PLACING THE NATION: THE POLITICS OF SPATIAL PRODUCTION AT AUCKLAND AIRPORT AND WELLINGTON AIRPORT

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Abstract

The airport is a site that blurs spatial boundaries. While primarily functioning to move aircraft and passengers between land and air, the airport is simultaneously a complex social institution that mediates the relationship between the local and global, the public and private, and national and international space. This thesis discusses the changing nature of Auckland International Airport and Wellington International Airport as spaces that are produced through a number of historical, economic and political contexts. Using spatial, cultural and critical theory along with concepts from human geography and mobilities research, this study examines each airport as a dynamic, ongoing process of spatial relations. Central to this analysis is the understanding that space, subjectivity and technologies of power produce and reproduce each other on different scales. Drawing upon news stories, promotional material, institutional representations and popular representations of Auckland and Wellington airports, the following thesis will explore the ways in which their spaces have been imagined, produced and used over time.
Introduction

Often considered spaces emblematic of a globalised world, airports are sites that encompass a number of spatial boundaries. They interconnect the local and global, public and private, and national and international space, producing unique social spaces of institutions, companies, governments, and city councils. Yet, while airports constitute specific social systems, their main users pass through. They are spaces characterised by transience. As static structures that operate according to a logic of temporariness and spaces of flows that simultaneously hold people at a number of thresholds, airports are also spaces of contradictions.

The proliferation of air travel in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has made airports increasingly populated spaces, becoming objects of analysis for anthropologists, cultural theorists, and human geographers alike. A compelling site for studying the nature of place, the airport is often cited as an example of a ‘non-place’ characteristic of an increasingly nomadic world (Augé). Yet, despite their transitory nature, airports are increasingly being viewed by scholars as products of specific socio-historical, cultural, economic, and geopolitical contexts. They change in their meanings and uses, having been described as distinctly urban spaces (Roseau; Fuller and Harley); as celebrations of a culture of flight (Adey, “Air-mindedness”); as environments of authorities (Kellerman); and spaces of governmentality (Salter, “Governmentalities”), to mention but a few. Each of these descriptions, while by no means mutually exclusive, highlight the ways in which airport space is organised according to different operations, principles, and practices.

This thesis investigates the changing nature of airports; how as social institutions, they position people in relation to different modes of spatial experience that change over time. It will be framed by two case studies on Auckland International Airport and Wellington International Airport – two of New Zealand’s largest and busiest airports1 – offering rich sites of analysis for the dynamics of social space. Both airports are South Pacific hubs in a network of global travel through which increasing numbers of passengers pass. In turn, they act as gateways for both the nation and their

1 See Auckland Airport and Wellington Airport’s Monthly Traffic Updates
respective cities and as vital infrastructures in the national economy, occupying a privileged space in national and urban identity.

Particularly important to this investigation is the view that space does not simply exist but rather is produced through ongoing social and spatial relations, as discussed by Henri Lefebvre. The relationship between representations of airports and the lived experiences of their spaces is in a constant state of negotiation, so that the different ways in which the space of the airport is articulated give rise to subtle and gradual changes in its meaning and use. This thesis will draw on a range of texts, including newspaper articles, promotional material from the airport companies themselves, historical documents and published histories to identify key shifts in how their spaces are articulated. The ways in which the airports are discursively framed will be compared with the physical spaces of the terminals themselves, supplemented with an institutional analysis of how these airports operate as both companies and national and urban bodies. The resulting topology of spatial relations provides a site to discuss each airport as a distinct social space in which people are ‘placed’ in relation to a number of interacting contexts.

This thesis is comprised of four chapters. Chapter One will discuss the airport as a space produced through changing contexts by critically examining the existing theoretical literature on airports, along with a number of popular cultural texts that place airports in the social and national imaginary. This chapter will set up a framework of analysis for case studies on Auckland Airport and Wellington Airport, highlighting relevant theories and issues that have informed previous studies on airports. These issues include the relationship between place and mobility; the local and the global; and commercial imperatives and airport security, among others.

Chapter Two will use articles from Wellington and Auckland newspapers during the 1950s and 1960s, along with personal interviews from locals and statements from municipal bodies, to perform textual and discourse analysis of representations of the airports’ early developments. Both airports have recently celebrated their fifty-year anniversaries – Wellington in 2009 and Auckland in 2016 – providing a point of analysis for examining the ways in which their spaces have developed. Using online promotional videos from the airport Vimeo and YouTube channels, I will chart the
changing discourses surrounding the reception, functions and uses of their spaces.

Chapter Three will analyse the physical spaces of the terminals themselves to discuss the ways in which the terminal is designed for an affective passenger experience. This chapter will unpack the multiple functions of airport space, exploring the institutional tensions inherent in designing airports, such as commercial imperatives and aeronautical operations. With a focus on the passenger’s movement through the terminal, the chapter will discuss how experiences of terminal space are often planned for and engineered by institutional motives.

Chapter Four focuses on each of these international airports as politically unique spaces that facilitate the movement of passengers over the border, so that airport security becomes a vital function in airport operations. This chapter draws upon material from the New Zealand-produced reality television series Border Patrol, following the operations of customs and airport security in New Zealand airports, along with media stories regarding the airport security experience, to analyse how different mobilities are produced, regulated and represented in relation to airport space. In doing so, I examine the interplay between representations of airport space and lived experiences of that space.

These texts will be used to discuss airports as spaces that exist in a state of flux, where the ongoing production of space opens up sites for diverse and changing experiences for people. While the spatial relations that produce each airport may sometimes appear to be cohesive in the experiences, uses, and representations they bring about, there are often moments of disjuncture in which the relationships between these spatial instances are unstable. This thesis analyses how these instabilities manifest in airport space: how they influence the ways in which it is imagined, used, and experienced.
CHAPTER ONE
The airport in theory, representation and practice

Much of the scholarship on airports is premised on its function as a site for human mobility, situating it within a body of work looking at the relationship between space, place, and movement. This work is concerned with how both individuals and groups relate to and experience space, so that space and subjectivity become closely intertwined. Other work has explored airports as distinct consumer economies, focusing on their deregulation from government control and subsequent commercialisation. The space of the airport and its location in regards to both its host city and the political space of the national border have furthermore been the subject of discussion within fields such as urban studies, cultural and critical geography and geopolitics. This chapter will contextualise the somewhat abstract space of the airport within a genealogy of writings that explores its uses, history, practices and representations.

1.1 Producing space and place

The airport constitutes, first and foremost, a distinct space which has been produced and used in a variety of ways. The nature of space – the ways in which spaces are conceived, represented and inhabited – is an important foundation for examining the space of the airport. Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* argues that space is not an inert, neutral, or pre-existing container in which things happen, but rather an ongoing production of social and spatial relations. For Lefebvre, space is an active moment in social reality, produced and reproduced in relation to a society’s mode of production (31). This basis of thought is fundamental to any analysis focusing on the way people inhabit different types of space. According to Lefebvre, there are three specific moments in the production of space: the representations of space, spaces of representation and spatial practices – what he refers to as a “spatial triad.” Each element of this triad blurs into the other, so that “each instance [of production] internalizes and takes on meaning through other instances” (Merrifield 111).

1. *Representations of space* refer to conceptualised space, to the spaces conceived of by architects, planners and engineers through the paradigms and practices used by
these agents and institutions. Representations of space are intimately tied “to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes” (Lefebvre 33) so that they are imbued with ideology, becoming the dominant space in any society.

2. **Spaces of representation** are the directly lived spaces of everyday experience. They are felt more than thought, through the non-specialist symbols and images of inhabitants and users which “overlay physical space, making symbolic use of its objects” (Lefebvre 39). Such spaces, according to Lefebvre, have “an affective kernel or centre” embracing “the loci of passion, of action, and of lived situations” (42), so that they do not obey rules of consistency or cohesiveness that representations of space may adhere to.

3. **Spatial practices** are the daily routines of space; the production and reproduction of relations between objects and products. Spatial practices structure lived reality and include the “routes and networks, pattern and interactions that connect places and people, images with reality, work with leisure” (Merrifield 110). Lefebvre suggests spatial practices are closely tied to a perceived space that embraces both the conceived and the lived, whereby “in terms of social space, and of each member of a given society’s relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance” (33).

These separate moments become entangled in a way that makes space appear as something neutral, that “gives action free reign” (Lefebvre 27). However, this illusion of neutrality conceals the fact that space is an on-going production of spatial and social relations, where the interests of power are at work. This is because the relationship between conceived, lived and perceived spaces is never stable, nor linear. Merrifield suggests that lived experience (spaces of representation, in Lefebvre’s words) “invariably gets crushed and vanquished by the conceived, by a conceived abstract space, by an objectified abstraction” (111). The order imposed by representations of space produced under capitalism subsume these lived experiences into the logic of Lefebvre’s “abstract space” – what Merrifield refers to as the materialisation of conceived space. As the product of conceived space, abstract space is imbued with ideology, maintaining a perpetual dialogue between its space and users. In Merrifield’s words: “abstract space impregnates people, socializes everybody as spatial bodies and
class subjects; its inbuilt consensus principle allows it to function within lived space and to flourish as all there is to be perceived” (112-13). The relationship between these moments of spatial production and the dominance of conceived space is bound up in the ideologies that underpin a society’s mode of production. Users become “spatial bodies and class subjects” through their interactions with and within these loaded spaces, so that subjectivity is tied up in the production of space.

Elspeth Probyn similarly discusses a “spatial imperative of subjectivity” that she explains using Louis Althusser. In Althusser’s theory of subjectivity, individuals are subjected to the practices of different ideological state apparatuses and become subjects in terms of them, through the process of interpellation. Brought to its full realisation in his example of a police officer addressing a person on the street with “[h]ey, you there!” the person turns to acknowledge the police officer’s call, recognising themselves as a subject of the law (Althusser 86). Probyn argues that, within these terms, subjectivity is both “spatially determined and temporally heavy” (298), in that spaces are imbued with a sedimentation of ideologies that define both the practices within them and their modes of interpellation. For example, the idea that the pub is a male-gendered space has been informed by a history in which women, by law or by custom, were banned from Western pubs. Now, although the space of the pub is usually open to anyone, a woman may occupy the space quite differently from a man. In Probyn’s description of the pub, “the men are propped up on the bar, shoulder to shoulder, presenting a solid front of space gendered as masculine… A single woman enters and she is checked over, chatted up or ignored” (294). A woman is made to recognise her gender subjectivity in a way that men are not, due to the patriarchal and heteronormative ideological history of the pub as a space. Such an example demonstrates that subjectivities are produced under very particular circumstances, through both the multiple positions people hold – as gendered, sexed, in a particular relationship, and so on – and how these positions are configured across different spaces imbued with ideological histories (Probyn 296-98).

More broadly, the idea of subjectivity as spatially-produced can been explored in relation to a body of work on the relationship between spaces of capitalism and society. Georg Simmel, writing in 1903, suggested the capitalist-industrialist city had a profound psycho-spatial effect on its inhabitants. Products of industrialisation, such as
the railway system and the telephone enabled time and space to be experienced in
different ways than in pre-industrial societies. Automated travel enabled long distances
to be temporally compressed. Traditional modes of communal sociality based on
immediacy and locality were disrupted as people and products circulated throughout
space at an accelerated rate. For Simmel, the individual within the capitalist-industrial
city develops an “organ” protecting them against “the threatening currents and
discrepancies of his external environment which would uproot him” (Simmel et al.
176). Siegfried Kracauer, writing in the 1920s, similarly used the metaphor of strangers
waiting in the hotel lobby to suggest that modernity estranged the individual from space
in a way that produced indifference and a detachment from the everyday (176).

Fredric Jameson, writing on the late-capitalist spaces of the twenty-first century,
argues that late capitalism produces a “cultural logic” of postmodernism. While the
products of modernity estranged the individual from space-time, he argues that
postmodernism sees this to a hyperbolic effect, producing a “hyperspace” in which
subjects have not yet determined “perceptual habits” or ways of being in space
(Jameson 39). Jameson uses his experience of being lost in the Westin Bonaventure
Hotel to argue that postmodern hyperspace has transcended the capacity of the subject
to “locate itself, to organise its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to
map its position in a mappable external world” (44). These perceptual habits can be
thought of in terms of Lefebvre’s spatial practices, or the way space is perceived within
a particular mode of production. Like Simmel’s metropolis or Kracauer’s hotel lobby,
the user of this space must constantly readjust. The conceived and abstract spaces of
capitalist production overtake the spatial practices of its users, dislocating them within
new modes of experience.

The spatial imperative of subjectivity becomes particularly relevant to a body of
literature discussing the idea of ‘place’ – specifically, what makes a space a ‘place.’
Human geography writers such as Edward Relph and Yi-Fu Tuan view space and place
as two distinct concepts on the same spectrum of human experience. Place is looked at
as a phenomenological and subjective experience; as constituting a spatial centre of
social meaning for a person or persons. Central to this mode of thought is the idea that
place is an “essentially static concept” (Tuan 177), and that to be “in-place” is to be
rooted, or to be attached in particular ways to space. Heidegger’s idea of “dwelling” has clearly influenced this approach to place, whereby dwelling is to remain in a certain relationship with a specific place and mode of existence (351). Relph, however, suggests that mass culture and spaces of travel have given rise to an increasing “placelessness,” causing “the casual replacement of the diverse and significant places of the world with anonymous spaces and exchangeable environments” (143). Similarly, Tuan claims that “modern man might be so mobile that he can never establish roots and his experience of place may be all too superficial” (183). Both Tuan and Relph’s work contributes to a mode of thought that pits mobility against place, an approach Tim Cresswell describes as “sedentarist” (On the Move 26). Here, mobility is seen through the lens of place, rootedness and belonging to be “morally and ideologically suspect, a by-product of a world arranged through place and spatial order” (Cresswell, On the Move 26).

Marc Augé similarly suggests that in the twenty-first century, people spend increasing amounts of time in what he refers to as “non-places.” These are the spaces of institutions “formed in relation to certain ends” such as transport, transit and commerce (94), produced by a phase of accelerated capitalism that he terms “supermodernity.” Augé positions the non-place in opposition to anthropological place, which, sharing many similarities with both Relph and Tuan’s notions of place, is expressed as the sort of experiences of the world based around collective history, relations and identity formation (Augé 78). The non-place instead eliminates history and atomises people in a way that constitutes them primarily as customers, users or passengers. Motorways, hotel rooms, large supermarkets and, importantly, airports, are all seen as spaces of supermodernity, which operate within the logic of excessive information and excessive space that global capitalism produces. According to Augé, these are in-between spaces, where people circulate in and move through in ways that, despite the presence of many other users, delimit social interaction beyond a passing greeting or formality. The non-place instead requires its users to submit to the logic of the space itself; to enter into “contractual relations” with it (Augé 101), to pay here, to proceed to the gate, to take the next left, so that people interact with signs, rules, and codes. Driving down the highway, then, or awaiting a flight in an airport lounge, exposes the individual to “entirely new experiences and ordeals of solitude” (Augé 93).
1.2 Places of mobility

While place has been theorised through notions of rootedness, belonging, and attachment, for Cresswell “the social is no longer seen as bound by “societies” but as caught up in a complex array of twenty-first century mobilities” (On the Move 1). As movement has been discussed as one of the primary operations of the airport, mobility becomes a central notion to explore, both as a distinct concept in itself and in regards to the relationship between mobility and place. It is important to distinguish between movement and mobility here, where movement can be understood as the physical motion of moving from one place to another, whereas mobility, according to Cresswell, “is socially produced motion” (On the Move 3), or movement that is loaded with meaning in particular ways. In later work, he discusses a “politics” of mobility, where mobility consists of three intertwined components: movement, representations of movement, and practice. Movement is the physical act of getting from one place to another, or in Cresswell’s words, “the raw material for the production of mobility” (“Politics of Mobility” 19). Representations of mobility are the ways in which physical movement has been coded, for example as meaning adventure, freedom, or risk for a group of people. Practice refers to both the everyday sense of particular practices such as driving or walking and the ways in they are habitualised and experienced through the body (Cresswell, “Politics of Mobility” 20). These three components are not dissimilar to Lefebvre’s conceptual triad of the production of space, in that the practices, representations and embodied experiences of mobility also interact in ways that make and remake each other. One’s mobile practices may indeed conform to the representations that surround them, for example, a feeling of freedom when taking off in an aeroplane; however, as Cresswell points out, at other times there is a “dissonance” between representation and practice (“Politics of Mobility” 20).

Cresswell uses a number of examples within this triad of mobility to further illustrate the ways in which movement becomes socially produced to the advantage of certain social groups more than others. He suggests movement is motivated, where someone either chooses to move or they are forced to; movement has velocity, where Cresswell associates speed with a more powerful social position, for example, being a frequent flyer in an airport and bypassing check-in queues; movement has a route,
where “tunnelling effects” such as highways and specific train routes facilitate speed for some while ensuring those who are bypassed slow down; movement has feeling, where the movements of humans are experiential; and movement has friction, for example, borders are points where bodies must slow down or stop (“Politics of Mobility” 23-26). Doreen Massey, too, discusses mobility in terms of socially produced movements, arguing that some people are more in charge of movement than others (61). She uses the term “power-geometries” to describe the ways in which people are “placed” in distinct ways to the flows and interconnections of movement that the time/space compression of globalisation engenders. In her example: “[e]very time someone uses a car, and thereby increases their personal mobility, they reduce both the social rationale and the financial viability of the public transport system – and thereby also potentially reduce the mobility of those who rely on that system” (Massey 62).

