to the potential implications for the wider community and the image of the police beyond their immediate action. It is this culture of accepting what senior officers say that also contributes to the continuation of poor relations with private security. Although some officers are aware of the importance of doorstaff to the policing of nightlife spaces, the
majority of those interviewed had negative views of the work of private security staff. These perceptions are based on a mix of actual officer and colleague experiences and longstanding beliefs and prejudices that doormen are often or always hyper-aggressive “thugs” (Ned) who create more problems in the city after dark. Despite the occupational links between state and private policing, these prejudices are akin to many general public views of private security. Police feel fair-minded in holding these views, but are ironically deeply wounded if the public view them in a similar way rather than as a group upholding justice. The following section will discuss the dysfunctional qualities of the relationship between private and public police operating within Sydney’s NTE.

**Public Police and Private Security: A Dysfunctional Policing Family**

Les Johnston (2003) romantically described emerging community policing initiatives in Britain involving private security as being part of a new “extended family” of policing. It would be fair to say that, while private security numbers are ever-increasing in Sydney and their role is becoming more central to the regulation of nightlife, the relationship between public police and private security is far from harmonious. Indeed, it will be the contention of this final section that the private/public policing relationship is more akin to a dysfunctional family where each member is reluctantly accepting of the other.

Within the whole policing occupation there is an enduring distrust between the two parties. Private security guards, as discussed in the previous chapter, believe that members of the NSW Police do not respect their position and status within the NTE and are constantly undermining their authority in commercial nightlife spaces. Often feeling ‘emasculated’ by the public involvement of police in internal quarrels, bouncers clearly identify as the lesser brother in the broader policing family. On the other hand, police officers resent the heavy-handed approach frequently associated with doorstaff. Police interviewed for this thesis repeatedly asserted that private security personnel are regularly the cause of serious incidents of violence in nightlife spaces and are deserving of their reputation as troublemakers. Many of the more senior officers did suggest that
the relationship is slowly improving with “better communication” and a general “cleaning-up” (David) of the security industry. However, as with perceptions of policy, there was a marked divergence between the views of senior police leaders and street-level officers. While those who were not directly involved in day-to-day patrolling were more likely to present the relationship with private security personnel in a more positive light, speaking at length about the significant improvements the industry has made, general duties and operational officers were less glowing in their assessments. Carly spoke bluntly in the following excerpt, implicating security staff in serious acts of violence and suggesting they deliberately avoid assisting police in distress:

*They’ve been known to assault people, patrons and what not. They get a bit heavy-handed. A lot of them get in the middle of brawls, or start brawls. I find if I’m struggling with somebody on the floor, they don’t help. They’ll watch me struggle, get punched, and won’t assist me at all. I don’t think much of them, really.* (Carly)

Such actions generate a level of distrust among general duties officers who regularly have to deal with violent incidents involving patrons and security staff for which blame is uncertain. On many occasions police have arrested quarrelsome patrons on the advice of security staff before analysing surveillance data which clearly showed security as the agitators:

*…these Islanders got in a fight with security, and anyway, we arrested all of them: “No worries”. You know, “He assaulted me, he did this, he did that”. You know, “No worries, they’re under arrest”. Take them back, bring up the footage from the Council CCTV, and they’ve got bouncers pulling out batons, poles, just start assaulting these people. You know, it’s like, well…I guess they, themselves, can cause a lot of problems. And I did have another job, same kind of thing. I arrested a couple of Asians at a karaoke bar. And apparently they’d assaulted these two security guards, and punched them, and swung this pole, or some little pretty weak pole at a bouncer. I say to them “No worries, you’re under arrest”. Took statements*
from them. Next week I got footage from the building, and anyway, you see this Asian guy kicked over a bollard, and then he left. You know, yeah, “Dickhead!” But he was leaving. Security runs after him, has a word to him, you see them kind of talking, standing over him. And then you just see this Asian bloke fly on his back, and go arse-over-end, and obviously all the other Asian guys are standing over in the corner. They’ve seen it and now it’s a brawl going off. So, I mean, a lot of the security can or are a bit rough, and I think they go out of their way getting into a fight themselves. And they obviously think, you know, they’ve got it on their side too, they’re sober the patrons are drunk, who are police going to believe? (Chris)

The frequency of security involvement in episodes of violence can give a sense that doorstaff require greater regulation. Jacob contends that “while they have a job to do, a lot of the time the way they do their job increases the amount of work for us. They react to situations in a way that makes more issues than it stops. Yes, they have a big role [in policing], but they themselves need more policing”.

