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Danielle Brady
Edith Cowan University

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Space, Place, and Agency in the Roe 8 Highway Protest, Western Australia

Danielle Brady

Abstract: The struggle to save the Beeliar Wetlands, an urban remnant bushland in Perth, Western Australia, demonstrates elements of both urban social and urban environmental movements. At the end of 2016, 30 years of objection to the continuation of the Roe Highway development (Roe 8) culminated in months of intense protest leading up to a state election and a cessation of work in 2017. During the long-running campaign, protestors fought to preserve high-conservation-value bushland that was contained in the planned road reserve. At the heart of this dispute were competing spatial uses. This article will analyze four protest actions from the dispute using Henri Lefebvre's concept of the production of space, and will demonstrate that the practices of protest gave those fighting to preserve Roe 8 the agency to reinscribe meaning to the natural uses of the Beeliar Wetlands over and against the uses privileged by the state.

Keywords: Beeliar Wetlands, environment, place, protest, Roe Highway, space, spatial practice

Spaces of Protest

The Australian environmental movement has its origins in 1960s wildlife conservation but has grown to encompass diverse concerns ranging from species extinction to climate change (Lines 2006; Rootes 2015). The protest campaign to save the Beeliar Wetlands in Western Australia can be understood as belonging to this broader environmental movement, whose concerns are echoed globally. However, it has some uniquely Australian attributes due to the low-density pattern of urban development in cities. Perth, Western Australia (WA), was settled on a coastal plain that is now known as a global biodiversity hotspot (Hopper and Goia 2004). Remarkably, pockets of original vegetation, termed "nature reserves" or simply "bush," survive in a state of high biodiversity within the metropolitan area. For example, there are bushland areas within Perth that still support more than two hundred floral species and marsupials like kangaroos. Although sometimes designated as "parks," they are semi-wild places that experience constant threats from urban development, and there has been continuous action to try and protect them from development over the last 50 years.

Campaigns to save urban bushland in Perth, and across Australia, make claims typical of the broader environmental movement—for example, that significant or rare species should be protected. But they also defend recreational uses that are incompatible with development. Increasingly, such protests are invoking issues of justice regarding the decision-making around competing uses of land and their aim is to

have representatives elected who can effect change (see Nisbet and Syme 2017). There is considerable overlap in the concerns of urban bushland protestors and those seeking improved public transport, renewable energy alternatives, and more sustainable urban development with green space. Thus, urban bushland protests share some attributes with other urban, but postindustrial, social movements (Jasper 1997) and further can be linked to both environmental justice (Schlosberg 2013) and spatial justice (Soja 2010) movements.

The repertoire of protest is often understood to comprise arrays of actions to attract attention to sway public opinion and effect specific changes (Tilly and Wood 2009). However, protests are experiences that happen in space, both symbolic and physical. This article draws upon Henri Lefebvre's (1991) triad of spatial practice, representation of space, and representational space, to examine the ways in which protestors create, subvert, and remake spaces. People who enact mass protests are engaged in *spatial practice* that can produce social space that flows over or through the physical space so often described in *representations* like maps. Lefebvre's category of *representational space* is "dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects" (1991: 39). In these terms, space is neither subject nor object, but relational according to practice. With respect to protest, the production of space is here considered as a fundamental process through which protestors derive their agency by changing the meanings of space (Endres and Senda-Cook 2011; Leitner et al. 2008; Sewell 2001).

Well-known social movements of the nineteenth century, such as Chartism, have been illuminated by the recent scholarship on spatial practice (Navickas 2016). Chartists fought for the right to meet in physical space, not just the right to speak and publish. At a time when public areas were being privatized, protest was enacted spatially. Meetings held on the English moors "enacted symbolic and physical occupation of privatised space and expressed argument against exclusion" and drew upon ideas about place, ritual, and collective memory (Navickas 2016: 244). Katrina Navickas argued that customary practices such as "the right to roam" that had driven English eighteenth-century protests against turnpikes continued well into the nineteenth century. And Doreen Massey (2008) noted an important similarity between eighteenth-century social movements against enclosures and contemporary environmental protests: the former fought and the latter fight against dispossession of place. Twenty-first century urban bushland campaigns against highway construction can be conceived of in similar terms: dispossession and restriction against the right to roam in remnant bushland.