Furthermore, Massey uses the idea of socially produced mobilities in order to conceptualise what she calls a “progressive sense of place.” This approach to place recognises the relationship between space and place without being threatened by it, suggesting that moving through space need not counteract the idea of place, but instead can be imagined as contributing to “articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings” (Massey 66). Peter Adey similarly argues that the relationships between people and things are not fixated and immobilised but relational. Borrowing from John Urry’s work on mobility and immobility, he suggests that mobility can be understood in terms of difference, so that what one may perceive as immobility is only in relation to a specific mode of movement, meaning that practically nothing is ever immobile (“If Mobility” 83). These relative mobilities are a part of the “becomings and processes” of space that are brought continually into being (“If Mobility” 79). Relational mobilities can be reconceptualised as part of a changing moment of place, in which networks of social movements and interactions are constantly reconfigured.

The airport, as a space of movement, can then be rethought of as an ongoing production and reproduction of spatial and social relations that produces movement with social consequences. This is a space imbued with ideology that is productive of particular subjectivities and modes of interacting within and engaging with space. While Augé has described the airport as a non-place, evolving definitions of place that
incorporate the experiences of a more mobile world complicate this notion, suggesting that the airport opens up a site for analysis in regards to the nature of place in the twenty-first century.

1.3 The airport in history and representation

Scholars have begun to reconceptualise airports as products of specific historical and socio-cultural contexts which “place” them in certain ways (Adey, “Air-mindedness”; Gottdiener). This is part of a broader change in thinking of spaces of mobility and transit as productive of meaningful experiences for those who pass through them (Crang; Merriman). Peter Merriman, for example, argues that the movements of travellers, rather than traversing place, are “integral to the construction and performance of landscapes and places” (146). Writing on the construction and use of England’s M1 motorway from the 1950s to present day, Merriman argues that it was incorporated into the spaces and experiences of the nation in a multitude of ways: through television broadcasts and newspaper articles on its opening; the noises of construction heard in private living-rooms; and the new identities opened up for those who used the motorway such as the Sunday driver, traffic policeman, and engineer (Merriman 155).

Mark Gottdiener writes on the various uses and functions of airports at the end of the twentieth and the start of the twenty-first-century, similarly destabilising the idea that spaces of transit are inherently non-places. As well as spaces of travel, airports are spaces of “immense drama”; for example, the reuniting of a family after a flight (Gottdiener 22). Transitional spaces are often imbued with emotion as they frequently mark out new frontiers in experience. Furthermore, Gottdiener argues that some airports host so many people that they engender practices similar to those in cities, creating their own mini-cities with specific urban communities: “a critical mass of social density” where “people live, love and sometimes even die” (Gottdiener 21-23). Even the highly forgettable “waiting” or “dead” time that people experience in airports can become memorable through its unique social landscape; in Gottdiener’s example of eroticism in the airport terminal, “traveling alone strips both men and women of their family and work status and frees up identity so it is pliable and chameleon-like” (38).
Alastair Gordon has written a detailed cultural and social history of Western airports, identifying a number of contexts which shaped their development. While airports, in their most literal sense as a space to port a plane, existed as early as the late 1900s in the form of airfields, the “first generation” of airports, as Gordon refers to them, became fully operational in Europe by the 1920s (47). These airports functioned as national gateways after World War I had drawn a new kind of political map in which borders were more fluid. Peter Adey, in his analysis of the early development of Liverpool Airport similarly notes that British airports emerged within a context of nationalism and imperial rivalry, becoming entangled in the “geopolitics of mobility and territory” (Adey, “Air-mindedness” 347). Likewise, German aviation was developing at a similar, if not more impressive, rate as the country rebuilt after World War 1. Berlin’s Tempelhof, originally built in 1927 and redeveloped in 1934, was a monumental display of German power, to create, in Gordon’s words, “a symbolic gesture, a phoenix rising from the ashes of the Versailles treaty” (127). Under Hitler’s command, the airports of the Third Reich became representative of national unity, where aviation was celebrated as a both modern and mythic technology with immense social and military advantages.

As an emerging technology that was gradually becoming assimilated into commercial and civil use, aviation fostered a particularly celebratory culture in the first half of the twentieth century. Part of this was tied up in the spectacular nature of flight. Adey, in an article on spectatorship in the modern airport, uses Giuliana Bruno’s *Atlas of Emotion* to suggest that aviation, as an emerging mode of mobility, produced a “new spatio-visuality” (Bruno, qtd. in Adey, “Attention” 523). The venues that accompanied these technologies of transit became new geographies of modernity, in which mobility became a form of cinematics, or a centre of attention. In Adey’s words, “it is unsurprising then, that from the outset the purpose of airports and airfields was something other than travel, as the first aerodromes were intertwined with spectacle and spectatorship” (“Attention” 523). Britain similarly nurtured an enthusiasm for aviation through encouraging what Adey refers to as “air-mindedness”: an ideal distributing “politics, technologies, people, education, policies, places and things for the development of flight” (“Air-mindedness” 346) and which was strongly evocative of the idea of the nation. British airports became such a symbol of both social and national
progress that the development of Liverpool Airport was seen as a vital infrastructure for the vitality of the nation and the city. Given its prominence as an industrial port, air travel was seen as both a natural and prosperous step forward and the prospect of an airport became the focus of a rivalry between Liverpool and Manchester (which, despite its proximity, has its own airport) (Adey, “Air-mindedness” 349-50). The airport was not only a symbol for mobility and connectivity, but, as part of encouraging citizens to be air-minded, it also served as a recreational space; a civic amenity to be used in a multitude of ways: not only to fly, but to enjoy, to watch, and for aviation enthusiasts to meet with each other (Adey, “Air-mindedness” 359).

By the 1950s, airlines had begun to offer lower, more affordable airfares, encouraging a larger passenger population. The jumbo jet era of the 1970s, along with the deregulation of air travel in the United States in 1978, opened up airports as companies to new private holders, who aimed to channel passengers from land to air and vice versa as quickly as possible. The function of the airport gradually shifted from a civic amenity that celebrated the possibilities of flight to a commercial entity in which fast and efficient movement was crucial to a high turnover. Airport commercialisation consequently reorganised the design of airport space, as retail, food, and an increasing amount of other consumer products became factored into the terminal environment in ways that would encourage spending. Furthermore, the events of September 11, 2001 incited a number of airports to re-evaluate their security mechanisms, with many requiring a reorganisation of their spaces and operations in response.

These changing contexts make evident Adey’s claim that airports are embedded within local politics, cultures and economics in ways that mean they are often “recast within spaces, histories and uses” (“Air-mindedness” 345). They are in a perpetual state of flux as various socio-economic, political and cultural events shape the ways in which people think about and move through their spaces. Nathalie Rousseau, in her work focusing on the ongoing dialogue between cities and their airports, describes the airport as a “u-topos, a spatial perspective on the outside looking in and questioning, extrapolating, and crystallising the acute tensions present in the contemporary city” (50). Gordon, furthermore, has suggested that while airports are constantly upgrading and imagining their spaces in the future, projects often become out of date before their
completion (217). He uses the example of Atlanta’s airport built in the 1960s, imagined as a space that would meet airline needs until well into the 1980s. However, at the opening ceremony, the airport's manager Jack Gray told the mayor it was already obsolete. More than nine million passengers were processed in its first year of operations, greatly exceeding the anticipated passenger population and leaving the airport struggling to accommodate them.

The ways in which people come to think about, understand and experience the airport are largely tied up in the airport’s discursive representation: through its framing in the media and its different iterations in popular culture. The airport has become an iconic symbol in the popular imaginary, where its space has been framed as producing particular experiences for people; a central theme being mobility. For example, Jason Reitman’s 2009 film Up in the Air follows Ryan, a human relations consultant who flies around the United States to fire people on behalf of their companies, showing the airport as a space where his mobility is both enabled and encouraged. He clears check-in, baggage check and airport security with ease, swiping his frequent flyer card to demonstrate his free mobility. In contrast, Steven Spielberg’s 2004 film The Terminal, in which an Eastern-European immigrant finds himself stranded at John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and must take up temporary residence there, shows the airport as a place that restricts mobility, where instead of passing through, the passenger is confined. While the airport has been framed as an open and emancipatory place for some individuals, like frequent flyer Ryan in Up in the Air, it simultaneously becomes a place of requesting access and dislocation for others.

The airport has been represented in popular media not only as a vehicle for mobility (and immobility), but also as a broader metaphor for the experience of being part of an ever-modernising world. In his book The Textual Life of Airports, Christopher Schaberg suggests that airport space in literature can work as a “way to forward commentaries on specific characters or culture at large” (12). Don Delillo’s 1999 play Valparaiso, in Schaberg’s example, follows Michael Majeski, who sets out on what was to be an ordinary business trip to Valparaiso, Indiana, but ends up in Valparaiso, Chile, becoming the centre of media attention. As Majeski narrates his story, his sense of selfhood and origin become increasingly uncertain, paralleling the uncertainty of his
final destination. In one scene, Majeski says:

I felt submissive. I had to submit to the systems. They were all powerful and all knowing. If I was sitting in this assigned seat. Think about it. If the computers and metal detectors and uniformed personnel and bomb-sniffing dogs had allowed me to reach this airline seat and given me this airline blanket that I could not rip out of its plastic shroud, then I must belong here. (Delillo qtd. in Schaberg 33)

Sorted and secured onto a flight, Majeski is at once in place yet disoriented. The practices and technologies of the airport have positioned him here, yet the nature of his “belonging” is superficial and temporary. His journey becomes a metaphor for the confusion, disorientation and reconfiguration of the self that writers such as Jameson have posited are characteristic of spaces of modernity.

Other depictions of the airport in popular culture provide insights into the multifaceted operations of its space. In the 1968 novel Airport by Arthur Hailey, taking place over one night in a fictional airport in Chicago, Airport General Manager Mel Bakersfeld struggles to keep the airport open as a massive snowstorm hits the city. The novel provides insights into the operations of a major commercial airport, illustrating the vast complexity of its network of customs officers, airport police, clerks, and so on. The 1990s comedy-drama TV series, Wings, similarly focusses on a group of friends running an airline on the New England Island of Nantucket, set in a small airline terminal. More recently, airports have become the subject of reality television shows such as Airline, following the crew of an American airline in their attempts to keep a major airport running smoothly. A proliferation of shows focusing on airport security also emerged in the early 2000s after the events of 9/11, namely Border Patrol, focussing on the customs operations of New Zealand airports and ports – which will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4 – along with other iterations of the show such as Homeland Security USA, UK Border Force, Border Security: Australia’s Frontline and Border Security: Canada’s Frontline. These representations of airport space demonstrate that airports are dynamic sites of work, leisure and everyday practices which are experienced in vastly different ways.
1.4 The airport in practice: mobile bodies, governmentality and control

Much of the scholarly work focussing on persons in the airport highlights both physical movement and the ways in which mobility is produced, regulated, halted, policed, and so forth. In Augé’s theorisation of the airport, it is an archetypical non-place, centred round travel and transit. Similarly, Gillian Fuller and Ross Harley in their book on airports refer to the airport as a “machine for processing and controlling mobility” (43), and, furthermore, as representative of “laboratory conditions” for thinking through the processes and systems of global movement (38). Yet, while the time-space compression enabled by the technologies of air travel introduces an accelerated mode of movement, where one can physically reach further distances in dramatically less time, mobility within the airport itself is subject to what Fuller and Harley refer to as the “paradoxical logic of transit”, where ‘stop’ systems such as border control, baggage checks and identity checks, integrate with ‘go’ systems, such as capacity and flow control techniques (43). Similarly, Adey suggests in his case study of mobility in airports that there are spaces in the airport in which passengers are kept “relatively immobile”; where they must wait for security, to check in baggage, and so on (“If Mobility” 89). Mobility, as a key experience of the airport, is thus experienced in relation to a number of contexts.

One of these contexts, as Massey’s idea of the “power geometries” of mobility suggests, are the networks of authority and governmentality that underpin airport operations. As spaces that facilitate movement across borders, airports are sites of what Mark Salter describes as “multiple vectors of authority” (“Governmentalities” 54), producing what Aharon Kellerman refers to as "authority generated flows" that channel passengers through different jurisdictions at the level of the international, national and local (164). For the passenger leaving the country, they must first pass through check-in, encountering airline agents who act as domestic or foreign commercial authorities, checking documents such as tickets. Secondly, passengers submit their hand luggage for electronic checking, conducted by local airport or national security forces. Thirdly, national authorities determine a passenger’s identity by checking documents such as passports and visas. Even purchasing within duty-free shopping spaces is overseen by authority figures, as passengers are required to show their boarding pass to the clerk.
before they make their purchase. Lastly, after moving through the space of the terminal, the passenger must present their boarding pass to the airline agent before boarding the plane (Kellerman 172). Movement requires constant authorisation at the airport. Both Kellerman and Adey note that the only spaces that do not require authorisation to pass through are the public lounges, food courts, entertainment facilities, toilets and meditation rooms, which in themselves represent areas of immobility, usually associated with waiting (Kellerman 173) and are often spaces designed for other imperatives, such as consumption (Adey, “Airports, Mobility” 441).

One of the emerging modes of inquiry within airport studies focuses on the airport as a uniquely political space in which spatial technologies of power underpin modes of governmentality. International airports constitute territorial thresholds, where the politics of citizenship, the sovereign state and security intertwine to produce particular experiences for citizens, foreigners, refugees, and so on. Taking one example, Kellerman notes that when police stop people on the street and ask for identification, it implies a form of suspicion; however, in the airport, passengers are stopped at multiple points to be identified (174); they are suspicious until proven innocent. Suspicion has only increased in most airports after 9/11, where security measures further impede the desire for free mobility. Fuller and Harley argue that the tactics of securitisation at the airport are made possible by a logic of exceptionality, where as part of the need to move, people submit to invasive identification procedures which become “rationalised through a discourse of exception – only ‘at the airport’” (44).

The airport as an exceptional zone has been discussed in relation to Giorgio Agamben’s work on the ‘state of exception’: a political environment in which the sovereign power can make unquestionable decisions regarding the rights of its citizens. Salter and Didier Bigo apply this paradigm of the state of exception to the space of the border, in which all travellers are subject to the sovereign decision of exclusion or inclusion as a security mechanism by the state (“When the Exception”). The airport as a space that encompasses the border can be seen as an arrangement of these technologies of power to which all passengers are subject as part of their condition of entry. Salter uses the exceptional nature of the airport to argue that it is governed by a confessionary complex in which travellers must disclose their right to move through. He claims that,
despite the airport’s role in facilitating mobility, it has the “inverse effect of rendering mobility entirely problematic, shattering notions of sovereign space, and complicating the stable identities upon which the nation rests” (“Governmentalities” 63). The politics of mobility in the airport are thus largely tied up with the idea of the nation-state and the securitisation of mobility.

In relation to the ways in which mechanisms of power are spatially arranged in airports, Adey discusses the “architectures of affective control” which position and encompass the passenger in often subtle ways as they move through the terminal. His work introduces a body of literature that focusses on the phenomenological experiences of airport space for different passengers, focussing on how it feels to move through the terminal (“Mobilities and Modulations”; “Airports, Mobility”). For him, mobility both produces and is produced by “affect,” or the capacity of a person to relate to or engage with something (“Airports, Mobility” 439). The affective dimensions of mobility can be thought of in terms of both how it feels to be mobile and how one reacts to being mobile. As part of what constitutes, and is constituted by mobility, then, affect can factor into how mobile bodies can be regulated. In Adey’s words, “bodies, both physically and emotionally, are opened up to power” (“Airports, Mobility” 439), so that the affective nature of mobility plays into its capacity to be controlled. The built environment of the terminal building channels the possibilities for affect in certain ways, so that passengers are both encouraged to move in certain directions and to experience particular emotions. For example, security checkpoints may be experienced with a level of anxiety due to the possibility of suspicion or apprehension. These “relative states of anxiety,” Adey suggests, distribute affect across the terminal building, in ways that are designed to make passengers more compliant with the airport’s operations of risk management (“Airports, Mobility” 445-46). The logic of exceptionality that airports operate on ensures this anxiety is internalised, as part of what is required to be mobile.

While Adey suggests certain environmental aspects can produce affect in the passenger, the body is also opened up to power in more direct ways, through technologies such as biometrics. Defined by David Lyon as the “automated use of physiological or behavioural characteristics for identifying or verifying the identity of a
living person” (“Bodies, Borders, Biometrics” 128), biometric information has been viewed as infallible and unchallengeable, as the corporeality of the body supposedly cannot lie. Biometric systems are often linked to databases: for example, passengers may have their faces scanned and compared to a database of ‘terrorists’ or other ‘wanted’ people as part of a pre-emptive risk profile (Lyon Surveillance 77). In another example, Amsterdam’s Schiphol Airport introduced a biometric system to accelerate the mobility of trusted travellers. “Privium” is a technology that scans the passenger’s iris and matches the result with an electronic image of the eye, securing identity without the passenger needing to show their passport. The passenger, in this case, willingly submits their biometric information to prove that they are low-risk. Dean Wilson argues that because biometric technologies perform automated functions of verification and identification, such technologies have been framed as neutral, eliminating the possibility of discriminatory enforcement (91). However, systems are often imbued with strong political motives (for example, fighting the ‘War on Terror’). Drawing on Agamben, Wilson suggests “the cause of concern is that such databases are being assembled amidst a ‘state of exception,’ whereby nation-states increasingly enact decisions based upon political will rather than the constraints of normative law” (91). Political power is inscribed directly at the site of the body, through its inclusion or inclusion, as a citizen or a non-citizen. These technologies of security, as Adey suggests, can subsequently produce the “the very personal experience” of being deemed suspicious, disallowed entry into a country or being questioned (“Mobilities and Modulations” 156).