The new regulatory initiatives discussed in Chapter Four, which have seen Sydney nightlife venues receive calibrated punishment for violent incidents recorded against premises, have also shaped police views of security staff. Stuart contends that security staff are actively protecting venues from financial and legal sanctions by deliberately avoiding police attention:

> Security guards are rectifying assaults and brawls themselves, sending people home in a taxi with vouchers, telling them to come back in next day, bribing them off with food, accommodation, drinks, so it doesn’t go reported, and it doesn’t come up on the stats. (Stuart)
The highly touted regulatory mechanisms employed in NSW since 2008 have repeatedly been claimed as successful due to improvements of the measured performance of listed venues. Yet there are serious flaws in cases where not all parties are working towards the same goal. The commercial imperatives of the licensed venues can trump the greater community good for bouncers and it is unlikely that this issue will be resolved while operators heavily favour financial interests over social concerns.

**Conclusion**

The role of the public police has been fundamentally altered in contemporary society. Central to this change has been the pluralisation of policing and the increased role of private security in performing functions traditionally undertaken by state-based agencies. Changes in the nature of police recruitment have reduced the traditional stress on authority based on an imposing bodily capital, and state-based police agencies have increasingly turned to new paramilitary styling to project strength and impose greater presence in public spaces. At the same time, the relationship between police and security is left wanting in addressing disorder in the NTE. While senior police make claims about substantial improvements in public/private relations, street-level officers are less convinced. Cooperation appears largely dependent on the potential ramifications for the venue in which security staff are employed, meaning that public police and private security are often representing contrasting interests.

In what seems to be an increasing trend in the NTE and the policing of public drinking, public confidence in the police in NSW is maintained through large scale “event-like” policing operations conducted to placate public anxieties and promote a positive public image. This focus is a marked divergence from the recent community policing focus which sought to create greater communication with the public and minority groups within each local community.
As this thesis has outlined, public order offences and acts of interpersonal violence in and around sites of night-time, alcohol-based leisure have featured prominently in the social imagination as a source of great concern and anxiety. The street operations established to combat problematic issues relating to after-dark leisure appear short-sighted and essentially political. The increasing media-focus of public police agencies is seen to diminish the overall function and character of the police and leaves many less senior officers disillusioned. Moreover, the constant fluctuation of strategic direction from within the policy hierarchy is an apparent source of frustration and confusion among front line officers. Hot-spot, problem-oriented action may distort policing activity, recording and reporting, while such heavy targeting of certain minor street crime categories fosters aggressive policing that alienates police from specific communities. Especially in relation to nightlife, the officer antagonism and suspicion held towards revellers in Sydney’s city after dark will further erode any deep “respect” and strong endorsement that this research indicates so many police seek from the public.
Chapter Eight- Conclusion

Introduction

Throughout this thesis inner Sydney after dark has been presented as a place of both real and imagined risk, a ‘frontier’ (Melbin 1978) where freedom and transgression are closely linked, and where regulation has been diffused throughout an expanding network of private and state actors. While this is a local reality, there are also strong parallels with many other cities across the globe. As this thesis has shown, Sydney’s contemporary NTE is the product of an intersection of both local and globalised social, political and economic transformations. At the same time, policing has come to incorporate ‘private’ as well as ‘public’ personnel empowered to regulate drinking and nightlife.

This research brings to light the obvious contradictions of ‘policing’ a NTE that is linked to social disorder, but which also provides a significant source of income for the state economy and private sector interests. It has also engaged in an examination of the individual and collective impacts of the structure of policing and governance on police and security staff, and the role that nostalgia plays in legitimising particular attitudes and behaviour, while simultaneously extending resistance to ‘professionalisation’ within the policing sector.

Neoliberalism, Alcohol and Regulation: Contradictions in the Policing of Nightlife

The findings of this thesis suggests that the financial contribution of the NTE to the state economy of NSW ensures a vexed political response to issues of heavy drinking and violence which have been, and continue to be, a central feature of after-dark sociality in Sydney. Government and political ambivalence has limited the development and
adoption of long-term strategy regarding the policing and regulation of Sydney nightlife. With the state government so reliant on tax income generated from alcohol and gambling (gaming alone contributed around AU$1.168b between 2008 and 2009 in NSW,\textsuperscript{70} while “drink led” business is said to generate AU$425m in the City of Sydney alone (Bevan \textit{et al} 2011)), contemporary NSW nightlife continues to be marred by short-sighted policy that fails to engage fully with evidence-based measures aimed at decreasing incidents of late night, alcohol-fuelled nuisance, violence and disorder.