Reading protest through Lefebvre's (1991) concept of the production of social space can sit uneasily against activists' investments in place. In a history of Australian environmental protest, William Lines (2006) showed that it was the valuing of particular places, such as the Franklin River in Tasmania, that drove people to protest their destruction. Protestors, Lines argued, do not put their bodies on the line for abstract ideas. Contemporary social protests about unconventional gas extraction in Australia also involve complex notions of place (Hartman and Darab 2018; Luke et al.

2018). If places are "locations with meaning" (Cresswell 2008: 134), then protests about places are disputes about meaning. The same physical location can hold different meanings for different people and different meanings through time. Tim Ingold objected to the notion of place being somewhere within space, and maintained that "lives are led not inside places but through, around, to and from them, from and to places elsewhere" (2011: 148). His idea of place is of nodes or points of activity described by intersecting movements, an embodied idea of place resulting in "meshwork" that, unlike roads drawn on a map, cannot be divorced from experience and that is changeable over time (Ingold 2004). Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook (2011) argued that place is a rhetorical artifact and that places are imbued with both meaning and consequences—that is, place is not just a space about which discourses of meaning are circulated. They described the ways in which meanings change through spatial action. By building on already understood meanings through spatial protest action, and by reconstructing meanings and then repeating them, new meanings of place can replace older meanings of place. Considered in these ways, the specificity of place, with its associated meanings and temporal practices, is not inconsistent with the production of space in Lefebvre's terms. And I would argue that the spatial practices employed by protestors produce new spaces of contention through altered meanings of place.

The Roe 8 Highway Reserve—A Representation of Space

Perth, the capital of Western Australia, is a sprawling metropolis designed for car transport. Located to the south of the city, the Beeliar Wetlands are a bushland remnant of a landscape that once contained a chain of interconnected wetlands. Now greatly reduced in size, the remaining wetlands are contained in a discontinuous suburban park, the Beeliar Regional Park. The park is still large by urban standards with "26 lakes and numerous wetlands stretching 25km along the coast and covering an area of approximately 3400 hectares" (Parks and Wildlife Service 2018). The park contains ecological communities that once extended over the Swan Coastal Plain such as the Banksia Woodlands and is deemed to be of high conservation value (Department of Conservation and Land Management 2006; Gaynor et al. 2017). The Roe Highway is an orbital road that was planned as part of the Perth Metropolitan Regional Scheme in 1963, and the contentious Section 8 (Roe 8), which is supposed to go through the Beeliar Wetlands, had been opposed since the 1970s (Curtis and Low 2012). The future road can be seen via aerial photography, even without the overlaid road plan (Figure 1). Its outline is shown by remnant vegetation in strips and around the planned highway flyovers, which were preserved for 50 years for the future road they were to become and inscribed on generations of maps. In Lefebvre's terms, this image is a *representation of space*. The aerial photography records a physical space, but the network of roads, the dependence of Perth on car transport, and the reservation of land for a future highway also represent a particular way of cataloguing space. Plans for orbital roads in the Australian cities of Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth have had long-term effects on urban development and have been accompanied by powerful justification narratives proffered

by state planning agencies (Curtis and Low 2012). However, resumption of the dispossession of land to build these 1950s-style highways remains contentious and can be viewed through a spatial justice lens along with the unfair distribution of pollutants and unfair access to resources (see Soja 2010).