While at some points in the terminal passengers move through highly-politicised, tense zones of inclusion and exclusion, channelled through access points via the built environment and security technologies, at other points, the passenger is asked to relax. Adey suggests that once the “relative anxiety” of security checks and way-finding has been overcome, passengers finds themselves in a state of relief, which coincides with their arrival at food courts and duty free shopping areas before boarding their flights. These areas of commerciality represent “compulsive consumption zones” for passengers who, after successfully submitting themselves to authority, are finally “in the right state of mind to shop” (Adey, “Airports, Mobility” 443). Furthermore, Justine

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2 See “Iris Scans at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.”
Lloyd suggests the airport is no longer somewhere to pass through, as it has been theorised by scholars such as Augé, but rather somewhere to spend time. An increasing “homeliness” in waiting zones and opportunities for leisure activities (Lloyd, “Dwelltime” 94) works to alleviate any anxieties passengers may have in relation to travelling. This “homeliness” comes into tension with ideas such as the “non-place” as it is increasingly made to produce more personal, leisurely experiences in liminal zones. In Lloyd’s words:

[t]emporal investment, rather than pure expenditure, encapsulated in the notion of “spending” time, is crucial to [the] “nightclubbing” of nonplaces. Instead of experiencing waiting time as wasted time, which inevitably leads to boredom and alienation from one’s environment, the urban traveller is invited to use transit time to accumulate useful experiences of leisure and work in this revamped nonplace. (“Dwelltime” 94)

Lloyd uses the example of the privatisation of Sydney's Airport, suggesting its new marketing slogan: people to see, places to go, things to do: shop where the world begins, reframes the airport as a fun place to be ("Dwelltime" 103). The public spaces of the international terminal were redesigned somewhat like an urban mall, with food courts, entertainment, provisional services such as beauty salons and hairdressers, financial services and art exhibition space. This redesign of Sydney Airport highlights the different modes of interpelling the passenger moving through the airport. Beginning as a security threat, once the passenger has been identified and secured they are then called into the position of a consumer and a customer. Not only are passengers at this point invited to enjoy themselves, they are encouraged to experience these revamped non-places in meaningful ways. Such spaces, in Lloyd's words, configure waiting as "pleasurable" (Lloyd, “Dwelltime” abstract).

At once mundane, in-between spaces in which people often spend “dead” time, airports are simultaneously spaces of social experience, politics, and difference. Although these spaces are constantly in flux, responding to advances in air travel and national and international politics, they constitute unique social spaces with specific
rules and modes of being in space. They are what Foucault calls a heterotopic space: a space connected to other places but different from them in specific ways (“Of Other Spaces” 25). Heterotopias often juxtapose several spaces within one real place (Foucault, “Of Other Spaces” 25), just as the airport intertwines spaces of consumption, security, identification and so on. They change in their uses over time, just as airports operate according to changing contexts (Foucault, “Of Other Spaces” 25).

The remainder of this thesis will utilise the above literature on airports through a case study into the development of Auckland and Wellington airports. It will illustrate the ways in which airports provide unique sites of analysis for how people relate to and experience place in a society increasingly preoccupied with technologies of movement. The following chapter will contextualise Auckland and Wellington airports through their historical development, early uses, and continued re-imaginings to explore how they have been ‘placed’ in changing ways.
CHAPTER TWO
Placing the non-place: Airport histories and futures

While often considered a placeless zone of transit, airports create networks of use and experience that are by no means limited to just passengers. Both the movements of travellers and the complex work that goes into facilitating and managing these movements, rather than traversing place, contributes to, as Merriman suggests, the “multiple, partial and relational ‘placings’ which arise through the diverse performances and movements associated with travel, consumption, and exchange” (147). Examining the developments of airports can help to identify these ‘placings’ and uncover the ways in which, as Adey argues, airports are often “embedded within local and national cultures, histories and uses” (“Air-mindedness” 360). This chapter is concerned with the histories and representations of Auckland International Airport and Wellington International Airport from their early beginnings in the 1950s to their fiftieth anniversary celebrations in the 2010s. It explores the diverse and changing ways these airports have been used, experienced and negotiated in relation to the physical and social spaces of the both the city and the nation.

The early development of both Auckland and Wellington airports were extensively covered in both local and national newspapers, representing them as matters of high civic importance to their respective publics. Wellington newspapers The Evening Post and The Dominion, for example, frequently wrote on the developments of Wellington Airport, especially during its construction, the opening in 1959, and its early years of operation. Ian Johnson, a local who grew up in the Rongotai region during the airport’s development, collected and compiled a large amount of these articles to create a scrapbook chronicling the airport’s inception as Rongotai Aerodrome in the 1950s to the opening of its new terminal in 1999. The scrapbook – titled From Rongotai Aerodrome to Wellington Airport and donated to Wellington City Libraries for public use – not only demonstrates the ways in which the airport was framed by local and national newspapers, but indicates the airport’s development has occupied an important space in Johnson’s life as he followed its coverage for over fifty years. Martyn Thompson and Alice Clements’ book, Where New Zealand Touches the World: From Farm Paddock to South Pacific Hub: A History of Auckland International Airport
similarly draws upon newspaper articles from local and national papers such *The Auckland Star* and *The New Zealand Herald* to review the coverage of Auckland Airport’s early development, along with personal interviews with local residents and reports from groups such as the Auckland Aero Club, Manukau City Council & Auckland Regional Authority, and Auckland International Airport Limited (AIAL). Their book charts a number of historical moments in the airport’s history including its construction, opening events, development of the international terminal and its purchase by AIAL, up until 2003 when the book was published.

The ways in which both Auckland Airport and Wellington Airport have been represented in these media texts will be analysed in relation to recent promotional material uploaded by their respective airport companies on video-sharing platforms YouTube and Vimeo, charting the shifting discourses surrounding their development, uses and spaces within changing socio-cultural and historic contexts. Exploring how these discourses are created, consumed and negotiated opens up the airport as a site of ongoing spatial relations that affect not just passengers, but people living around, working on, and making plans for the airports.

2.1 Contextualising Wellington Airport and Auckland Airport: early histories

The socio-geographic environments of the cities in which Auckland and Wellington airports developed has greatly affected their production and use. Roseau, in her work examining the relationship between airports and their host cities, suggests the processes of imagining and building airports are tied to specific urban narratives surrounding aeromobility (36). As technologies of flight emerged during the first few decades of the twentieth century, architects and planners from France and the United States envisioned “upper cities” superimposed onto existing urban structures, accommodating a utopian image of air travel in which people had personal aircrafts that could “port” at lift-garages (Roseau 38). A turn in the early 1930s signified a shift from the ideal city restructured around aerial mobility – the “aerial city” – to the quest for an airport planned as an urban alternative, “the airport city” (42). As it became clear that air travel would be most viable as a form of public rather than personal transport, the first “airports” constituted independent structures, which required their own spaces
outside the already developed city centres. Imagined as a form of “territorial gateway to the city”; both a part of its space and its outer frontier, they acted as “flagships” and “celebratory beacons placed at their gates,” taking on attributes of the city and extrapolating these within a peripheral space (Roseau 41). As airports gained increasing institutional autonomy, they began to constitute their own outer mini-cities, hosting a range of urban amenities and attractions, such as cafeterias and shops, surrounded by hotels, sports grounds and aviation schools. Contemporary trends in airport design have begun to re-imagine airport structures back within the central city, through downtown terminals where passengers can check in luggage and print boarding passes before proceeding to the peripheral terminal from which the actual plane departs. There is a symbiotic relationship here in which cities and airports are in a constant dialogue, Roseau arguing that “airport design and implementation formalize boundaries that circumscribe and transcend the contours of the host city, even as they invoke localized urban issues” (50). This suggests that while airports often restructure urban space, they are nevertheless urban prototypes that are produced in line with the city.

The early narratives of Wellington and Auckland airports make evident this relationship between cities and airports. After Australian Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith and his crew completed the first Tasman flight from Sydney in 1928, circling Wellington but discovering there was nowhere to land and flying on to Christchurch, the Wellington City Council designated 30 hectares of the Rongotai region as aerodrome. Already associated with aviation for a number of years, in 1934, Rongotai was identified by the Chamber of Commerce as the best site for an airport in Wellington. In 1950, the government agreed to progress the construction of a north to south runway on the site to accommodate DC-3 aircrafts. The local newspapers regarded the early decisions for an airport in Wellington as a remarkable development that would greatly impact the region. For example, an article from The Post on 5th September 1956 reports that an American airport planning consultant investigating the project, Mr. Melvin B. Borgeson, said Rongotai Airport could not fail to become “a tremendous and ever-growing asset to the economic, social, and cultural life of Wellington City and its environs” (“Planner Says Great Asset”). K.C Keane reported for

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3 For a timeline of Wellington Airport’s development, see “History – Wellington Airport Runway Extension”
that the new site “will be one of the world’s most remarkable aerodromes” as it is equipped with “the most up-to-the-minute navigational aids,” also noting, “there are few airports serving a capital city, or any other city, that are so close to the city’s centre” (City’s Geography Changing Fast”). This initial hype surrounding the airport’s conception set up its development as an urban spectacle, with much to be anticipated.

The coverage of Auckland Airport’s early development was also closely linked to the vitality of the city, and furthermore, tied up in a nationalistic discourse through which Auckland served as a role model for the nation. The site upon which it would developed, a paddock in Māngere, was originally the site of The Auckland Aero Club founded in 1928. The Club became a prestigious location for early New Zealand aviation, hosting the arrivals of several long-distance flights including Sir Charles Kingsford Smith arriving in 1933 from across the Tasman, and New Zealander Jean Batten, arriving at Māngere airfield in October 1936 after a record-breaking solo flight from England. While in 1948, the Royal New Zealand Air Force made their site at Whenuapai available for civil airline operations on a temporary basis, relegating the Aero Club to recreational flying and instruction, it continued to thrive until it was moved to Ardmore Airfield to make way for the construction of Auckland International Airport (Thompson and Clements 28). After the decision to use Māngere as the site for the new airport in 1955, the New Zealand Herald wrote “not Auckland alone, but all New Zealand, should be glad that a first-class modern civil airport can be provided without engineering difficulties at only a moderate distance from the [country’s] largest seaport and centre of population” (qtd. in Thompson and Clements 73), promoting Auckland’s suitability as a city to host an important national infrastructure. Despite early contention surrounding the airport’s funding – The Auckland Star reporting “they [Auckland’s local bodies] all want an airport but in typical Auckland fashion they want someone else to pay for it” (qtd. in Thompson and Clements 77) – after the project was signed off by Auckland City Council in 1960, The Star claimed “Auckland will retain her place as the country’s major air centre.” The Herald similarly described the airport as “a national asset,” suggesting that “Auckland is the only logical place for it” (Thompson and Clements 90). The new airport was discursively framed in terms of its benefits for the both the city and the country, so that, in Adey’s words “nationalistic
ideas…. became centred and reproduced at the local scale of the airport” (“Air-mindedness” 349).

While Wellington’s and Auckland’s new airports were imagined in terms of how they would enhance their existing city’s economic, cultural and social life, there was an equally strong focus on the how the emerging infrastructure of each airport would change the urban environments. In March 1958, *The Evening Post* reported that Rongotai’s runway emerged dramatically with a target opening date for the Airport of 1 April, 1959 (“Dramatic Emergence of Rongotai Runway”), and later in August that the geography of the city was rapidly changing as the airport was built, the project amounting to “an astonishing achievement… in a city notorious for snarling zephyrs that spill round corners, over hilltops and through every gully” (“City’s Geography Changing Fast”). *The New Zealand Free Lance*, a weekly pictorial magazine based in Wellington at the time, reported in October 1958 that in order to construct the runway, “more than 100 houses were demolished or moved to new sites, a section of a street was closed and a subway was built beneath the runway” (“Rongotai Assuming Its Final Shape”). The bulldozers used to level land for the site were of particular interest to observers; as *The Dominion* reported, “of the 60 or so brightly-coloured machines now working on the Rongotai job, 14 are big-time earth movers” (“Euclid Equipment Knocks The Rocks”) easily seen on the construction site, “bouncing along with their loads like oversize diesel-driven dinosaurs” (“City’s Geography Changing Fast”). A double-page spread in *The Post* in November 1958, titled “The Evolution of an Airport: Past, Present and Future” and featuring two photographs and an illustration of the changing site of the airport in 1950, 1958 and how it would look completed in 1959 again demonstrates the local concern with the changing environment, and the work required to accommodate such a large infrastructure. Thompson and Clements share this preoccupation in regards to the 1955 decision to construct an airport in Auckland on Māngere farmland, suggesting “[i]t is interesting to muse on how Auckland may have developed as a city if one of the more fanciful locations had been selected…The whole physical layout and development of the city would have been fundamentally different” (70). Returning to Roseau, the dialogue here between both the city and the emerging airport indicate they are indeed linked in a “relationship of hybridisation and ambiguity,” where the airport “both challenges and renews the whole metropolis” (48).
Not only did the development of these airports dramatically change their surrounding environments and urban infrastructure, the local residents and workers involved in the construction faced a number of changes in their day-to-day lives, too. An article from *The Evening Post* in December, 1958, for example, reports an explosion on the Rongotai aerodrome site which sent sharp-edged rocks over 100 yards into local resident Mr. Ching’s backyard. The article includes a picture of his daughter holding one of the large rocks, along with a quote from Mr. Ching saying, “you get absolutely fed up with the crowds over there. This is the first time I’ve ever complained, but I’ve been raring to go many times” (“Roofs and Windows Damaged”). After a delay in the airport’s opening in 1959, *The Dominion* reported another blast, damaging local Kilbirnie residents Mrs. O.C Ashton and Mr. Ashton’s roof and kitchen windows. The Ashtons’ neighbour, Mr. C. Silestrean, additionally complained he had been “having trouble for some time” with the construction at Rongotai, claiming the vibrations from the site had moved the foundations of his house, making it impossible to close an inside door or open a window. Furthermore, the previous year, the noise from an earth-moving machine repair depot which was right outside his bedroom window “had been so bad that he had to spend two months in hospital” (“Blast Rocks Houses”). After an article in *The Post* in March 1959 reporting that an anonymous official had claimed the glare from headlights would affect plane landings at Rongotai, a secondary article in May reported that the chairman of the City Council’s works committee described the first article as misleading. Cr. B. L. Dallard suggested that the official suffered from “a Rongotai phobia,” causing “unjustified public concern” (“Cr. Dallard Says Article Misleading”).

When Māngere was under consideration as a site for the new Auckland airport, the Kirkbride family were shocked when, in 1949, representatives from the Department of Public Works came to complete a survey regarding their farmland. Quoted in Thompson and Clements’ book, Gordon Kirkbride said he was not too impressed to learn the new airport site would be “slap-bang in the middle of my farm!” (64). While the Kirkbrides and other farmers set up a “Fighting Fund” to oppose the airport’s construction, it nevertheless went ahead. Kirkbride reflected, however, that “it wasn’t the huge problem we were expecting,” the worst parts being the noise from “the earthmoving machines running night and day” and an incident in which during a
Vampire jet crash, the engine dropped beside a milking cow “giving her such a fright
that she dropped dead!” (qtd. in Thompson and Clements 65). There was, evidently,
tension diffused throughout the local public regarding both the developments at
Rongotai and Māngere, tied up in their impact on existing urban life.

Despite these accounts, the coverage of the new airports in Wellington and
Auckland was, for the most part, celebratory. In February, 1959, *The Dominion* reported
that Dr. John H. Furbay, director of educational and cultural services at the United
States airline T.W.A, had said “Rongotai airport is one of the most marvellous
constructions I’ve ever seen,” commending the airport’s placement so close to the city’s
population centre (“Rongotai Job Praised”). In March, *The Post* reported that thousands
of people watched as three planes operated from the unfinished airfield, “giving
pleasure flights and pilot training flights” in an article titled “Verdict on Rongotai
Airport: It’s Good.” In July 1959, *The Dominion* reported that the youngest person on
the inaugural Vickers Viscount airliner to the Wellington Airport was five-month old
Gloria Doidge, pictured in the arms of New Zealand National Airways Corporation (N.A.C)
senior air hostess Miss R. Woodsford (“Lightest Passenger”), and in another
article, that four-year-old Tony Treister was met by his sister at the gangway of the
Vickers Viscount flight from Christchurch to Wellington, accompanied by a picture of
the siblings holding hands in front of the airliner (“Meeting at Airport”). These stories,
circulated around the region via the daily newspapers functioned to elicit a sense of “air-
mindedness” in the local population; a moral geography that worked, in Adey’s words
“to define particular ideas, beliefs and behaviours acceptable for one to attain
citizenship of the nation, locality or city” (“Air-mindedness” 346). The airport served as
a focal point for the ways in which aeromobility became integrated into New Zealand,
and specifically, Wellington life for local people, and was “infused with an enthusiasm
for flight” as Adey suggests of Liverpool Airport when it was developed (“Air-
mindedness” 358).