In addition to this political ambivalence, the influence of the media has made the application of stable regulation more difficult. Media attention surrounding Sydney’s NTE is commonly focused on major, dramatic, and often fatal incidents of night-time, alcohol-related violence in the city after dark that can muddle public understanding of real crime rates and recorded trends. As well as the traditional media class-based disapproval of working-class and youth drinking, this focus has come to depict nightlife as the very epitome of social volatility and public “spectacle” (Debord 1995) in contemporary urban existence.

Community discontent is exacerbated under the conditions of the neoliberal state, where government has retracted much of its responsibility for the provision of public services, including the role of public police, who are increasingly unable to satisfy the demand for security in the city after dark. This thesis also indicates that critical transitions made under the direction of neoliberalism have contributed to an uneven regulation and governance in nightlife spaces. In this occupational domain, the role of both public and private policing bodies is ambiguous and in constant flux. Ambivalence concerning the role and performance of private security firms in regulating nightlife ensures that a public policing presence remains necessary. However, with increasingly stretched resources, public police do not have the capacity effectively to placate social- and therefore political- concerns regarding night-time crime and disorder. This inability

\textsuperscript{70} Information sourced from the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing website. Accurate as of 9 August 2013.
has promoted the emergence and proliferation of private security providers who increasingly assume roles formerly adopted by state police.

**Policing Sydney’s Night-Time Economy: Policy and Practice**

While private security is seen as a legitimate means to combat and placate anxieties concerning the threat of interpersonal violence associated with a profitable NTE that is regulated ‘at a distance’, the discretionary nature of private security, and the perceived lack of regulation and governance of its employees, can set off public alarm. With media representations reinforcing concerns about private security employees, there continues to be a strong sense of ambivalence concerning the industry’s position as a key agent in the provision of personal safety and security in the city after dark. Although they may be well justified, negative representations of ‘bouncers’ engaging in aggressive and violent conduct further undermines efforts to bridge the divide between state-based and private policing forms. This issue is compounded by frequent references to the industry’s history of excessive violence, criminal practice and strong links with crime syndicates involved with drug dealing, extortion and stand-over tactics.

Despite the animosity and ‘disrespect’ between public police and private security that this thesis has uncovered, these concerns have sometimes also mobilised progressive political action that has stimulated legislative amendments and notable, albeit slow, improvement in operating standards within the industry. To further extend this process, media and political debate ought to move beyond the limited focus on individual wrongdoing and violence and engage in a broad analysis of the industry and the regulations that govern it. Unfortunately, however, media depictions of problem security staff working in licensed venues often only mirror perceptions of the young male and aggressive drinkers, characteristics that Christie (1986) might argue have made them more “ideal” and, consequently, more visible as a disliked ‘offending’ group.
While neoliberal policies promoting a retraction of state fiscal and operational responsibility and an increasing reliance on the private sector are evidenced in public-private policing shifts, they require public approval and support to be successful. Negative portrayals of private security inhibit support for their increasing presence. In recent times, Sydney media focus on some major individual cases of night-time violence and security behaviour has surprisingly been superseded by a more critical debate about problems of bouncer regulation and the 24-hour availability of alcohol. Intense coverage around high-profile incidents, including the death of Thomas Kelly in Kings Cross, have followed this path in that, following a period of sustained reporting on the individual incident and the issue of offender ‘thuggery’, the media attention moved on to stimulate deeper debates about the structure of nightlife in Sydney. The eventual media, political and public discourse about the Kelly case was surprising for its concern about regulatory practice. Unexpectedly, the media allowed, and indeed promoted, space for critical discussion about the structure of nightlife that moved beyond common claims regarding security and arbitrary masculine violence. While this dialogue was beneficial, it is still limited in its frequency and remains applicable only to high-profile incidents. The underlying reality is that years of ‘new’ reforms have still failed to address many issues within the private security industry located within the NTE. The results of this study and other studies suggest that attempts to curb the disorder associated with Sydney’s NTE will not work while the neoliberal profit/deregulation prerogative remains paramount. Police officers at the ‘coal face’ of Sydney nightlife seem to know this truth intuitively and are often left frustrated by the politicisation of crime control that leaves them “chasing a bouncing ball” (Ned).