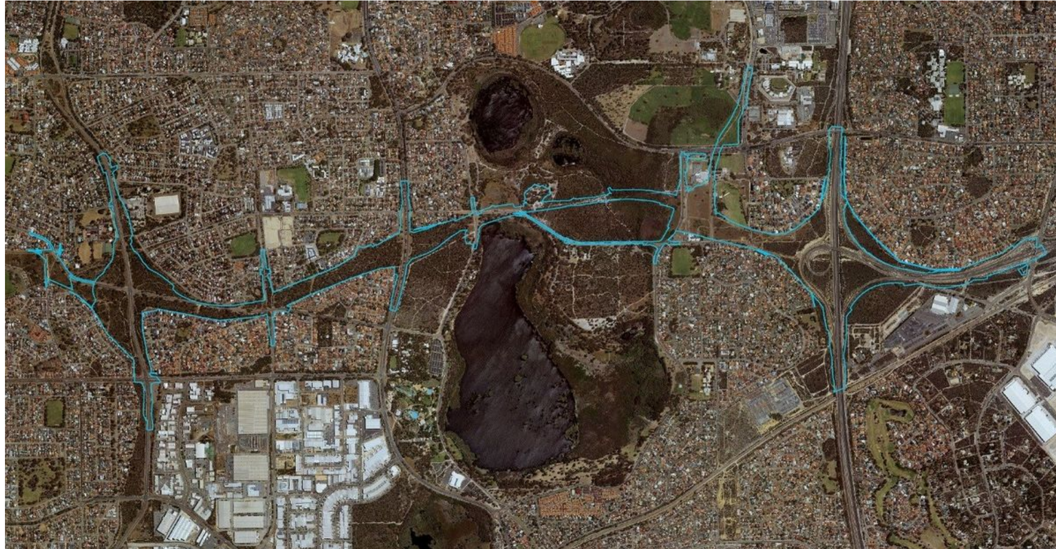

Figure 1: Area surrounding Beeliar Regional Park with the Roe 8 Highway construction envelope overlaid (Source: Landgate WA).

The Roe 8 road reserve has long been experienced in ways that the representation in Figure 1 cannot capture. The area was used by the Indigenous Noongar people before Perth existed, and they continue to use it today. If it were possible to track and plot the movement of people jogging along the irregular sandy tracks, walking dogs, spotting birds, carrying out wetland conservation, visiting sites of Indigenous significance, leading biology students on field trips, or illegally removing firewood—the reserve would be crisscrossed with the lines forming Ingold's "meshwork" (Ingold 2004, 2011). These unrecorded trajectories describe a place with nodes of meaning: a favorite swamp or a patch of wildflowers in spring. The meaning of these places is expanded by the sensory experiences that make up movement through space. Yi-Fu Tuan said that "place achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind" (1977: 18).

In a study of users of Australian nature reserves, Gordon Waitt and colleagues found that "the regular, repetitive weaving through the familiar crisscrossing paths, and the ability to view the land from a variety of perspectives, enables the walker to move through, and to territorialise the reserve as 'their' place" (2016: 45). While the people who move regularly through and across the corridor described by the Roe 8 Highway reserve would recognize the *representation of space* shown in Figure 1, their embodied, sensory *spatial practice* has produced a different kind of space quite unrelated to roads or plans. A strong connection to place was a key motivation for people to

protest the construction of Roe 8. It informed the spatial tactics they used and led to the production of new social spaces of contention.

Although planned long in advance, the construction of the Roe Highway did not commence until the 1980s. Section 7 was completed in 2009, but the contentious Roe 8 was deferred by a state Labor government in 2001 (Gaynor et al. 2017). A Liberal state government elected in 2008 resurrected Roe 8 as part of a new project called "The Perth Freight Link" and the project obtained the promise of federal funding in 2014. In 2015, mass rallies with thousands of participants were held near the site of the road in the cities of Fremantle and Perth and outside Parliament. Successful legal action by a community environmental advocacy group, Save Beeliar Wetlands Inc., held up work for a year until the action was overturned on appeal in 2016 (Nisbet and Syme 2017). Extensive campaigning was carried out through social and traditional media, and other nonviolent, but disruptive, protest actions were led by small groups: banner drops, tree-sits, the removal of survey markers, the pushing down of fencing at night, and the accosting of politicians in public places (Whish-Wilson et al. 2017). The complaints of the protesters were centered on multiple perceived injustices, including the destruction of a valued natural place in order to build a highway section according to an outdated plan, the privileging of one kind of use over many others, the imposition of federal infrastructure priorities over state affairs, and the misuse of environmental regulatory machinery to justify political ends. The events recounted in this article occurred during a final intense period of activity from the commencement of works in December 2016 to the WA state election in March 2017. The account of the following four events is the result of my participant observation following an ethnographic approach to social movements (Plows 2008). Key events were crosschecked against a timeline of events compiled by community members and verified by two participants. My interpretation of the public events was supplemented by local news reportage.