Both Wellington Airport and Auckland Airport hosted opening events of grand
scales, further mobilising their urban publics in particular ways. *The Dominion* and *The
Post* extensively covered the preparation for Wellington Airport’s opening air-show on
October 24th, 1959, sponsored by the Wellington Branch of the Royal Aeronautical
Society. *The Dominion* reported in March 1959 that the chairman claimed “at present, there is every indication this display will be the most spectacular ever staged in New Zealand” (“Air Display to Open Rongotai”). *The Post* reported later that month that an estimated 100,000 people were likely to attend the airshow, in which the Governor-General Lord Cobham would officially declare the airport open, followed by “a great variety of aircraft, both civil and military, from Britain, the United States, Australia, and probably Canada, at least” (“Huge Crowd Likely at Airport Opening”). Early in October, they reported the show would be an “exciting and memorable programme of flying in celebration of the opening of Wellington Airport” (“Airport Opening Should be Memorable Occasion”), and, later in the month, that the Superintendent of the Wellington Police District said “it was doubtful if the Police had ever had as great a concentration of men and equipment in one place at the one time as they would have for the opening of Wellington Airport on Saturday” (“Police Face One of Biggest Tasks Ever”). These stories promoted a high level of anticipation for the opening, making both *The Dominion* and *The Evening Post* gatekeepers in the reception of the new airport. *The Post* even published a special edition paper on Saturday the 24th, the date of the airshow, focussing on the airport and the programme for the day. It read:

The stage is all set for the grand opening of Wellington Airport today and it only requires fine weather to be one of the most outstanding in the Capital City’s history…. The programme of spectacle and entertainment today should thrill and delight young and old; it should also give some view into what the future holds for aviation in New Zealand, and how Wellington Airport will be able to cope with that future. (“Wellington Airport”)

*The Dominion* also published an article the following Monday quoting the chairman of the city council’s airport committee, Cr. W. H. Nankervis at the opening air-show, claiming the airport has begun a “new epoch” in the Capital City. The article stated that New Zealanders were “air-minded” people with twenty-six percent of the population travelling by air in the last year, suggesting the airport would “undoubtedly prove to be of as great a service to the nation as to the capital city” (“Airport Begins New Epoch”).

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Auckland Airport’s opening was similarly commemorated with a “Grand Air Pageant” held over three days from January 29-31, 1966 and organised by an Air Display committee headed by the Auckland Mayor. Like Wellington’s show, the pageant featured an official opening from the Governor-General and static and flying displays of military and civilian aircraft from around the world. Over 200,000 people attended the opening event at Māngere, which Thompson and Clements describe as “crowd-pleasing,” a “rare opportunity” for the public to see military aircraft in action (120) and as a “spectacle” (122). Prime Minister Holyoake wrote in a pamphlet published for the occasion that the opening would be “a milestone in the history of New Zealand aviation and of Auckland in particular…. It signifies Auckland’s growing importance as a commercial centre and as a gateway to New Zealand” (qtd. In Thompson and Clements 118). The Minister of Civil Aviation, Mr. J.K Mc Alpine, also wrote that the opening would be a “major event for the South Pacific. For the people of Auckland it will place the city and district firmly on the map of international aviation. For the people of New Zealand, it will mean direct jet connections with the outside world… and in doing so, will launch a new era of progress for New Zealand” (qtd. in Thompson and Clements 119).

The opening events for both Auckland and Wellington are significant in that they consolidate a number of narratives surrounding the airports’ development into a celebratory spectacle of achievement and social progress. While many instances of tension characterised each airport’s construction, from decisions regarding each airport’s geographic placement and funding to the effect of construction noise on the daily lives of local residents, what was highlighted was the idea of moving forward into a new frontier as both a city and a nation. As Adey suggests of Liverpool Airport, the events “connect[ed] a local site to the ambition of civilization, social development and citizenship” (“Air-mindedness” 353), using a sense of air-mindedness to bring together the urban public. The extraordinary nature of each show, including aerobatics, parachutists and aircraft racing, along with the large crowds attending both events, indicates the shows operated according to a logic of spectacle by which, as Guy Debord suggests, the audience is caught up in a “specialised mediation” of the world (120). The input of local government figures such as airport committees belonging to the city councils, official openings by the Governor-General and an emphasis on military
displays in the airports’ respective openings, suggests they worked to serve a particular dominant narrative of the city and the nation-state as both progressive and united in their progress. Tied up in this discourse of national identity, the celebration of aeromobility suggested, as Adey argues, “to be air-minded, and to become involved in the airport’s construction was to be a good citizen” (“Air-mindedness” 354).

Not only were Wellington and Auckland’s airports framed as opportunities to connect their cities to the global world, they represented a form of social unity for the cities themselves, orienting the urban public in line with an ideal of air-mindedness. Such an ideal, as Adey argues, made the airport “more than a stop or interchange on the way to somewhere else, [the airport] stood as a promise for the possibilities of flight and was intimately intertwined with the time, the place, and the people that it shaped and was shaped by” (“Air-mindedness” 358). Indeed, the discourses of progress, pride, and urban vitality that surrounded the development of Wellington and Auckland’s airports in the 1950s and 1960s figure inextricably into the ways in which they have been, and continue to be, represented. However, as can be demonstrated by the prolific events of the opening ceremonies orchestrated by city governments, particular narratives of the airports’ development and use are privileged. These ways in which the new airports were discursively framed have figured into their meanings as places today, and how they are subsequently negotiated by governments, airport companies and their users.

2.2 Negotiating the local and global, past and future

In the twenty-first century, as air-travel has become commonplace in everyday life, the relationship a city’s airport has with both ‘the global,’ to which it acts as a mediator, and ‘the local,’ where it is situated, occupies a contentious space. In the 1950s and 1960s as both Wellington and Auckland airports were developed, rather than facilitating mass international travel in a time when flying was still expensive, the airports functioned more as a symbol of the possibilities and spectacle of flight. In 2016, Wellington Airport hosted 5.9 million passengers, with 892,199 of those passengers flying internationally,\(^4\) and Auckland Airport hosted 18.3 million passengers, with 9.2

\(^4\) See Wellington Airport December 2016 Monthly Traffic Update
million of those passengers flying internationally. Both airports now, more than ever, act as key sites for negotiating (inter)national space and politics.

Lloyd, in her study on Sydney Airport and the city’s ‘aerial modernity’, suggests the airport occupies a space somewhere between the local and global, making it complex in the way it is both lived and represented. In her words, airports “locate urban and suburban subjects in conjunction with the internationalised, globalised abstract space of the world economy” (Lloyd, Marrickville 20), suggesting the airport is a space of negotiation where local life becomes interfaced with global capital. While the early discourses surrounding Auckland and Wellington’s airports framed them as opportunities for revitalising their cities’ urban development, more recent representations of their space harness these ideas of local space and cast them into the global network of commercial air travel. In 2009, Wellington Airport celebrated its fifty year anniversary of being open. Auckland, as a slightly younger airport, celebrated fifty years in 2016. Both Wellington International Airport Limited (WIAL) and Auckland International Airport Limited (AIAL) have recently posted promotional material for their respective anniversaries on YouTube and Vimeo that privilege particular historical narratives of their development. Two videos in particular, “Wellington Airport Celebrating 50 years (1959-2009)” and “Auckland Airport’s 50th Anniversary” frame each airport as unique in their local, urban identities while simultaneously suggesting they are part of the global market. A complex and somewhat contradictory image of place emerges that this section seeks to unpack.

Wellington Airport’s video begins with black and white photographs chronicling the development of aviation in Wellington. A voiceover states: “Rongotai has been developed from small beginnings to the stage we witness today…. World standard,” as pictures of construction are shown, including bulldozers moving earth and a house being moved to make way for the airport. This is followed by footage from events happening at the airport over the following decades, for example, ‘Miss Wellington Airport’ arriving at the airport’s opening event, with the Governor-General stating, “the spirit of progress, the spirit of adventure and endeavour that has always characterised Wellington is in evidence here today” in his official opening speech. Footage from the

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5 See Auckland Airport December 2016 Monthly Traffic Update
airshow is used, featuring aerobatic performances and aircraft taking off and landing. 1960s footage of military personnel forming a guard of honour in front of an aircraft then follows, along with shots of large crowds cheering for the arrival of the Beatles from their aeroplane in 1964 and welcoming the King and Queen of Thailand in 1962. These celebrated moments in the airport’s development discursively link it to Wellington City. They create a shared historical narrative in which the city is interfaced by the airport – in that visitors to Wellington enter the city via its space – while the airport is simultaneously interfaced by the city, as characteristic of its “spirit of progress, adventure and endeavour.”

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Fig 1: The Beatles arriving at Wellington Airport in 1964. Still from “Wellington Airport Celebrating 50 years (1959-2009)"

Auckland Airport’s video also begins with an historicisation of the airport, using archival footage of the opening pageant for Māngere Airport, a voiceover narrating “what an occasion that day was fifty years ago, a tribute to the vision of our predecessors…. Manukau has long been a transport hub ever since the Māori first landed and settled here.” Aerial shots of the farmland at Māngere follow, with the voiceover stating “the land was farmed before becoming a centre for Aucklanders with a passion for aviation” referencing the site of the Aero Club. Pictures of the developing runway follow, along with the narration: “in 1955, the area was secured for the purpose
of becoming the country’s primary international airport.” Here, the historical narrative put forth again connects Auckland and the airport in a symbiotic relationship, suggesting that Aucklanders are inherently air-minded, and that the city has always been a “transport hub.” Importantly, the ways in which a culture of aviation was gradually negotiated into both the structure of the city and the day-to-day lives of its residents are, for the majority, absent, eliciting an idealistic history of its space. In particular, the contention surrounding the placement of the airport and its impact on local farmers is left out in favour of a discourse of Aucklanders as “passionate aviators.”

Wellington Airport’s video goes on to show scenes from the following decades, including the opening of the new terminal in 1999 which replaced the “Tin Shed” – the hangar that had served forty years as a “temporary” terminal. It ends with a vision of the airport in the 2010s (the fiftieth anniversary being in 2009) when plans for the new “The Rock” terminal are shown – an upgrade designed to reflect the unique Wellington landscape surrounding the airport. Auckland Airport’s clip also shows how the spaces and culture of flight have developed over the years, the narrator stating: “as Auckland and New Zealand grew, so did our runways, terminals and airport facilities” and “the airport has continued to be reimagined as time has passed, as flight has moved from the hobby of risk-takers to the travellers of today’s global generation.” While the airport is reimagined here as a place that hosts a global generation, the narration continues to reference Auckland, signalling the city’s growth is synonymous with the airport’s expansion. Auckland Airport is furthermore described as “a place of arrivals and departures, a place of hello and goodbye, of kia ora and haere rā, of welcome home,” suggesting it is a uniquely New Zealand space through the use of te reo Māori words, while simultaneously positioning the space within the operational logic of a large hub airport through which people are consistently on the move. The narrator goes on to envision Auckland airport’s future, stating “we are already planning for what the world will look like in another fifty years. The places, the faces, the planes, and the way things are done will change, but one thing will not. Auckland Airport will always roll out New Zealand’s welcome mat to the world.”

While these clips frame the airports as inextricably linked to the history of their respective cities, they also produce a discourse of progress and evolution which projects
the airport into the future. Roseau stresses that airports are experimental structures; prototypes in urban development, yet they are designed in the context of an uncertain future, so that they are consistently subject to changes, upgrades, and redesign. Their spaces are thus “recast” on an ongoing basis in relation to the evolution of both air travel and the cities they host (Roseau 46). Importantly, this idea of uncertainty and frequent change makes the notion of heritage, or the urban history of airports, difficult to mark out, where, in Roseau’s words: “living heritage constantly negotiates the terms of its own transformation in light of the relentless demands of air transport” (50). The clips for Auckland and Wellington Airport make apparent the tension between the prototypal dimension of airport planning and development, working to project the airport's utility into the future, and the memorialisation of particular histories inscribed in existing architecture and practices.

Considering this, what becomes apparent in these promotional videos is that particular spatial histories are evoked; for example, Auckland in the 1960s, in order to help attach certain narratives to a trajectory of progress. In Lloyd’s work on Sydney Airport, she follows “the exterior of the airport, particularly as it is always articulated or interfaced with some other real and imaginary spaces, such as ‘the British Empire,’ ‘the Australian nation,’ ‘the inner city,’ ‘the suburbs’ among others, in a series of shifts that illuminate movements of continuity and change, but rarely add up to a whole” (Marrickville 32). In these videos, both Auckland International Airport and Wellington International Airport are also articulated with other spaces, such as rural New Zealand, Wellington and Auckland City, the nation, Aotearoa New Zealand and ‘the world,’ as they negotiate their way into an uncertain future. These strategies of framing make evident Adey’s claim that airports are “recast within spaces, histories and uses” (“Air-mindedness” 345), while at the same time complicating the idea of heritage and history as the airport constantly evolves.

As videos produced by the airport companies themselves, there is, of course, a commercial function to these videos that further implicates the relationship between local history and the global economy. David Harvey, writing about the nature of place and identity under capitalism, suggests that “the effort to evoke a sense of place and of the past is now often deliberate and conscious…. The quest for authenticity…. stands to
be subverted by the market provision of constructed authenticity, invented traditions and commercialized heritage culture” (12). This deliberate construction of an authentic sense of place becomes particularly obvious when considering Auckland Airport’s use of te reo Māori words and reference to Māori settlers in their “fifty years” video. Māori heritage is being mobilised in a particular way here, in order to anchor the airport in relation to a history unique to New Zealand. Yet, importantly, certain histories are absent from a large majority of the promotional material regarding the surrounding land of Auckland Airport’s development, problematising this reference. The land of South Manukau and the suburb of Māngere were bound up in the New Zealand wars of the 1860s in which the Crown confiscated land from Tainui iwi. The ancestral lands of Waikato-Tainui, stretching from the South of Manukau Harbour to the Mokau River, were at the heart of the King movement, or Kīngitanga. When the Crown sought to obtain the fertile land for Pākehā settlement, the Kīngitanga resisted the loss of land and control after which the British and colonial forces confiscated the land through a series of battles (Royal “Waikato Tribes”). While in 1946, a Royal Commission inquiring into the confiscation found that it had been excessive, offering a compensation payment, it wasn’t until 1995 that the Crown offered a Deed of Settlement to Waikato-Tainui, including cash and land valued at $170 million (“The Waikato-Tainui claim”).

The right to land was, evidently, a contentious issue, which Auckland Airport’s naming of the land at Māngere as both “a tribute to the vision of our predecessors” and a “transport hub since the Māori first landed here” works to smooth over. While stating “in 1955, the area was secured for the purpose of becoming the country’s primary international airport,” the video omits the indecision surrounding placement and funding; who secured it and from whom. Furthermore, the “Fighting Fund” opposing airport development on Māngere farmland set up by farmers such as the Kirkbrides in the early 1950s as described by Thompson and Clements becomes especially loaded in light of the Waikato-Tainui claim that had been gaining momentum since the 1860s, still far from settled in the 1950s. Māngere, and by extension, Auckland, becomes discursively constructed through the lens of the institutions and agents relating to the airport, selectively overlooking the site’s disputed history to utilise an idealised historical narrative for a unique place image.
The ways in which Wellington and Auckland’s airports have been represented within these materials spanning five decades indicate various shifts in the discourses surrounding the roles and uses of their spaces. The opening events for both airports solidify a particular narrative of progress for each city, reproducing nationalistic discourses at the local site of the airport and uniting their urban publics as air-minded people, while the recent anniversary videos by WIAL and AIAL project these narrative of progress into the future by using local sites to interface the changing landscapes of global air travel. In doing so, they privilege a number of historical narratives that contribute to a cohesive image of each airport’s history that, in sync with the social ideals, practices and attitudes of the city, smooth over the fact that both airports were gradually, and sometimes controversially, negotiated into urban space.