For this study, there is an immediate relevance in the impact of media depictions of nightlife on policing strategy. Drawing on the need to address negative public perceptions of Sydney nightlife, NSW Police have focused on high-visibility, ‘problem-oriented’ policing strategies that produce ostensibly positive statistical and symbolic outcomes, but that alienate and marginalise nightlife revellers through frequently heavy-handed treatment of the public. Police engagement in these high-profile ‘blitzes’ can be understood as part of the legitimising process that promises to address popular
community concern and to increase public confidence. While adoption of this new approach is understandable due to the significant corruption and malpractice associated with the previous ‘closeness’ of police with licensees and other business operators in places like Kings Cross, heavily targeted but episodic policing has an alienating effect on both revellers and venue owners and operators who resent the shortcomings of regulation by auditing and listing practices.

If the police goal is a substantial and sustained reduction in offending and a major shift in public reassurance, the tangible outcomes of these approaches are questionable. Statistics from the NSW BOCSAR and survey results from the *City After Dark project* have shown that violence is generally stable rather than falling, and that members of the public place limited reliance for their own personal protection on either public police or private security.

As has been seen throughout the later chapters of this thesis, there is an obvious collision between the traditional violent masculinities of police/bouncers and some patrons in Sydney’s nightlife spaces, and the erosion of those identities by reform and regulation in contemporary Sydney. Chapter Six explored doorwork as both a job and a facility through which an aggressive masculine identity is constructed, performed and circulated. In Sydney, contemporary doorwork cultures are shaped by the industry’s history, and a revered past in which doorstaff allegedly had significant work autonomy and were also ‘respected’ by nightlife revellers. In this mythologised past, “real men” (Bill/Jerry) worked doors and were able to control their licensed venues through the discretionary application of both physical and verbal threats and, on many occasions, via acts of violence. This action was deemed necessary to stifle and control patron disorder and to limit disruption to the profits of a venue. However, changes in the scale and form of the NTE alongside increasing regulation governing the private security industry have been shown to have a notable bearing on the way in which doorwork is now conducted, with considerable contradiction existing between official claims of ‘professionalisation’ by leading industry bodies and the lived experience of those ‘working the doors’.
Resistance to formal industry change is evidenced by an occupational nostalgia and fascination with violent masculinities that were previously accommodated in a less-regulated industry. The esteem of experienced and hardened veterans has been shown to influence less-accomplished doorstaff in a way that is fuelling a partial adherence to old patterns and hostility to regulation.

It has also been argued that the growth of the NTE through expanded venue numbers, venue types and a wider social range of patrons, facilitated by the deregulation of drinking and leisure at night, has placed increased pressure on the resource pool of competent doorstaff. Police also claim that this rapid expansion has had a significant effect on their ability to provide an adequate presence in nightlife spaces. The mix of new opportunities and pressures for the private security industry has been further exacerbated by the demands of more stringent probity, training and licensing standards that have been introduced in NSW in recent years. Informants claim that those with the requisite bodily capital and aggression are being ejected from the industry. New recruits are said to be of an inferior quality and often incapable of regulating the difficult occupational challenges that doorwork presents. This “new breed” (Brendan) of doorman, often described as “soft” by industry veterans, allegedly limit the capacity of security teams to regulate the licensed environment. However, many security operators insist on the financial benefits of ‘raising the bar’ in terms of training, safety and conflict management skills. They claim that it is increasingly difficult to recruit the right guards and to have an inherent trust in staff without undermining their venue brand. The desire for responsible autonomy and the ability to somehow both aggressively control problems and also conform to more rigid regulation standards, including the serious implications of venue auditing and police listing, shows the complexities of private security work. Those in management roles argue that providing a safe and responsible security team is part of the shifting focus of the industry. Such tempered imagery sits oddly alongside an awareness that doorwork is still “dirty work” that includes hours of patrolling, guarding and the physical surveillance and rough handling of crowds. It also conflicts with the unresolved dilemmas regarding occupational change and reform that
are underneath a wavering discourse and claims about the need for violence and enforced respect.