"Enough Is Enough"—The Spatial Practice of Mass Protest

The first mass protest of the campaign, "Enough is Enough," occurred as bush-clearing began (Figure 2). The first tangible sign of the road's development occurred in December of 2016 with the erection of temporary fencing by Main Roads WA contractors around the construction envelope within the bushland reserve. The crudely erected fencing was more of a representational boundary than a barrier. Preliminary drilling and assessment had already led to a few arrests, and protestors were mobilizing by running nonviolent direct action workshops and intensifying their lobbying of politicians and media. A mass protest was planned via social media for 12 January 2017. Protestors began to arrive very early in the morning, many having come dressed in their work clothes, and began to line up along the temporary fencing that had been erected in the bush reserve and that was bounded by a suburban street. By 6:30 a.m., hundreds of people were massed along the fencing including parents with children and elderly people. Inside the fenced-off zone, two women had breached security and locked on to a bulldozer and shredder during the night. Numerous police, including mounted officers, were present. Accounts vary about whether there was a call to push

over the fencing or whether it was a natural consequence of so many people leaning against it. Regardless of intent, approximately two hundred meters of fencing was knocked down and surprised protestors swarmed forward and went around the clearing equipment. In the disarray of the next half-hour, protestors ran through the bush, pushing down more distant fencing, and they were followed by groups of mounted police picking their way through dense bush. The crowd was urged over a microphone by a fellow protestor to "sit down for your rights"; to stabilize the situation; and to show the nonviolent intent of the action. Some of the protestors sat down. Gradually, the mounted police formed a line facing the crowd and began to advance forward, yelling at the protestors to move back. At an unspoken signal, the police started cantering toward the crowd and into some of the sitting protestors. During this action, multiple people received minor injuries and arrests were made. Protestors were driven back through the bush to the original temporary fencing line by the mounted police. By mid-morning, the protesters locked on to equipment had been removed and arrested and the crowd had been dispersed. Many of the protestors had not experienced this kind of action before and had not expected to enter the construction zone. Older people and those with young children stayed toward the back of the action, and even after the fencing had been knocked down a portion of the crowd was still corralled by its representative boundary.