The representations of Auckland and Wellington’s airports demonstrate that the space of the airport is produced on different scales, for example, locally, as an urban infrastructure evoking the values and histories of its host city; nationally, as both a gateway to the external world and representative of national vitality; and globally, as a competitor in the world-market of air travel and authentic place branding. These are decidedly ideological representations of space; they are produced by a number of agents and institutions such as city councils, the national government, and the airport companies, engendering particular experiences surrounding the airport – to be air-minded; a citizen; part of a shared national history; or consumer of a particular place image. While these representations of airport space play a significant role in the ways in which their spaces are thought of and experienced, the physical, lived space of the terminal itself is also evocative or particular spaces and histories, as will be explored in the following chapter.
CHAPTER THREE
Designing the terminal: Affected mobilities and spectacular places

Having explored the narratives of development of Auckland and Wellington’s airports from the 1950s; the ways in which they have been situated within local histories in real, symbolic and sometimes contradictory ways, this chapter will focus on the internal spaces of the airports themselves: the architecture, processes and practices through which they are directly experienced. In the previous chapter, the airport was examined as a space represented through a number of texts, by which discourses positioned people as particular subjects in relation to airport space, such as local residents, air-minded citizens, and potential passengers. In the twenty-first century of frequent flyers and “departure lounge lizards” as Pico Iyer calls them (Gordon 250), people spend increasingly more time inside of the terminal itself, making it an important space of experience for passengers. While the airport terminal has been described as one of the many exchangeable spaces of global consumer culture, characteristic of “nowhere architecture” (Rem Koolhaas qtd. in Gottdiener 59) and the non-place, Gottdiener suggests that every location, including airports, “contains within it spatial markers and a cultural style that make it a definitive location, a material realm in which people interact, linger, and live” (61). The “dead time” often ascribed to the terminal experience comprised of waiting and moving through a number of zones before boarding a plane or leaving the airport opens up a site in which people experience ‘place’ in a number of ways. In Gottdiener’s words, “when we get stuck in the terminal… we are forced to deal with our surroundings” (31). On the one hand, airport terminals use strategic minimalist architecture to help move people swiftly through the terminal – for example, having planes visible through large glass windows to encourage passengers in the right direction – yet on the other, it is a space laden with signifiers of its geographic location; of the city and country it is hosted by. This chapter will analyse the organisation of space within Auckland’s and Wellington’s terminals in order to explore this relationship between the functional mechanisms of regulating passenger movement through the terminal, and the architecture, design features and practices that imbue these spaces with a sense of place.
3.1 Designing today’s airports

Since the 1950s, architects have built airports using symbols to create themed environments. While early airport designs recalled the large railway passenger terminals iconic of travel in the 19th century, from the 1980s, architects began to use symbolic motifs “referencing the associations and romance of flight”; for example, light, open spaces (Gottdiener 63). As Gottdiener cites architect Norman Foster on his design for the Hong Kong International Airport mega-facility: “It is a quest for calm spaces bathed in natural light – views to the aircraft, the sea, and the mountains, so that you always know where you are – an uplifting experience to bring a sense of occasion to air travel” (69). For Gordon, however, the dawn of the jumbo jet era of the 1970s meant that “the free standing terminal lost its architectural identity” (219), so “passengers became oblivious to the outside world, moving through concourses that were double-glazed and super-insulated to muffle the roar of jet engines” (221). The Airline Deregulation Act of 1978 removed federal control over commercial fares and routes in the USA, enabling airlines to make their own decisions regarding fare prices, services and routes. Competition grew for lower fares and more flights, beginning a transition in which airports began to function more as commercial entities rather than public utilities (Lyon, David Keith 65). This shift in airport function brought with it a reorganisation of airport space, through which the terminal became both a channel to efficiently process passengers for a high turnover rate and a form of commercial enclosure in which revenue is extracted.

In 1985, the New Zealand government proposed a new scheme by which airports would be formed into companies and thereafter operate on a commercial basis. The Airport Authorities Amendment Act was passed in 1986, amending the original 1966 Act by allowing the Crown and local authorities to form and hold shares in airport companies. By 1990, all major airports in the country, including Auckland and Wellington, had been corporatised. In July 1998, the Crown sold its 51.6% shareholding in Auckland Airport to a selection of private companies, and in December, sold its 66% shareholding in Wellington Airport’s company to Infratil. Both airports have then since been part local government and part privately owned. David Keith Lyon notes in his study on the commercialisation of New Zealand airports that in 2003, Auckland
Airport’s non aeronautical revenue (retail, food, entertainment, etc.) exceeded their aeronautical revenue, becoming greater in each subsequent year and representing a shift away from a reliance on aeronautical revenue to run airports (153). Wellington Airport, while maintaining a higher aeronautical revenue than non aeronautical, followed a similar trend, showing an 18.4% decrease from 1999 to 2008 in the amount of aeronautical revenue (Lyon, David Keith 201). Both airports have incorporated a growing number of non aeronautical sources of revenue into their spaces, so that passengers are increasingly surrounded by spending opportunities as they move through the terminal.

These spending opportunities, however, must be negotiated into the terminal design in a way that encourages maximum profit with the minimum effect on airport operations. Anna Nikolaeva, in her analysis of mobility and public space at Schiphol Airport, notes that there are often competing motives in airport design in which operational objectives and profit-making incentives are hard to reconcile (543). Salter has similarly emphasised the tension between enabling free mobility while maintaining high levels of security (“Governmentalities” 50). While the airports function to move people and cargo from land to air to land again, this movement must be organised in highly strategic ways in order to facilitate both security procedures and commercial imperatives. Movement is organised in a number of ways, including through the physical and information architecture of the terminal.

In his book on airport architecture and design, The Modern Terminal: New Approaches to Airport Architecture, Brian Edwards claims that airport terminals are “essentially movement systems,” noting that movement through the terminal is landmarked in four principal ways: by space, by structure, by light, and by objects (80). In terms of space, defining routes using different sizes or volumes of internal space helps the passenger determine if the concourse is a major or minor one; for example, a concourse leading toward a major gathering space that all passengers use, or a smaller corridor leading towards a toilet facility or emergency exit. Structures such as beams and columns, while physically supporting the infrastructure, also guide passengers through space by indicating direction or providing scale. Light can also be channelled to indicate direction, particularly between terminal levels, while objects within terminals
such as check-in counters, free standing kiosks and sculptures work as “orienting elements: solid points of reference that interrupt vistas or limit the edges of space” (Edwards 81-2). Such design elements work to both physically and psychologically orient and mobilise the passenger in often subtle ways; to move them through essential areas of operations – like immigration, health, and customs controls, and areas of expenditure, such as duty free – at a suitable pace.

In BBC Two’s miniseries on the culture of air travel, City in the Sky, host Dr Hannah Fry walks through Atlanta Airport discussing the navigation design ‘tricks’ that aid people efficiently through the terminal, echoing many of Edwards’ claims. Directional patterns in the flooring and lighting ensure “the space itself tells us where to go while the signs merely assist” (“Departure”). These signs, she suggests, actually slow passengers down, so Atlanta has as few as possible. Hard floors like tiles keep people moving, while carpeted areas signal it is time to stop, for example, at the gate. The ticket counters are angled to reinforce the directional flooring and encourage flow in the right direction, while a single “S” shaped queue has been proven more efficient than multiple straight lines, also eliminating the element of choice for the passenger who may worry about which line will be fastest. Fry remarks “if you’re less stressed out, you’re less likely to ask difficult questions when you finally get to the counter,” indicating these design features not only attempt to direct the mobile body in particular ways, but aim to produce particular forms of affect in the passenger, such as minimising stress. Again this is seen as she walks down the travellator, noting they are not notably faster than walking; however, they encourage directional flows, order passengers into particular lanes, and create the illusion of faster movement with less effort.

The terminals at Auckland and Wellington airports both use specific design elements to orient and mobilise the passenger. There is, for example, a multilevel design to separate outgoing and incoming passengers for efficiency, natural light and outside views in the departures area to direct the passenger toward the airside and carpeted floors to signal areas of rest. Auckland Airport has two separate international and domestic terminals located 500m apart and connected by a free shuttle service, in order to separate the international traveller – who often requires more security and will typically spend longer in waiting zones – from the domestic traveller. The international
terminal has a check-in hall to the left of the ground floor and arrivals on the right, with departures located upstairs on the floor above, along with retail opportunities and food stores. This creates a flow through which passengers typically arrive on the ground floor via the connecting road, check in at the left-hand side counters, follow a large stairwell up to the first floor to the main food court and retail zone after which they will pass through the “International Departures” gate, proceed to security and head to their gate to board. Passengers flying into the airport will arrive downstairs on the right side of the terminal and proceed out to the road. The domestic terminal is predominantly on one level, with departures from both the ground floor and smaller mezzanine first floor, with arrivals on the ground floor. Comparatively, Wellington International Airport, as a smaller airport with fewer international routes, operates out of single terminal constituted by three piers: the South, South West and North West piers. The main terminal building has a common check-in area for both international and domestic departures at its front, and a common retail area and food court at its rear, from which passengers depart via domestic and international gates. Incoming passengers arrive on the ground floor, where they collect baggage and leave via the connecting car park.

The design elements of these terminals, while subtle and innocuous in appearance, can be seen as examples of Adey’s “architecture of affective control,” in which affective triggers are engineered into the terminal for particular purposes. In Fry’s example, minimising stress through techniques such as eliminating the option to pick a queue affects how the passenger feels, so that certain points in the terminal can, in Adey’s words, “close-off the passenger’s capacity to disrupt the security processing system” (“Airports, Mobility” 445). These moments of engineered affect are distributed throughout the terminal in strategic ways to creative “relative states of anxiety” that correspond with airport operations (“Airports, Mobility” 446). For example, after moving through a high security bottleneck such as customs, the passenger arrives in the food and retail enclosure with many amenities and spaces to rest on offer, encouraging a relaxed passenger. The zones of the terminal work to interpellate different subjects, such as the secure, identified passenger, and the relaxed, liberal consumer during the passenger’s journey. Indeed, as Adey argues, “the knowledge of what bodies can do, how they will react to emotional and physical stimuli in an imaginative futurity opens up entirely new ways for manipulation as airport designers and operations attempt to
engineer and facilitate affect” (“Airports, Mobility” 439). These elements of design elicit certain responses from the passenger as part of a mechanism of control to guide movement in productive ways for the airport.

Adey, in earlier work on mobility in the airport terminal, has similarly suggested that airports position passengers in various technical arrangements and performances of spectatorship that hold them in specific areas, producing a form of immobility (“Attention” 515). Central to his argument is that spectatorship is bound up in the ways that people use and move through the airport. This spectatorship is another producer of affect engineered into the terminal in order to manage movement. Adey looks at the ways in which spectatorship is encouraged within airports by exploring the logic of spectacle. Debord argues that spectacle is not only a singular event or image that is spectated, but rather, the totality of the visual, where images mediate all social relations (117). Foregrounding the importance of the space that the spectator “inhabit, negotiates, and changes,” Adey explores not the object, but the context of spectatorship (“Attention” 517). Furthermore, while Foucault writes on the forms of power that order people in space through a lens of surveillance, focussing on the positioning of the observed, Adey inverts this dynamic by emphasising the ordering and arrangement of the observer, exploring spectatorship as a means to hold them in certain zones of airport space (Adey, “Attention” 516). Using Jonathan Crary’s work on spectacle and surveillance, Adey focuses on the relationship between attention and mobility. Crary says:

Spectacle is not primarily concerned with looking at images, but rather with the construction of conditions that individuate, immobilize, and separate subjects, even within a world which mobility and circulation are ubiquitous. In this way, attention becomes the key to the operation of non-coercive forms of power. (qtd. in Adey, “Attention” 519)

For Adey, the attention of the spectator is harnessed in order to immobilise them, opening them up to various power dynamics within the terminal, such as, on the one hand, governmental authorities at passport and customs checks and on the other hand, areas of high density retail which encourage expenditure. Importantly, however,
passengers are not locked in the position of the passive spectator. Adey emphasises that these acts of spectatorship are instead the result of how airports actively plan and hope people will gather in particular spaces (“Attention” 520).

Airports have, from their conception, been spaces of spectacle, where the new technologies of flight encouraged large crowds not necessarily to fly themselves, but for “the spectatorial experience of aircraft” (Adey, “Attention” 525). Opportunities for observing the spectacle of flight continue to be designed into airports today, for example, the observation deck in which waiting passengers, friends and family can watch flights arriving and departing. However, many instances of attention management now serve the retail purposes of the airport rather than the spectacle of flight. Windows work to expose people to as much retail frontage as possible and function to immobilise passers-by as they gaze into shop displays. They are also used to offer external views, and signify, as Gillian Fuller suggests, the “spectacle of outside” (qtd. in Adey, “Attention” 526). Architects then surround the views with spending opportunities, such as cafes, restaurants and retail, so that the passenger’s gaze is drawn, attention captured, and they are susceptible to advertising. Informational architecture works to position people in the terminal in a similar way. Flight information displays, for example, encourage passengers to dwell in the immediate area as to not miss any updates, and such areas are, too, “imbued with the politics of consumer spending and profit maximisation” (Adey “Attention” 528). These technologies of viewing that configure people in particular relationships with the subject of their observation and within the terminal are, Adey argues, increasingly bound up with the politics of airport commercialisation, which work to extract as much revenue from the passenger in the terminal without impeding safety, security, and operational efficiency (“Attention” 532).

While airports have become deregulated from government control and subsequently privatised by commercial holders, they still constitute a form of public space, which ties into the ways in which mobility can be regulated. Nikolaeva uses Schiphol Airport as an instance of public space designed for mobility. She suggests terminal space can become more legible when broken down into sections such as plazas and streets, which people are familiar with from their experiences in the city (550).
Discussing the challenges of designing terminal space, she quotes the French urbanist Francois Asher who says designs work to “[reconcile] those near-opposites that constitute the richness of cities: hurry and dawdling, efficiency and unhurriedness, functionality and superfluity, the planned and the unexpected” (qtd. in Nikolaeva 551). Similarly, John Allen, in his research on “privatised public space” suggests that despite a common narrative of privatised public spaces – such as malls – becoming exclusive to the kinds of public they encourage and thereby producing a form of urban closure, a novel form of commercialised public space has emerged. Using the example of the Sony Centre on Potsdamer Platz in Berlin – a kind of exhibition complex for entertainment wares of Sony – Allen argues that this new form of space constitutes its public through a logic of inclusion (442). “Accessible yet closed,” he claims, “inclusive yet controlled, the very openness of this commercialised public space is precisely what allows consumers to be constructed through a logic of seduction” (Allen 442). While consumers are not enclosed in the space – the Centre being a large, open plaza with four main entrances – they are, nevertheless, subtly positioned within it in certain ways, surrounded by a finite possibility of attractions which redirect attention in a largely predisposed manner (Allen 448). People engage with things such as demonstrations of new software games, the Style Store or the Berlin Filmhaus, simply because they are in proximity to it, so that, as Allen argues “power closes down options through an inclusive logic” (452). The space is private in that it belongs to Sony, yet constitutes a form of staged public space through the nature of its open design and the seductive arrangement of attractions that anyone can engage with. For Allen, the result of such a space is a non-coercive operation of power in which Sony, as a brand, is sold to customers via the experience of the space in an “emergent economy of affect” (449). He continues: “it is as if the experience of the space itself which provides the commercial offering and only indirectly the durable goods and corporate software on display” (Allen 449).

The forms of affective positioning Adey suggests are engineered into airport terminals to capture passenger attention within spaces of retail can also work to create novel forms of public space in which the experience of space itself becomes the product, as Allen argues Sony’s privatised public plaza does. The following section will explore the ways in which the physical designs of Auckland and Wellington airports not
only regulate mobility for the purposes of airport operations such as security, identification, and expenditure, but simultaneously work to channel and arrest mobile bodies through demonstrations of place in order to produce particular experiences that function within an economy of affect.

3.2 Producing the spectator

This section will focus primarily on the performances of spectatorship that passengers are encouraged to perform within Auckland’s and Wellington’s terminals, exploring the ways in which attention and mobility become linked for particular purposes. To begin with, examining the placement of observation decks and viewing areas within the airports can help determine the functions they serve in both regulating mobility and producing forms of affect in the passenger. Auckland Airport has a number of areas from which people can watch planes depart and arrive. The website Spotter Guide, a hub for plane spotters who share their experiences of favourite “spots” to watch aeroplanes from around the world, compiles profiles of various airports, detailing the viewing areas they host. Sections such as “where” providing a description of the spot, “what” describing what can be seen, “time” detailing the best times to watch and “miscellaneous” compiling additional information such as nearby facilities for food, drink and seating help rate the overall utility of each spot. Auckland Airport’s profile, compiled by user Julian Mittnacht, lists seven spots, including spaces within and outside the terminal. The three main interior spots are at the upstairs gates in the domestic terminal providing views of the gates used by Air New Zealand and the main runway beside it, a look-out observation area on the top floor of the international terminal which has since been closed due to renovations but once providing panoramic views of gates on one side of the international pier, and another airside spot at the end of the international terminal providing views of the gates on one side of the terminal and the runway (Mittnacht). Such a resource demonstrates particular patterns of using space at Auckland Airport from both the guide’s author and other “spotters” who have commented, indicating that, in Lefebvre’s terms, certain spatial practices, or modes of perceiving and moving through space, have developed within the terminal.

Each spot, it is noted, is in close proximity to “plenty of food and drink facilities
in the terminal” (Mittnacht), indicating that users of these spaces both require, and are positioned around, particular amenities during points of observation. From a designer’s perspective, the location of these spots close to departure gates and in the international terminal, through airport security, indicate that only those with tickets can use them, demarcating this form of observation as for passengers only. While passengers have already paid for their use of space, they are encouraged to increase their expenditure, so that these observation points act as a form of capture for the already-constituted consumer. While Wellington Airport does not have a profile on Spotter Guide, this is not to suggest there are no opportunities for plane watching. The rear of the common food and retail area on the first floor is a vast pane of floor to ceiling glass windows that look out onto the runway. Plenty of seating is allocated to this area, also doubling as consumption spots for customers of the surrounding cafés, bar, and restaurant. The views from these windows may attract observers who are then located within the expenditure zone, encouraged to buy food and drink. This common area is accessible to anyone; users of the space do not require a ticket to access it, indicating that the amenities in this area may serve not only passengers, but customers who have come to the airport specifically for particular spending opportunities. The often subtle organisation of space within these observation areas thereby allow for specific modes of being in and experiencing the terminal, imbued with commercial and operational motives.

Wellington Airport encourages another form of observation specifically for those who are departing on an international flight. In The Rock departures lounge is a large display cabinet from the New Zealand Department of Conservation (DOC), filled with restricted items that require certain permits if they are to be brought into the country. A sign titled “Going shopping overseas? Don’t buy trouble” states:

Be careful what you buy when travelling overseas – including souvenirs. Take a look at what’s in this cabinet – all these items were seized at the airport because their owner did not have a CITES [Conservation of International Trade of Endangered Species] permit. Items containing parts from CITES listed species will be confiscated and owners risk a $100,000 fine or 5 years in prison if required permits are not presented to border
control when you arrive in New Zealand.