A number of related claims are made about the relations between public police and private security personnel regarding the policing of nightlife. There is analogous deep nostalgia for a distorted past and public police argue that their role has been fundamentally eroded in contemporary society. The supposed ‘disrespect’ and lack of effective control that is seen to be ubiquitous in the NTE epitomises this claim. Central to this change has been the pluralisation of policing and the increased role of private security performing functions traditionally undertaken by state-based agencies. Here, there is a contradictory mix of irritation and relief that more and more of this work is undertaken by private operators. Despite steady privatisation, public police generally speak of the expanded late NTE as a pernicious and criminogenic social trend, and as a further drain on their organisational resources. In a similar vein to claims by security that regulatory and legislative introductions have altered the quality of employees, changes in the nature of police recruitment are said to reduce the ability of police officers to exert physical control in nightlife spaces, particularly when dealing with heavily intoxicated and quarrelsome revellers.

In response to changing staff qualities and a movement away from the traditional stress on authority based on an imposing bodily capital, state-based police have increasingly reproduced paramilitary styling to project strength and to impose greater presence in public spaces. However, alongside the focus on hard targeting of ‘hotspots’ in policing operations, this development can present a negative or even hostile picture to nightlife revellers, staff and operators, and inhibit police-community relationships. In this sense, the new means of projecting collective police strength in public night-time space could actually undermine consensual policing and the much sought after “respect” that is also so critical to officers’ sense of authority. In public policing and private doorwork, nostalgia and longing for a barely understood, idealised and, in truth, corrupt and violent past serves to reinforce resistance to change. While both local police and
security staff have had their more open licence for discretionary violence curtailed by greater regulation, older masculine notions of ‘honour’ and ‘face’ associated with aggressive self-presentation have persisted in an economic and social order that increasingly privileges non-physical forms of masculine labour. In this respect, street policing and doorwork serve as a facility through which individuals can perpetuate forms of masculinity that have lost their social/economic bases in the lives of most other men.

For all their shared experience of policing nightlife spaces, the developing relationship between police and security is still left wanting in addressing disorder in the NTE. While senior police make claims about substantial improvements in public/private relations, street-level officers are less convinced. Cooperation appears largely dependent on the potential ramifications for the venue in which security staff are employed, meaning that public police and security staff are often representing contrasting interests. There are also significant clashes of authority between the two groups. Private security staff are particularly sensitive when police encroach on their occupational domain and intervene in activities that they feel emasculates them in public. The often brittle masculinities belonging to both policing bodies can be challenged by the unwanted public presence of the other and frequently results in mistrust and animosity. This dysfunctional relationship is perhaps one of the biggest challenges to the effective governance of the city after dark. Furthermore, the tension between these views of public and private police are a small mirror of the much wider contradiction between the contemporary state’s guarantees of citizen safety, security and regulatory control and private industry’s desire for greater profits from expanded drinking and spending in a nocturnal city economy of directed and intensified consumer leisure.

**Theoretical Summations and Directions for Future Research**

There is an incommensurability between extended promotion of ‘bouncing’ and the liberal democratic ideals that modern policing was founded on: security staff are ultimately employed by commercial operators whose motives often contradict state
concerns. Door and security staff are directly accountable to their employers and understand that their job is to facilitate a relatively ‘trouble-free’ and profitable environment. Security staff often prioritise the concerns of their employers over the official regulations that govern their industry, and in so doing they may undermine state efforts to regulate dangerous consumption practices and behaviour.

Doorwork and policing can be understood as gendered structured action and as frequently shaped by the desire to project positive masculine imagery, particularly in group and public settings. Uses and threats of violence become part of the ‘performance’ of this private policing, engendering degrees of fear and respect that are highly valued ‘commodities’ within the occupation. The reverence for ‘respect’ as the unquestioned following of authority in nightlife spaces often creates a greater divide between the public police, doorstaff and nightlife community. However, in another way, this extended pluralisation of policing neatly aligns with neoliberal concepts of privatisation, load-shedding and responsibilisation, creating a further mix of advantages and challenges for government and civil society.

Key aspects of the structure of policing and the NTE can be better understood through the ethnographic prism that explores the importance of violence and masculinities to group police and private security identities. It has become apparent that there is an irony to the NTE in that the aggressive/hard masculinities on display from police, security and revellers appear to be a partial by-product from a now-defunct working class manufacturing sector. Interestingly, the NTE has become a neoliberal stage for the performative display of masculinities made redundant/surplus by the emergence of neoliberalism. In this space, the masculinities of police, security and revellers all interact perniciously to reproduce and further expand each other. This is an interesting and relevant aspect of policing and nightlife cultures that requires further research.
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