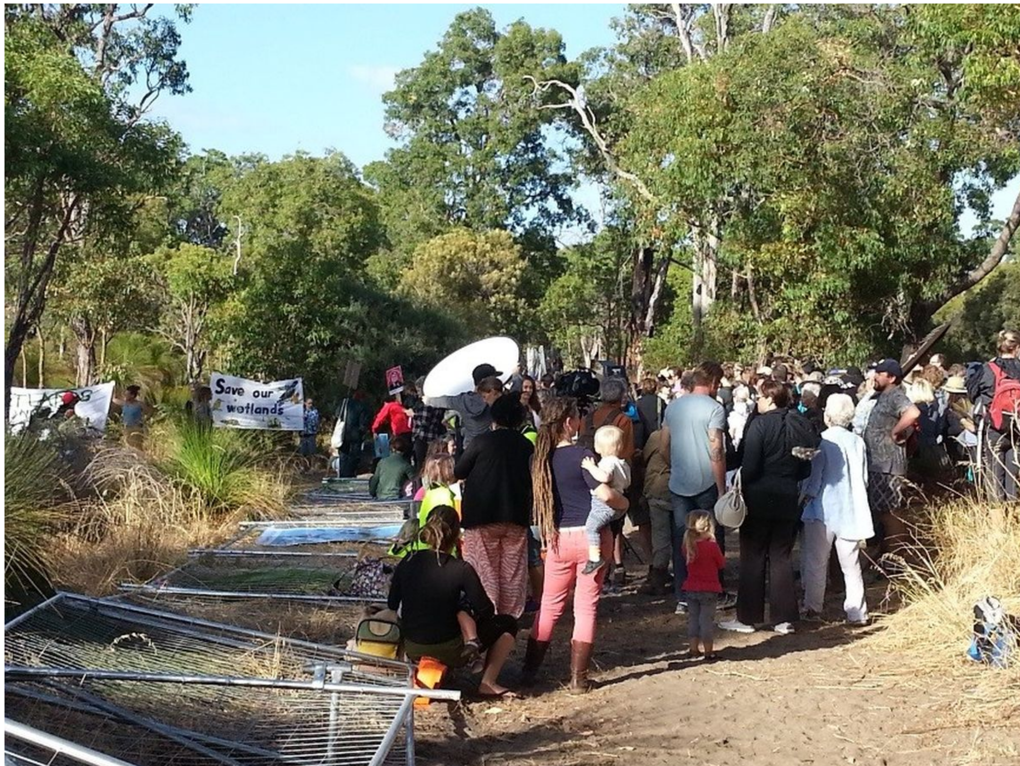

Figure 2: "Enough Is Enough" mass protest during the Roe 8 campaign (Photograph courtesy of Danielle Brady).

The first and most obvious impact that a mass action can have is that it can visualize opposition; In other words, the "congregation of bodies at a protest can communicate the strength of support for the movement" (Endres and Senda-Cook 2011: 262). Such an action converts the written and verbal complaints of protestors into spatial opposition—the presence of bodies in space (Tilly and Wood 2009). Journalists present on the day did not dispute that a crowd of more than one thousand people had gathered (WA News 2017). "Enough Is Enough" resulted in the gathering of hundreds of bodies, people of different ages and occupations, that were present in the space between an existing suburb and the fenced-off zone. During the spatial protest action, that representation of the road to come was unrealized. For a time during the action, people breached the boundary signified by the temporary fencing. By placing their bodies in this trespass space, the protestors contested the right of Main Roads WA to clear it. For those at the front of the group, their opposition to the state-sanctioned road made them physically vulnerable, and indeed some were injured by police horses. While the temporary fences were down, the line of mounted police became the new boundary of the state-sanctioned meaning of the space. This boundary moved back and forward over the course of the morning, producing a new social space of contention. Main Roads WA appeared to acknowledge the ambiguity of this new space, retaliating with a declaration of a wider exclusion zone from the day of the mass protest (Moodie 2017).

Memories that accrete over time define places, and they allow past actions to contribute to meaning-making in places that have been the site of prolonged protest (Navickas 2016). Protestors at "Enough Is Enough" were aware of the long history of dispute over the Beeliar Wetlands that dated back to the construction of the nearby Farrington Road in 1984 (Gaynor et al. 2017). One of the women who locked on to the construction equipment had participated in this protest 30 years earlier and was known locally as a "veteran." Although the Roe 8 Highway was a different project on the other side of the wetlands, both disputes were linked across time and across physical space. The "Enough Is Enough" action occurred in a woodland area only two kilometers upslope of the wetlands site of Farrington Road, the site of the earlier protest. The veteran's spatial practice insisted that these two places were parts of one landscape. This production of space did not exactly match the "Beeliar Regional Park," as it covered a wider area and was imbued with more complex meanings. It was an active space produced through the collective, spatial practice of protest; through memories of the connectivity of the landscape and past protest; and through dreams of a future freed from the primacy of car transport. This *representational space*, in Lefebvre's terms, overlaid the physical Beeliar Wetlands and repurposed the representations of Main Roads WA, the police, and the 50-year-old Metropolitan Regional Scheme.

"Silence Speaks"—Resistance through Symbolic Space

"Silence Speaks" was an event organized at the height of the Roe 8 protest campaign, and it was advertised only to the protest community. Protestors were invited to come to Forrest Place, the civic center of Perth, and stand for an hour in silence (Figure 3). Although governed by the City of Perth, Forrest Place is frequently used for public

events like markets, festivals, welcomes for sporting heroes, and public protests. The protestors were asked not to bring banners or placards but to wear a small, sky-blue patch of fabric. Sky blue was the color of the Save Beeliar Wetlands campaign, and these fabric remnants were a symbolic link to the remnant bushland under threat. On the afternoon of 29 January 2017, hundreds of people began to arrive at Forrest Place. As permission had been obtained from the City of Perth, this legal event accessible by public transport allowed the old, the young, and the disabled to participate along with those who were unwilling or unable to participate in on-site actions. The latter included many people who had been arrested and had bail conditions limiting their access to the Beeliar Wetlands themselves. Forrest Place quietly filled with subdued protestors. In the center of the plaza, play fountains tinkled and the occasional person coughed, but otherwise it was completely silent. A few police warily scanned the perimeter of the group. Weekend shoppers stopped to see what was happening, some standing in silence themselves. There was no heckling or harassment. After the hour was up, the assembled protestors broke into applause and then dispersed. The event was only briefly mentioned by two media outlets that night.