Among the items on display are a tortoise shell, an ornamental monkey skull, a preserved tarantula, traditional Asian medicines, a zebra skin and a large tusk. The positioning of these items arranged as an exhibition constitutes a spectacle in that the exotic items on display harness the attention of the passenger, who is then confronted with a warning against bringing them back into the country. This form of spectacle works to align the passenger with New Zealand’s biosecurity rules in order to regulate their return into the country, demonstrating another way in which passenger movements may be affected by the terminal design. Furthermore, this display acts as a mode of address to the thoughtful citizen. Rather than be a passenger who brings a restricted item into the country and is apprehended with fines and/or incarceration, the departing passenger is called into the position of a self-managing citizen, who takes responsibility for what they purchase and bring back from overseas. Here, the security functions of the terminal become quite explicit. However, while the cabinet is in a practical location to address passengers in one of the last zones before they board the plane, its presence in the The Rock terminal – a structure inspired by the “geological, historical and mythological past of Wellington’s south coast” (Wellington Airport “Wild About the Rock”), indicates another element competing for space in airport design. References to place are simultaneously designed into the terminal, which will be explored in the following section.
3.3 “Why is the big plane hanging from the ceiling?”

In addition to positioning passengers in proximity to spending opportunities and airport information, both Wellington and Auckland Airport use spectacle as a means of projecting ideas of place onto the passenger. Scott Lash and John Urry, in their book *Economies of Signs and Space*, discuss the concept of “place-marketing,” which, in their words:

entails the auditing of the resources of a locality… this includes both its physical artefacts and the possible place-images. It is then presumed that when visitors consume the various tangible products (such as visiting an
industrial museum, buying a souvenir), they also acquire the core product of a place (such as its unique history, its cosmopolitanism or its mystery).

(215)

Both airports use the physical space of the terminal to offer up these tangible experiences of place through practices of spectatorship. Auckland Airport’s international terminal displays the Percival Gull G-ADPR in which New Zealander Jean Batten made the first ever solo trip from England to New Zealand in 1936, landing at Māngere Airport on October 16th. The 400kg plane is hung from the terminal roof over the arrival hall, visible to both departing passengers on the first floor and arriving passengers on the ground floor. An accompanying sign titled “Why is the plane hanging from the ceiling?” names Batten as New Zealand’s most famous aviator and details her renowned flight. The international terminal is also named after Batten, with a statue of her outside, demonstrating that she occupies a dominant space in the airport’s image. Liz Millward, author of *Women in Imperial Airspace*, suggests Batten signifies the dual processes of imperialism and nationalism, becoming the first person to link England and New Zealand by air. However, she suggests that Batten’s multiple interactions in New Zealand, among other nations including Australia and Brazil, “signified many different things and offset any easy perception that technological knowledge and prestige were being transmitted from the centre of an empire to its peripheral colonies and dominations” (Roth 121). Auckland Airport’s emphasis on her New Zealand identity, despite moving to London as a young adult, helps to shift this discourse of British imperialism to one of New Zealand nationalism, reiterating the importance of aviation in national history.

Auckland Airport borrowed the plane from the Shuttleworth Trust in 1990 to put on display for New Zealand’s 150th anniversary celebrations, which coincided with the airport’s twenty-fifth birthday, before negotiating to buy it. Before 2010, the plane was hung above the food court in the departures area. Its relocation to above the arrival hall, as stated on Auckland Airport Corporate’s website, “means that people arriving into Auckland, as well as those enjoying a meal at the food court, will be able to view the famous tiny plane that carried our world-record breaking aviatrix” (Auckland Airport “Batten plane on the move”). This repositioning of the plane to appeal to a wider range
of viewers demonstrates its function as something first and foremost to be looked at. We can situate this spectacle within Adey’s framework of using attention as a means to arrest mobility within the airport terminal. Similar to the way in which he suggests windows and screens capture the gaze of the mobile passenger, the plane’s presence in the terminal attracts attention for particular purposes. Adey’s argument – that these forms of spectacle hold people around compulsive consumption zones – is, indeed, applicable to the plane’s positioning, particularly as it was situated directly above the international departures food court. Passengers admiring the display would soon see the array of eating and drinking opportunities around them. However, the plane’s relocation to include arriving passengers as spectators suggests it simultaneously functions as a form of place-marketing. As a greeting to those who have just landed in the country, both visitors and citizens alike, the plane works to reinforce a particular historical narrative of both Auckland and New Zealand. Its tangible presence in the terminal, along with the question and answer format of the information plaque – “Why is the big plane hanging from the ceiling? The plane belonged to New Zealand’s most famous aviator” – allows it to act, as Lash and Urry describe, as part of “the core product of place” (215).

The spectacular nature of this process works to instantiate one dominant narrative in the spectator’s view: that Batten’s extraordinary achievement is bound up in the development and history of Auckland airport. She is portrayed as possessing great technical prowess and courage, being able to navigate and fly such an early aircraft for a long distance, which becomes packaged as part of her identity as a New Zealander, and, specifically an Aucklander. However, while 6,000 people awaited Batten’s arrival in Māngere in 1936, Mayor Ernest Davis had tried to deter her from coming. His speech upon her arrival, according to the New Zealand government’s official history website, “managed to be both condescending and congratulatory”:

Jean you are a very naughty girl. And really I think you want a good spanking for giving us such a terribly anxious time here. We knew you could do it, but we did not want you to run the risk. We glory in what you have done, and we glory in your wonderful and magnificent pluck, dear. We congratulate you from the bottom of our hearts. (Davis, qtd. in “Jean
Such language indicates that while her achievement was congratulated, Batten’s status as a young woman dominated the responses to her arrival, through which she was both infantilised and, to an extent, sexualised. What is privileged on the information displayed at Auckland Airport, however, is her national identity, rather than her age or gender. Lash and Urry suggest that the social composition of the local population contributes to how place-images are produced; in their words: “the ways in which different divisions of class, gender, race and generation overlay each other and may result in particularly powerful or distinctive social groups able to impose their habitus on their town or city” (216). The Batten plane works to orient the arriving individual in line with a particular narrative of New Zealand history which serves the municipal bodies and national government, through depicting the nation, and Auckland in particular, as socially and technically progressive.

3.4 Thrills at the “Middle of Middle Earth”

Wellington Airport’s terminal design also uses spectacle to ‘place’ the airport in certain ways. The exterior of the main terminal building displays the name “Middle of Middle Earth” – a reference to the Lord of the Rings (LOTR) franchise filmed in New Zealand and directed by New Zealander Peter Jackson – while the airport’s interior is dominated by three large LOTR themed installations, designed and set up by Weta Workshop, a special effects and prop company based in Wellington. A thirteen-metre long sculpture of the character Gollum was installed in the main terminal building above the windows that look onto the runway in 2012, suspended from the roof and showing the emaciated figure submerged and reaching for fish as seen in The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers. According to Steve Sanderson, Wellington Airport’s Chief Executive:

As the first and last impression to our region, the Airport is proud to work with Weta and have this magnificent sculpture on display for all to see. Everyone will be amazed when they enter the terminal. Visitors can walk
under and around Gollum and the fish to explore the sculpture’s beauty and intricate detail; it really does feel like you’re in the stream with him. (“Gollum”)

In December 2013, another sculpture was installed showing Gandalf the Grey atop one of two Great Eagles, as seen in *The Hobbit*, suspended from the roof as if they are swooping into the terminal above the arrivals, creating “yet another unforgettable experience into Wellington Airport” (“Gandalf”). In November 2014, a third sculpture of Smaug the Magnificent, a dragon of Middle Earth, was installed, who “watches over passengers checking-in” (“Smaug”).

Fig 3: Gollum at Wellington International Airport, photo by Kent Blechynden, Fairfax Media NZ / Dominion Post.

In Daniela Carl et al.’s investigation into film tourism in New Zealand, they observe that the New Zealand government and many commercial operators have invested in extensive promotion of New Zealand as Middle Earth, and that, for a number of tourists, the way New Zealand landscapes have been packaged and promoted
in the films motivated their travel (50). Carl et al. cite the (now defunct) New Zealand tourist website Pure NZ, which “unabashedly promoted New Zealand as the ‘Home of Middle Earth’ or even more directly as ‘Middle Earth’ itself” (54), indicating that New Zealand was much more than just the shooting location of the films, but linked to their cultural landscape. Although New Zealand has no direct links with J. R. R. Tolkien – the author of the books on which the films are based – it has become inextricably bound up in the country’s tourism image through Jackson’s creative direction and decision to film here. Wellington Airport, as a commercial operator, has indeed invested in the promotion of New Zealand as Middle Earth and particularly, Wellington, as a dominant stakeholder in this image. The airport itself has little to do with the production of the films, nor is it a shooting location. However, the self-promotion of the airport as the “Middle of Middle Earth” works in a similar way to Pure NZ’s description of NZ as “Middle Earth itself”; by not just representing the production context of the film, but by also producing the space of the airport as part of the filmic diegesis.

Within the LOTR films, scenes are a combination of the “real” shooting location and post-production digital effects, interwoven with the performances of the actors and the larger narrative. According to Carl et al., the “unadulterated” geographic landscapes “provide little access to these elements of the film experience” for tourists, so that a disjunction between the hyperreal world of the film and the real shooting landscape occurs (50). The installations at Wellington Airport, as larger-than-life yet highly realistic replicas of the films’ characters, work to help tourists bridge the gap between the geographic location of production and the hyperreal world of the film. Furthermore, the language used in articles regarding the installations on the airport’s website discursively frame these sculptures as hyperreal, which act as a strategy to produce the airport as a gateway to more than just a shooting or production location, but rather, to the experience of Middle Earth itself. For example, the titles “Gollum dives into Wellington Airport’s terminal”; “Gandalf swoops into Wellington Airport’s terminal”; and “Smaug – the great dragon of Middle-earth lies in wait… to thrill travellers” animate the sculptures so that they figuratively take up the characteristics of the fictional creatures. They loom above passengers functioning to “delight” and “amaze,” becoming hyper-real components of the airport-as-Middle-Earth. The presence of the fictional characters within the real space of the airport merges Middle Earth and
Wellington Airport into a single cultural landscape. This, in turn, allows Wellington Airport to capitalise on the success of Middle Earth as an imaginary location by intertwining it with the real space of the terminal. Furthermore, the production context of the installations become linked to the place-image, where Weta Workshop’s involvement represents, as Urry and Lash have said, the “auditing of the resources of a locality [to] acquire the core product of a place” (215).

3.5 Experiencing the spectacle of place

Both the Jean Batten plane at Auckland Airport and the LOTR installations at Wellington Airport share a similar spectacular nature, being large objects displayed hanging from the roof as if they were in motion. Situating these installations within the logic of spectacle, by which, in Crary’s words, “attention becomes the key to the operation of non-coercive forms of power” (qtd. in Adey, “Attention” 519), they can be used to analyse what forms this non-coercive power takes within each terminal building. Navigating airport space already involves certain performances of spectatorship, such as following large concourses to common areas and staying close to flight information displays. Spectatorship is figured here as a spatial practice of a society that frequents airports. For Lefebvre, spatial practices structure everyday reality; they “ensure continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society’s relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance” (33). To move through the airport requires acts of spectatorship as part of this specific level of performance. At Auckland and Wellington airports, the passenger thereby comes across the installation as a pre-constituted spectator. They are produced as spectators both by the nature of the space, and, as Allen suggests, by “a logic of seduction” (442); they look because they are there. The ways in which these forms of spectacle within the terminal can harness attention project certain narratives of place onto the passenger as they pass through its space; of Auckland Airport as the home of Jean Batten and as Wellington Airport as Middle-Earth. Furthermore, their positions within the terminal in hubs where both arriving and

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6 The Batten plane has a wingspan of 11 metres, each LOTR eagle is 15 metres in wingspan, Gollum is 13 metres in length and Smaug is 4.25 metres from nose to the back of his head.
departing passengers pass through maximises their exposure, reinforcing these place-images across the trajectory of the terminal.

These specific place-images, however, are patched into an assemblage of histories and cultural contexts that the airports are trying to evoke. In another example, the arriving passenger at Auckland Airport, before exiting into the arrivals hall from which the Batten plane is visible, walks beneath a large Māori artwork of traditional wood carvings. On the airport’s website in the project profile for a 2008 upgrade to the arrivals area, it states:

As you make your way from the arrival gate to the arrival hall you will pass beneath a magnificent piece of Māori artwork, crafted from eleven totara logs and gifted to the airport by the late Māori Queen. The carving takes the form of a traditional doorway and represents all the Māori tribes in New Zealand. (Auckland Airport “Our Brand New Welcome Experience”)

While it may be representative of the Māori tribes of New Zealand, the carving’s position as a doorway through which the passengers will walk provides only a fleeting glimpse into this narrative of cultural heritage of New Zealand before the passenger passes into a space evoking another history: the arrival hall dominated by the Batten plane.

In another example, at Wellington Airport for the months of August and September 2016, the main terminal hosted a video collection called Talk Treaty – a project designed to open up conversation surrounding the Treaty of Waitangi and Māori and Pākehā culture. Created in 2015 by the Morgan Foundation, Talk Treaty is a collection of interviews with more than fifty New Zealand personalities – both Māori and Pākehā – talking frankly about the Treaty of Waitangi and a wide range of issues relating to it, including working with Pākehā, being Māori in NZ, and the Treaty and daily life. While the collection itself opens up an important dialogue between Māori and

See Wellington Airport “Talk Treaty.”
Pākehā people, its position in the terminal provides another node in the airport’s place image to harness the passing passenger’s attention. Gareth Morgan of the Morgan Foundation, in an interview discussing the project, said that its position “smack in the middle of one of the most highly travelled places in the country – an airport” gave it unique exposure to the public (“Treaty Talk: the Sky’s the Limit”). Indeed, with 5.9 million passengers passing through the airport in 2016, it garnered a wide reception, representing the airport, Wellington and New Zealand as taking vital steps into talking about and understanding the Treaty and Māori heritage. However, its temporary stay in the terminal for only two months indicates that this is a cultural narrative the airport has assumed and then absolved among an assemblage of others.

This content is not available. Please consult the print version for access.

Fig 4: Talk Treaty exhibition, Wellington Airport August-Sept 2016 (Wellington Airport “Talk Treaty”).

These place-images, interwoven throughout each terminal, work to evoke certain local and national histories. They are, in Lefebvre’s terms, spaces of representation that signify the directly lived spaces of everyday experiences. These experiences, however, merge together to create an overall picture of shared histories, which the airports harness as part of their image. The physical space of the terminal, and its primary function of channelling passengers from land to air and vice versa, is “overlaid” by these symbols and images “making symbolic use of its objects” (Lefebvre 39), so that the space becomes imbued with meaning. Lefebvre describes these spaces as possessing “an affective kernel or centre” (42) in that they represent the lived
experiences of inhabitants and users. Indeed, the designs of these terminals motivate an affective response in the passenger as Adey describes it. However, these widely-encompassing “shared” histories gloss over the ambiguities and ironies present in the narratives evoked. Auckland Airport’s arrival hall is fraught with competing spaces of representation; a Eurocentric narrative of New Zealand nationalism tied up closely with Britain represented by the Batten plane, interfaced with a fleeting glimpse of Māori heritage in the totara carving. Wellington’s terminal similarly produces a complex space of representation, in which the cultural landscape of LOTR becomes entangled with the meditations on Māori and Pākehā culture in the Talk Treaty exhibition. Bound up in the logic of the airport’s space, these place-images are designed to be observed en route by the passenger moving through the terminal, so that movement helps smooth over the contradictions and ironies inherent in these shared histories to retain a cohesive image of place for the airport.

The experience of the terminal itself is thus closely tied up in the design and organisation of space, through its affective positioning of the moving passenger. This type of affective experience is encouraged by the terminal in a non-coercive way, in that while the passenger is not forced to look, they are within a space that encourages it. We can align this power dynamic with the logic of the privatised, public space that Allen discusses. Similar to the ways in which the Sony Centre in Potsdamer Platz is “accessible yet closed” and “inclusive yet controlled,” the airport, too, is a privatised space that attracts certain publics through its specific services. Allen suggests that such spaces enable brands to sell themselves to customers via the experience of the space itself, in an “emergent economy of affect” (449), as Sony does in Potsdamer Platz. While Wellington and Auckland Airport may use attention as a tool to position passengers around spending opportunities and airport information, the airport companies also rely on the affective experience of the space itself to sell their brand, by packaging an experience of place for the airport user. While these place packages may contain ambiguities in the shared histories they evoke, the organisation of space and the design of the terminal channels the passenger forwards, leaving little time to meditate on individual narratives. Movement and spectatorship as spatial practices and place-images as both spectacle and spaces of representation work in unison here to produce each airport as a distinct space: one of history, representation, and sociality, but also one
of capital, of transience, and of ambiguity.