At the time "Silence Speaks" was held, the actions on the site appeared to be having little traction and the bulldozing of the Roe 8 reserve was continuing unabated. In peacefully and silently occupying Forrest Place, the protestors embodied their opposition to Roe 8. Use of public places with politically resonant meanings is a common tactic used in protests and can be an attempt to increase the scale of awareness (Endres and Senda-Cook 2011; Sewell 2001). By taking the protest about a distant urban bushland to the city center, they claimed the issue as one of state importance. Unable to enter the space by then defined by the temporary fencing at the Roe 8 construction site, the protestors created a new symbolic space by occupying the civic heart of the city. Their small blue patches and silent occupation provided coherence for the action—and symbolically linked the remnant bushland and the campaign for its preservation.

Being physically silent requires being physically present, and in this case the protestors were physically present within their spatial practice for one hour. The transmission of sound alone can describe space, and those standing silently could hear the small sounds made by each other and the background sounds of the city (Tuan 1977). All of the participants would have occupied the space previously, for example as pedestrians or shoppers, but during "Silence Speaks" they were bodily present for a new purpose, occupying the same space as an act of resistance. Artist activist Jane Trowell has described this kind of action as "a somatic practice—by putting the body into public space one implicates the self in a way that is different than intellectual approaches" (Brown et al. 2007: 23). Participants who had until that point engaged with a less direct approach to protest, such as writing letters to the editor, stood side by side with tree-sitters and frontline campaigners, thereby uniting their individual resistances in spatial practice. They also demonstrated WUNC or "worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment," which has been frequently invoked as a display tactic of social movements (see Tilly and Wood 2009). Repurposing the signs and symbols of the protest movement and occupying a civic space in a new way, "Silence Speaks"

produced a new social space of possibility and solidified the latent agency of the protestors. Although there was no direct outcome from this action, many participants described a sense of exhilaration and empowerment afterward. Protestors created "a collective body, bringing individuals together in a shared sense of self" (Navickas 2016: 130). Protestors at "Silence Speaks" broke through the restrictions placed on them at the site by symbolically recreating the place of the Beeliar Wetlands in the city. William Sewell says that "by changing the meanings and strategic uses of their environments, protesters exercise spatial agency and produce their own spaces" (2001: 66). Through "Silence Speaks," protestors produced a *representational space* that made a direct link from the civic heart of the city to distant urban bushland being cleared.

Figure 3: "Silence Speaks" mass protest during the Roe 8 campaign (Photograph courtesy of Simon Stevens).

"Women in Song for Country"—Reinscribing Indigenous Space

The Beeliar Regional Park contains mythological sites of significance for the Noongar people of southwestern WA (Bennetts 2017). Aboriginal sites of significance are protected by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* in WA; however, a state minister can allow a heritage site to be disturbed in the community interest. In the case of Roe 8, the state Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) had already assessed an area impacted by the project as the most significant Aboriginal historical site in Southern Perth (EPA 2003). In preparation for recommencing the long-dormant Roe 8 project, a Liberal state government solved this obstacle to development by removing the heritage registration of Aboriginal sites located in the road reserve (Wahlquist 2015). These included sacred women's sites in the Beeliar Wetlands. The injustice of this expedient political action outraged both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; a traditional custodian had