The forms of affect that Adey suggests are engineered into airport terminals also contribute to a dynamic of privatised, public space in which the experience of space itself becomes the product. While predominantly thought of as a space of movement, the airport simultaneously slows down and stops movement by harnessing passenger attention, using the logic of spectacle to provide particular experiences of place that becomes bound up in the airport’s brand image. While the construction and development of New Zealand airports has ‘placed’ them in relation to national history and the lives of local residents, the dominant branding of Auckland Airport as the home of Jean Batten and Wellington Airport as the Middle of Middle Earth thus provide modes of experience designed to orient the passenger in relation to place narratives during their temporary stay in the terminal itself. The organisation of space within the airport, along with the affective experiences that are designed into it, suggest that although the privatisation of airports has resulted in the proliferation of the consumer-passenger, channelled through the terminal on a vector of maximum expenditure, specific markers of place still configure into airport design in often subtle ways. These ‘placings,’ however, are often assemblages of sometimes contradictory narratives, which are designed to take on a transient nature as the passenger passes through them. Furthermore, it is not only the physical space of the terminal that provides opportunities for which spaces of representation can be opened up and harnessed for particular purposes, such as selling place narratives. Media texts representing Auckland and Wellington airports utilise particular shared histories in order to frame their spaces in productive ways, too, as will be explored in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR
Framing the border: Securing mobility and representing the nation

While Wellington and Auckland airports’ companies use place-images to market the space of the airport to customers, the importance of place is also articulated through the need for security. In this manner, the airport becomes a uniquely political space in that it requires every individual to be identified as part of a larger governmentality of risk management specific to the geographic and political space of the border. In Fuller and Harley’s words, “the airport not only transforms a body on the ground into a body in the air, but it also involves the incorporeal transformation of the travelling body into a series of processing categories, like citizen, passenger, baggage allowance, threat” (44). While the idea of the ‘nation’ has been continuously evoked in this thesis as part of how airports are constructed, designed and branded, in the interests of national security, passengers are also individually ‘placed’ in certain relationships with the nation as they move through the airport itself.

Salter argues that airports reflect and represent the “intersecting forces that organize contemporary politics, facilitating transit while simultaneously securitising identity” (“Governmentalities” 49). By examining recent media representations of Auckland and Wellington airports, these motives become evident in competing discourses of the airport experience. This chapter is concerned with the discursive production of mobility through the airport; the processes which differentiate between the mobility of each passenger in relation to the nation, and how exploring these mechanisms of framing can reveal underlying modes of governmentality. I will consider material from promotional sources such as Auckland and Wellington airports’ official websites, the New Zealand reality television series Border Patrol, focusing on the customs operations at Auckland Airport, and news stories in the media regarding border security at both airports. These materials will be used to discuss the processes, practices and representations of passenger movements, exploring the ways in which they interpellate both New Zealand citizens and foreigners alike.

4.1 Airport governmentalities and managing movement

Both Wellington and Auckland Airport’s official websites use specific language
to represent the airport experience. Auckland Airport’s site uses the phrases: “the following information will help make your departure stress-free”; “arrival procedures at Auckland Airport enable passengers to easily plan and go through airport safety and security processes, to allow for a smooth entry through the gateway to New Zealand”; “to make sure your experience with us is convenient and pleasant, all arriving passengers have access to currency exchange, duty free shopping…” and “no matter what airline or class you are flying, the Emperor Lounge invites you to enjoy its quiet space and relax before your flight.” Wellington’s site similarly provides “information to assist visitors and passenger use the airport with ease.” The words “stress-free,” “ease,” “smooth entry,” “convenience,” and “pleasant” represent positive experiences of mobility at these airports. The “stress” that can potentially accompany air travel is presented as easy to avoid, if passengers follow airport rules and plan ahead.

While in these examples the airport has been promoted as a stress-free environment, this elides the fact that the airport is also a space of tension (Salter, “Governmentalities”) and anxiety (Adey, “Airports, Mobility”). To identify risks to safety and security, every passenger must be identified and authorised at certain points throughout their terminal journey – a process that Fuller and Harley have argued becomes rationalised through “a discourse of exception” (44). The airport thus becomes a distinctively political space, theorised by Salter as an instance of Agamben’s “state of exception,” which draws on Foucault’s work on biopolitics. For Agamben, sovereign power is premised on the right to declare a state of emergency, in which the law that normally underpins political life comes into a state of suspension. The sovereign decides whether or not the law applies to a certain situation, or whether it can be overridden by political fact. Of concern to Agamben are the lives that become caught up in this state of exception, who are excluded from their normal rights by the sovereign. In Salter’s words, they become “subject to the [temporary] law but not subjects in the law” (“When the Exception” 367, my emphasis). This “bare life,” as Agamben names it, is treated as a purely biological body, stripped of its inclusion in the political sphere and subject to the sovereign’s overriding power of governance (Homo Sacer 171).

Foucault argues that this sovereign power to abandon life from the law has been reconstituted to act through the administration of life, where the state takes into its care
the vital biological processes of the population (“Right of Death” 259). Here, political power takes biological life as its object of management and control, for example, measuring the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction and fertility in order to optimise a population. As a result, a form of “biopolitical life” emerges, through which life is submitted to these technologies of power as part of its conditions of existence (Mills 1). For Agamben, however, these modes of power are not mutually exclusive. He claims that the “state of exception” that produces bare life is increasingly becoming the rule, or the “dominant paradigm of government” (“The State of Exception” 2). In this case, state power acts directly upon the bare, biological life as its normal mode of governmentality, bringing bare life from the periphery to the centre of its attention. For Agamben, then, the “original activity of sovereign power” is the production of the biopolitical body (Homo Sacer 6).

The airport, as an exceptional zone according to Fuller and Harley, demonstrates the logic of Agamben’s argument. Here, the state of emergency that the sovereign decision is premised on is the security of mobility, in which decisions to secure national space can override a person’s normal rights while they are in the airport. The mobile body is stopped, examined, and identified by airport security, so that, as Salter argues, all passengers enter into a “space of indistinction in which citizens, foreigners, exiles, refugees and asylum seekers are all held in an extra-political nowhere while the sovereign makes a decision” (“When the Exception” 370). While the passenger is considered, they are temporarily classified as a potentially alien body that could be a threat to security so that “the border is a permanent state of exception, which makes the ‘normal’ biopolitical control of government inside the territorial frontier of the state possible” (Salter, “When the Exception” 365). Here, political power acts directly on the biological body as part of securitising the border so that “bare life” is continually produced.

4.2 Representing the biopolitical border

Border Patrol, a New Zealand reality television series focusing on border security as governed by the New Zealand Customs Service, Immigration New Zealand (INZ) and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), uses this logic of exceptionality –
of treating each and every mobile body as a potential threat – as its framing device. In contrast with the representations of passenger mobility offered on Auckland and Wellington’s airport websites, Border Patrol represents the airport experience as rigidly policed and highly tense – far from a smooth and relaxed flow through the terminal. Peter Hughes has looked at Border Security: Australia’s Frontline, particularly as a docu-soap style which works to entertain rather than inform or analyse, and how this functions as a form of positive public relations for border operations and larger government agencies. While perhaps performing a similar function for the public relations of New Zealand’s border operations, what is of importance here is how Border Patrol portrays the different ways in which people are processed through the country’s airports. While Wellington Airport is not a filming location, Auckland Airport and Queenstown Airport are the primary settings, providing in depth insights into the ways mobility is governed within the country. In the opening credits for Season 7, a voiceover states:

New Zealand’s air, sea and land borders are persistently under attack. Drugs, prohibited goods, pest organisms and animal diseases are among the unwanted and the unwelcome that could destroy our economy and our whole way of life. Standing in their way are our defenders: the men and women of customs and the Ministry of Primary Industries. Crucial lines of defence… New Zealand’s Border Patrol.

Described as “persistently under attack,” the border is framed as a space that requires perpetual defence as it is in a perpetual state of emergency under the threat of external forces. While in a post 9/11 aeromobile environment terrorism is seen as a pervasive risk, the opening credits suggest Border Patrol is primarily concerned with biosecurity, and the effect drugs, pest organisms and animal diseases may have on New Zealand life, constituting its own geographically and politically specific state of emergency. The typical episode structure follows intercut stories of passengers under suspicion of border violations at both Auckland and Queenstown Airports, as well as items that have been deemed suspicious and in need of examination at the Auckland Mail Centre (for the purpose of this discussion, footage from airports will be
prioritised). Hughes argues that *Border Security: Australia’s Frontline* “discursively constructs situations and individuals as ‘risky’” (444). This is also true for *Border Patrol* New Zealand, where every passenger featured is, through the nature of the show, under suspicion as they are subject to points of examination by authorities that determine whether or not they are able to pass through. There is a representation of specific and ongoing risks in these airports which requiring constant policing, to which every passenger is subject.

The use of specific camera shots in *Border Patrol* emphasise that these airports are spaces of risk, thereby reinforcing this potential of the sovereign exception for each passenger. Establishing shots for each story within an episode use similar techniques, including time-lapse footage of indistinct bodies moving through the airport terminal, baggage on carousels and passengers moving through security checkpoints, which are intercut with shots of airport signage demarcating “high security” areas, red lights above the customs search room, CCTV screens, the chain link fence marking off the runway, and so on. These visual cues denote a number of zones that must be transgressed by the passenger in order to move through the airport, where, by the logic of its space, they are continually considered as potentially suspicious.

Within this space, *Border Patrol* depicts specific individuals as risky through a focus on security techniques such as behavioural profiling. Adey has examined behaviour profiling strategies in airports, suggesting that while security checks primarily rely on identification of individuals passing through – whether it is biometric processing such as facial or iris recognition technology or a customs officer matching a passport with the corporeality of the body presented – airport security personnel are additionally systematically reading the gestures, expressions, and micro-movements of the body in order to uncover hostile intentions (“Facing Security” 277-280). For example, rapid eye movement, perspiration, or agitation could indicate a passenger has hostile intentions, from concealing a restricted item across the border to engaging in unwarranted activity. This form of behavioural profiling pre-empts particular scenarios under a regime of risk management, by detecting the often subconscious displays of emotions, feelings, fears and anxieties by the body (Adey, “Facing Security” 279-280). Adey argues that while behavioural profiling highlights particular bodies by separating
the high risk from the low risk, it does not individualise ("Facing Security” 284). Rather, this form of risk management is a part of both regulating and optimising the whole of a population; it is, in Foucault’s words, a form of “massifying” that is “not directed at man-as-body but man-as-species” (Society 243). According to Adey, these strategies of profiling do not focus on socialised displays of emotion, but rather biological displays, which “supersede the racial and the cultural” and are “genetic to all humans” ("Facing Security” 285). Here, behaviour profiling can be seen as a biopolitical technique of government, in that political power acts directly upon the site of the body, as a form of pre-emptive risk management. Hughes suggests that the customs officers in Border Security: Australia’s Frontline are “presented as experts in knowledges required for national security” (447). In Border Patrol, this knowledge is of the body, its biological responses and how these may indicate potential risks within airport space.

In Border Patrol, this mode of behaviour profiling is represented as crucial to the work customs officials do to protect the border. For example, over an establishing shot at Auckland International Airport in “50k Meth Man” (Season 7 Episode 2), the narrator states “customs staff…. have a knack for spotting the dodgy, the dangerous, and the daft.” This, to begin with, places an emphasis on observing behaviour and detecting abnormalities. In the same episode, a Singaporean national, who has captured the attention of customs officials as he has come to New Zealand via Australia for only two days, is observed over CCTV to be fidgeting, looking around frequently and moving his hands. This observation warrants a baggage search, through which a large amount of concealed methamphetamine is discovered. Similarly, in “Deported Tour Guide” (Series 7 Episode 4), cash detector dog Roxy indicates a tour group from Shanghai may be carrying over the restricted amount of cash into the country. However, customs focus on one individual in particular, the tour leader, who, as the narrator observes, “is keeping unusually quiet” and “displaying unusual body language.” After some members of his tour are confirmed to be breaching the cash restriction, the guide is taken to the search room, where customs discover a large amount of tobacco strapped to his body – well over the limit allowed to be brought into the country. Again, in Season 7 Episode 7, featuring a Bahraini national found with the Class B drug Ecstasy in his luggage, the narrator sets up the story by asking the audience “does a secret smile
lead to a secret stash?” In each of these scenarios, systematic observation of passenger behaviour plays a vital role in detecting and eliminating risks. *Border Patrol* prioritises a focus on the passenger as a purely biological body, whose movements may essentially disclose guilt. Within this logic, all bodies become subject to the scrutiny of power as enacted by airport security, aligning with a biopolitical regime of governmentality.

4.3 Interpellating the New Zealander

However, in examining the television series as a whole, particularly with a focus on Season 6 and 7, a pattern emerges that suggests a more complex politics of representation regarding the airport experience of mobility specific to New Zealanders. While according to Adey, behavioural profiling at the airport focuses on purely biological indicators of particular behaviours, the metanarratives in *Border Patrol*—despite utilising these indicators as strategies of detection—seem to frame New Zealand citizens more positively than people of other nationalities. For example, “50k Meth Man” featuring the Singaporean national bringing methamphetamine into New Zealand ends with customs officers awaiting the arrival of police to detain him. It is revealed to the audience that he has been prosecuted for a similar offence in Singapore, a voiceover stating: “you would have thought after ten years locked up in a Singaporean prison, the man would have learnt his lesson…. This man’s life is in a state of ruin and he is in serious trouble.” Such language evokes a strong discourse of morality, where the Singaporean national is framed as inherently guilty. “Deported Tour Guide” featuring the tour guide from Shanghai smuggling tobacco on his body uses similar language, for example, the narrator states “[the tour guide] hasn’t told customs the full story” and “[the Customs officer] is sure he [the tour guide] has something to hide.” The story ends with the tour guide’s visa revoked, a fee issued and a ban on entry to New Zealand for twelve months. Again, the tour guide is framed as dishonest and intentionally breaking the rules.

Comparatively, “Perfume Eu Tonga” (Season 7 Episode 3) features a New Zealander stopped by customs due to a display of framed butterflies he has brought in from the Philippines. Staff from the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) must determine if any of these butterflies are endangered before the man can pass through.
After discovering some of the species are endangered, the narrator claims the man “innocently brought a collection of butterflies in…. It’s all a shock for this straight-shooting kiwi who did everything by the book, buying from a supposedly legitimate Manila shop and declaring the collection to MPI.” After some of the collection is confiscated, the New Zealand man states: “if we don’t protect these things, then ultimately there’ll be none left to protect…. It needed to be done.” Here, the language used frames the man as apologetic, compliant, and understanding of the rules that he unintentionally broke. Similarly, in “Argie Bargie” (Season 6 Episode 3), a New Zealand pair comprised of a veterinarian and a scientist returning from a work trip transferring embryos on livestock are pulled up for examination by MPI due to the equipment they have brought back, including a microscope and an embryo freezing machine. The customs officer labels them as high risk passengers as they visit many farms in different countries (meaning they could have picked up bacteria or disease). However, they are found to be following all rules and are commended by the narrator as “vigilant passengers.” The customs officer also states “I wish we had all passengers like that, that would be good,” before thanking the pair for their cooperation.

These representations of the passenger experience at Auckland Airport suggest *Border Patrol* uses discourses of innocence and guilt to interpellate viewers as potential passengers. The language used at the point of examination, including “declaring,” “confessing to contraband” and “honesty” indicates a form of moral values being instilled in the viewers. The small amount of New Zealanders pulled up for examination are usually for minor breaches of border security, through which they are proven “innocent,” while foreigners appear to be the passengers that are featured as breaching border regulations most severely, in turn framed as guilty. The broadcast of this show to a New Zealand audience on TVNZ, New Zealand’s national television broadcaster, along with on-demand access on their website, suggests these discourses may act as a form of preparation for if the viewer is to travel through Auckland Airport, so that they are predisposed to behave in a manageable way. Adey claims in his work on behavioural profiling:

Foucault later argues that biopower is concerned with much more than just lives and the ‘living’ of the population, but, rather, that its people
should be “doing a bit better than just living.” And that this ‘doing a bit better’ can be converted into the forces of the state. (Foucault, qtd. in Adey, “Facing Security” 279)

Similarly, Hughes argues that the way Border Security: Australia's Frontline paints the mechanisms of security as normal and necessary, “mobilizes the travelling citizen in the maintenance of secure borders” (440). The metanarratives used in Border Patrol can similarly be seen as acting as a broader form of biopower, enacted at a distance to harness the New Zealand citizen as a self-managing, responsible user of the airport.

Not only are authorities in the airport part of a biopolitical governmentality that enacts power at the site of the body through states of exception and behavioural profiling, but the ways in which the travel experience of New Zealand airports are represented to a national audience reinforces what an appropriate travel experience looks like to the population. While the official airport websites frame the passenger experience as relaxed, organised, and stress-free – initially appearing to come into conflict with the tense passenger experience of examination and confession in Border Patrol – the largely domestic audience of both these promotional channels and Border Patrol may indicate that both sets of texts work as part of an interpellating strategy designed to organise and optimise the New Zealand passenger population.

4.4 Representing the safe passenger: frequent flyers and SmartGate users

Border Patrol is one of many examples that discursively produces some airport users as safe and others as threatening. News stories following events at border security are useful in further exploring the representations of mobility for different subject groups. Examined in relation to security practices employed at Auckland and Wellington airports, these representations carve out an image of airport space as a site where the definition of national identity becomes problematised in a similar way to Border Patrol. Such representations reveal a ‘politics of difference’ inherent in the ways in which mobilities are regulated in airports, an idea that has already received a fair amount of attention. Lyon, for example, focuses on the forms of ‘social sorting’ at the border that separate high risk passengers from the low risk (“Bodies, Borders”); Dean
Wilson and Leanne Weber write on the Australian border as discursively produced through inclusion and exclusion of certain social groups, and Adey ("Mobilities and Modulations") emphasises the subjective experiences of opt-in frequent flyer programmes that enable "trusted" passengers to bypass security checks.

Following the events of 9/11 at the World Trade Centre in 2001, airports have become increasingly concerned with mechanisms to minimise the risk posed by opportunities for global travel. Risk profiles are constructed using a compilation of information about suspect populations and then applied to individuals crossing the border by border control, so that certain categories of traveller who conform to set criteria can be "pre-emptively immobilized" if they become considered a risk to national security (Wilson and Weber 127). One such example discussed by Wilson and Weber is the computerised information network called Advance Passenger Processing (APP), which uses information technologies and comprehensive surveillance to enable passenger-monitoring from the time an intending passenger applies for a visa or attempts to board a flight for Australia. Immigration New Zealand (INZ), who deal with incoming passengers to the country, operates using the same service, so that airlines involved in the intending passenger’s travel are required to provide to INZ, as stated on their website: “the APP information required by the [Immigration] Act [2009] and regulations, for anyone who intends to board an aircraft to New Zealand” and to “comply with INZ directives about allowing certain persons to board an aircraft or not” (“Information for Airlines”). This is combined with Advance Passenger Screening (APS) checks conducted when the passenger checks in to their flight to New Zealand, to ensure they possess the correct travel documents and a valid visa, if required (“Information for Airlines”). As Weber and Wilson argue, such pre-emptive risk management systems work by effectively “pushing the border off-shore” (129), so that it becomes both delocalised and discursively produced via the processes, systems, and checks required before an individual can approach the physical border. The international passenger entering New Zealand is subject to these mechanisms of control before they depart, meaning the airport that processes their arrival is already working to capture them in a system of risk management. Not only is the border delocalised; so is the airport’s role in securing mobilities.
According to the INZ website, this system works to “enhance the security of New Zealand’s borders and minimise disruption for genuine travellers,” introducing the inverse of detecting high risk passengers, which involves minimising the security efforts required for low risk passengers. Adey uses the example of opt-in trusted or registered traveller schemes that are meant to “produce a faster, more comfortable, and speedier service for those who are deemed to be less of a risk than others” (“Mobilities and Modulations” 154). Within these schemes, passengers are encouraged to prove that they are less risky than others and do not require further examination, often by voluntarily submitting extra information or paying a fee. One such system, operating at both Auckland and Wellington airports, is SmartGate, an automated biometric identification system. SmartGate allows passengers holding a New Zealand, Australian, UK, US or Canadian ePassport (a passport which carries a microchip containing an electronic version of the passenger’s facial image, along with their personal details) to check themselves through Passport Control, via a gate which takes an image of the passenger’s face to match against the digital image in their passport. Also discussed by Weber and Wilson and in use at number of Australian airports, SmartGate facilitates the rapid-processing of low-risk passengers, allowing customs officers to focus on high-risk passengers in order to enhance security (134).

These systems are essentially designed to differentiate between groups of passengers, thereby affecting their path through the airport. As Adey suggests, they reveal “how different people may experience differential passage and treatment throughout the space” and, in turn, produce certain narratives surrounding those who can use these systems (“Mobilities and Modulations” 154). The New Zealand Customs website, for example, encourages people to “Breeze through Passport Control” by using SmartGate (“SmartGate”). In December 2015, New Zealand’s Minister of Customs Nicky Wagner claimed that the new gates “ensure legitimate travellers can enjoy faster border processing and officers can focus more on the high-risk travellers” in a way that is “quicker and easier for passengers” (Anthony). Here, the language emphasises both the speed of the moving traveller and the legitimacy of their movement, suggesting that those who cannot use SmartGate should be slowed down or are, in some way, illegitimate. Adey quotes Crispin Thurman and Adam Jaworski in saying “there can be no ‘special,’ ‘exclusive,’ ‘advantaged’ or ‘privileged’ unless one is (made) conscious of
the common, the ordinary, the needy, the dispossessed” (“Mobilities and Modulations” 154), which indeed becomes true for these representations of SmartGate. While a faster, more efficient route through New Zealand’s airports is offered for those who qualify, those excluded from the system are labelled by default as potentially risky. The production of the high risk and the low risk passenger becomes a process that begins before the individual enters the airport. While systems such as APP collect information from airlines and screen passengers from their departing locations to determine high-risk passengers, opt-in systems such as SmartGate allow the traveller to ensure they’ll be among the fastest-moving passengers through passport control.

4.5 Questioning citizenship

Systems like SmartGate require the user to have a passport from a participating country, in turn labelling those without an accepted passport as more of a risk. While this may suggest New Zealanders returning from travel overseas are more likely to have a “safe” arrival back into the country – a discourse supported by the privileging of New Zealand citizens as “innocent” on Border Patrol – other representations of the mobilities of New Zealanders suggest otherwise. For example, in an article for Stuff in June 2016, Yasmine Ryan writes about the emerging issue of what she calls “home-grown terrorism,” discussing the treatment of Muslim-New Zealanders by airport security. Two Tunisian-New Zealanders said they had each separately been stopped by customs. The first man was stopped initially at Auckland Airport where he was questioned for two hours after arriving home from a holiday he regularly took to visit family in Tunisia. According to the article, customs staff were “fixated on the fact that he was born in Saudi Arabia before his parents migrated to New Zealand,” also looking through files on his computer and phone. A second man was stopped on two separate occasions in 2015 when returning from a holiday in Tunisia, who is quoted saying “it’s a very humiliating process. And it feels as if we are treated as guilty until proven innocent.” Ryan writes:

On each occasion, [the men] were questioned extensively about where they had travelled, why they went, and who paid for their travel. The men
recently requested the files on the interrogations by customs, under the Official Information Act. The section on why they were selected for questioning is blacked out, so they still don’t know why they were questioned.

A few months later, the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (SIS) requested a meeting with the second man, of which the outcome was not stated in the article. The SIS denied selecting people based on their faith or ethnicity, a spokesperson instead claiming: “[w]e identify people of interest based on a number of factors, which could include something they say or some other behaviour” (Ryan). While the reason for detection remains undisclosed, the New Zealanders returning to their home country have at some point, been identified as constituting a risk, requiring temporary holding and further examination. The official focus on behaviour which, in returning to Adey (“Facing Security”), can identify risky passengers, works to obscure how the politics of race, religion, and culture may affect the selection process.

In both of the Tunisian-New Zealanders’ cases the passenger is differentiated in a way that makes their backgrounds appear threatening in the absence of any other explanation for why they have been detained, despite the SIS’s denial of holding people due to these very determinants. Adey argues that airports “actually work to make these differences by sorting passengers into different modalities” (“Mobilities and Modulations” 146 original emphasis), so that experiences of difference are manufactured by airport authorities for particular purposes (150). This indeed becomes true when examining this news article, where it is evident that, as Fuller and Harley argue, the initiatives of airport security often “flatten difference into manageable contours” (104) so that passengers are either safe or dangerous, legitimate or illegitimate travellers, immigrants or citizens. Wilson and Weber argue that bureaucratic forms of surveillance connected with international air travel as anticipatory means of border control, while risk reducing in theory, may be punitive in their effect (125), echoed in Adey’s claim that such initiatives are just as much about making people feel safe in the airport, rather than actually making them safer (“Mobilities and Modulations” 152). These politics of difference, while implemented as an imperative of (inter)national security, work in equal measure at an affective level, by which the
amplification of difference is used to inspire passenger confidence, create the feeling of security and a perceived level of safety.

The dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that these systems employ reiterate another function besides detecting risk and making the airport environment appear safer. In examining the classification of particular New Zealand citizens as “risky,” and thus requiring further examination at the border (and beyond the border, for the Tunisian-New Zealander) we can see that citizenship, in these scenarios, is not fully constituted, but interrogated and performed at a number of thresholds. Salter argues that “it is the decision to admit or expel the citizen – who already has a claim on the sovereign – which is the real limit of the population and thus the performance of sovereignty” (“When the Exception” 375). These mechanisms of security act as an extension of the sovereign power to ban or include, not only capturing non-citizens, but those who have previously been deemed “safe” and as belonging to the polis. Border security engenders the routine performance of both the sovereign and its subject; as Salter puts it, “every new arrival is a stranger, even the identity/knowledge granted by admission is temporary, arbitrary and able to be reversed” (“When the Exception” 375). Never entirely safe, the space of the border is constantly reinscribed; as Amoore suggests, “since the identity of the subject can never be entirely secured, the practices that rely upon the calling into being of specific subjectivities – terrorist, immigrant, asylum seeker – can never consider their work complete” (344).

It is not only the space of the nation that is evoked through the lens of airport security, but the space of state power itself which becomes articulated through the spatial organisation of sovereignty and citizenship. The representation of airport security practices to a national audience through shows like Border Patrol, which interpellate a self-managing and responsible citizen, and news stories regarding border security, which emphasises difference, work to reinscribe the relationships between the state and its citizens at multiple levels, sites, and practices. Anna Secor, in her examination of state spatiality in Istanbul, questions how subjectivity and difference become articulated through the spatiality of the state (34). For her, state power:

is not evenly distributed across a homogenous population of citizen-
subjects. Instead it is a process of differentiation, enacted in the repeated, multiple and incessant hailings and turnings, appeals and suspensions, through which state, space, and the subject are constituted. (48)

Secor argues that state space “is constituted through everyday practices and discourses,” referencing Lefebvre’s concept of spatial practices (34). The systems of representation invoked in the media texts discussed in this chapter, while evoking dominant representations of space that serve state power, simultaneously inform the spatial practices of those interpellated by the state. The potential of the sovereign exclusion and the politics of difference that are centralised in airports move into the spaces of everyday life, so that these technologies of power work from a distance.

Representations of how the passenger’s journey through the airport is encouraged, stopped, questioned, or disallowed thus work in a way which ‘places’ both Auckland and Wellington airports as distinctly national spaces that require specific performances of subjectivity in order for passengers to move through. The media representations of the ‘safe’ citizen, the ‘dangerous’ citizen, the immigrant, and the drug smuggler set up both airports as sites where individuals experience paths of mobility differently, along with both inclusive and exclusive modes of subjectivity in relation to the nation. In a similar way to Border Patrol, the discursive production of risky and safe passengers in promotional material and news stories surrounding the airport works to orient the citizen in line with the imperatives of state power. The relationship between the subject and the sovereign is continuously reinscribed both at the border, where at every crossing the passenger is included or excluded as a citizen by the sovereign, and in the everyday contexts in which people see, read and hear these stories regarding airport security and orient their practices in line with them. The proliferation of media stories regarding the security of New Zealand’s borders, along with the popularity of Border Patrol (Season Eight was broadcast in July 2016 with Season Nine in production as of December), indicate both an anxiety and fascination with the policing of New Zealand’s borders in the popular imaginary. Representations of passenger experience at the airport can both increase and alleviate anxiety over a preoccupation with international mobility, national security, and the individual’s position in it, so that it is a powerful tool for mobilising a population.
Conclusion

On 28 January 2016, Donald Trump signed an executive order that imposed an immediate travel ban suspending world-wide refugee entry into the USA for 120 days and the entry of immigrants from seven predominantly Muslim countries – Sudan, Siberia, Libya, Iraq, Iran, Yemen and Somalia – for three months. Trump unveiled the order saying: “I’m establishing new vetting to keep radical Islamic terrorists out of the USA. We don’t want them here” (Millward). In a matter of moments, people arriving in the US from these “terror-prone” countries, along with those still in transit, were illegalised (Merica). Airports, as the first point of entry for the majority of these people, became the focal point of the ban in which airport authorities were suddenly responsible for identifying, detaining and blocking unwarranted people from leaving the airport. These people were quite literally captured by the force of the ban to which the airport played host; stripped of the rights they were guaranteed before the executive order was passed. Christopher Schaberg has recently discussed how the travel ban reinforces the ways in which “generic sites, supposedly devoted to any traveling subject, can be used to heat up and vent simmering forms of nationalism: They can be turned against specific traveling subjects at will” (“Terminal Democracy”). Beneath the ordinary routines internalised by passengers, airports are fraught with questions about difference; who can pass through safely, who is a threat, and who can exercise absolute power. It takes only one decision of sovereignty – as Trump’s order demonstrates – for these politics to erupt.

However, despite being a site for differentiation, the travel ban provided an impetus for the airport to simultaneously function as a space for collective protest. By the evening of January 28th, protests were being held at airports throughout the country in opposition to Trump’s executive order. After two Iraqi refugees were detained at JFK airport – Hameed Khalid Darweesh, a man working in Iran for the US government and Haider Sameer Abdulkhaleq Alshawi, coming to the US to join his wife – thousands of protesters had gathered at the airport, chanting “let them in” (Walters et al.). The social media hashtag “#occupyairports” developed momentum as protests were reported at airports at Dallas-Fort Worth, Miami, Los Angeles, Detroit, and Portland, among other cities. While most protests were not met with police resistance, The Guardian reported
that police had arrested six protesters at Charlotte Douglas International Airport in South Carolina (Gambino et al.). Usually a space of order, routine, and individualisation, these airports became sites of collective outcry, public unity and relative chaos for airport operations. Schaberg writes that:

the sterilized backdrops of airport architecture stood in contrast to the masses of protestors and their hastily scrawled signs. A prayer session occurred in the DFW [Dallas/Fort-Worth International Airport] baggage claim, urgently sanctifying the “tight spaces” of airport waiting areas. Airport curb-sides were no longer interstitial space but became effective staging grounds for highly visible demonstration. (“Terminal Democracy”)

The ways in which airports have and continue to be imagined, produced, experienced and represented are, evidently, complex and changing. They do not just provide space for aircraft to port and facilitate the boarding and disembarking of passengers; they simultaneously imbue this space with ideologies, eliciting certain practices, behaviours, and experiences.

This thesis has discussed the ways in which airports are dynamic spaces, recast through changing contexts, uses and meanings, through case studies on Auckland and Wellington airports. While not as immediately apparent as the US airports that have become the focal point of Trump’s ban, these New Zealand airports are, too, sites of difference, in which a sedimentation of nationalistic discourses, built up over the airports’ development and histories, have imbued their spaces with a political agenda.

What has become paramount to analysing the changing nature of these spaces is the interplay between representation, practice and experience. The representations of both airports’ early developments in papers such as The Post, The Dominion, The Herald and The Star put forward discourses of urban and national vitality, air-mindedness, and social progress, consolidated into a commemorative spectacle through coverage of the airports’ respective opening events. The reimagining of their spaces have signified a shift in these discourses, where ideas celebrating the idiosyncrasies of
local and national space have become interfaced with the global air travel market, as the “fifty years” videos demonstrate. These representations of space, employed by Wellington and Auckland local bodies, the national government, and WIAL and AIAL, place people in particular relationships to these texts; as locals, citizens, customers, and travellers in a global marketplace.

Within Auckland and Wellington airports, analysis of the physical, informational and interior architecture has demonstrated that the organisation of space is subject to competing motivations, those of aeronautical operations, airport security, and commercial imperatives. In this way, the built terminal is an abstract space, materialised according to a number of ideological representations of space. As the passenger moves through the airport, they are part of a push and pull dynamic. Interpellated at once as a secure, safe traveller, the passenger also takes up the position of the relaxed, liberal consumer of both the tangible commodities on offer within the terminal and of the place-images the terminal perpetuates. These processes of consumption are part of the affective experiences engineered into the terminal produced via the logic of spectacle. The passenger’s attention is captured and directed according to privileged and often contradictory accounts of history, rarely adding up to a whole and taking on a transient nature as the passenger passes through them.

The regulated ways in which passengers move through the terminal are again re-inscribed through representations of the passenger experience, namely in regards to airport security as seen through Border Patrol and news stories. These representations amplify difference, reflected in the varying paths of mobility that individuals experience through airport space. Each passenger is examined according to a logic of risk management and either admitted or excluded by the sovereign’s decision, positioned in relation to the nation-state as either a citizen, foreigner, refugee, asylum seeker, and so on.

These analyses of Auckland and Wellington airports unveil a number of tensions and contradictions within their spaces, between public and private space, where the commercialisation of airports competes with their early civic function; local and global space, where lived spaces of representation are converted into place images; and national and international space, where certain mobilities are encouraged while others
are disadvantaged in the name of security. Heterotopic in nature, with several spaces existing (and often competing) within the real space of the terminal, the spaces of these airports are in a constant state of flux. Made obvious through the radically changing uses of US airport space during the immediate aftermath of Trump’s executive order, the airport can move from a mundane, ostensibly democratic space of processing and order, to an authoritarian “difference machine” (Adey, “Mobilities and Modulations”), to a public space of protest in a matter of hours.

This thesis has demonstrated that airports place people in relation to a number of real and imagined spaces, so that the terminal becomes a place in its own right. These place relationships often take place in largely predisposed ways which work to the advantage of the airport companies, state actors and government bodies that produce them. However, because of the diverse opportunities to experience place and the ideological build-ups inherent in airports, they also provide sites for revolutionary social collectivity, as demonstrated by the protests to Trump’s ban. Not only a site in which individuals experience relative placings within the existing practices, uses and meanings of its space, the airport is also a space that, in some moments, can be completely recast for new functions altogether; an idea that is open to further research.


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