already made an unsuccessful legal attempt to challenge the deregistration and had been supported by the broader environmental movement (Bennetts 2017). Toward the end of the campaign, around one hundred women of different cultural backgrounds participated in a women's only event in the heart of the disputed area at a place not named on maps but known locally as Frog Swamp. By February of 2017, there had been many arrests from multiple protest actions, and some people were financially burdened by their bail conditions. "Women in Song for Country" was organized in collaboration with local Indigenous women. While not trespassing onto the road construction envelope, they took care to choose a pathway into the Beeliar Wetlands that did not draw any attention from the local police. Tags made of sky-blue fabric marked the way into the seasonal Wetlands, which were dry at this time of year in the Australian summer (Figure 4). Participants removed their shoes as a sign of respect before stepping quietly onto the dry ground of the swamp. When the group was assembled in a dense circle, they sang a song/poem written in the Noongar language especially for the event, which was composed by Della Rae Morrison (2017: 75). The song, *Dabakarn*, had been privately circulated through social media for participants to learn. Gail Beck, an Indigenous woman, was clear about their intentions in a postevent media release: "The decision to sing in the language of the land was made out of respect for the traditional custodians and their sacred sites, and with a desire for all women of all cultures to connect with the land they are working so hard to protect" (McKibben 2017).

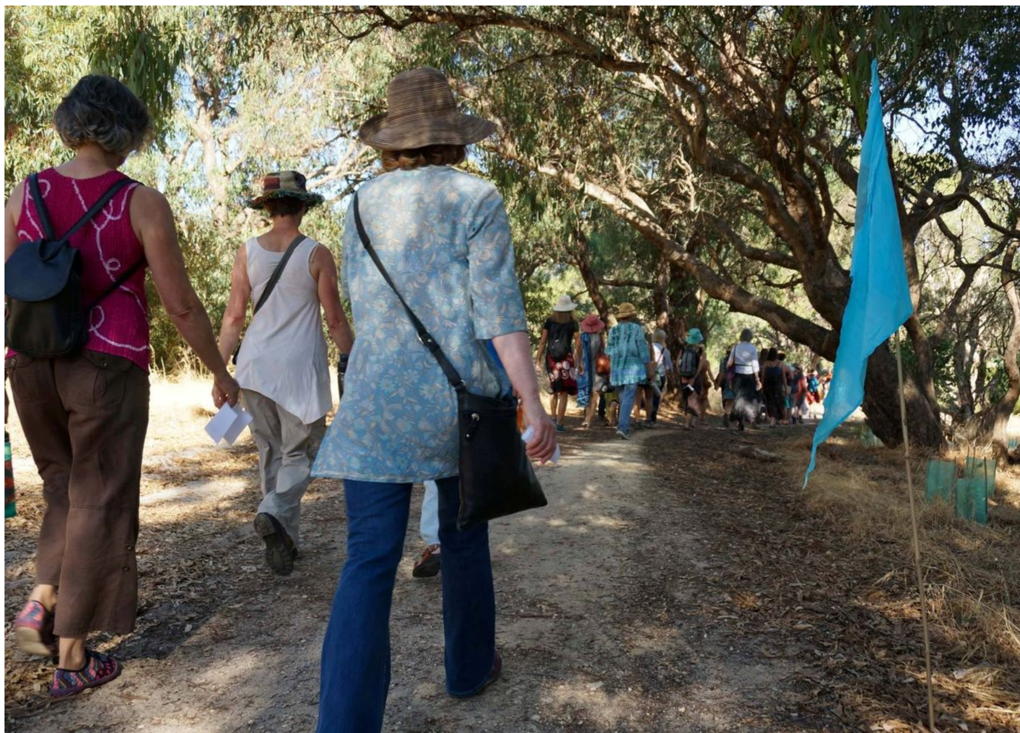

Figure 4: Walking to "Women in Song for Country."
(Photograph courtesy of Lecia Clifford).

The place of the Beeliar Wetlands is significant to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In Cresswell's (2008) terms, the physical location is imbued with meaning and hence the place of Beeliar is specifically valued space. Further, the continual movement of people through the physical space, walking, interacting with natural elements, revisiting their traditional country, described a meshwork of nodes that included Frog Swamp (Ingold 2011). In removing the Aboriginal heritage registration ahead of road construction, the state had attempted to blank out these places and, in so doing, remove Indigenous claim to place. The participants of "Women in Song for Country" reinscribed that place's significance by their spatial practice of walking onto the land, being guided by local Indigenous women, standing closely together, and singing in Noongar. Anna Haebich (2018) has documented the history of Noongar performance culture since colonization and its linkage to activism. She notes the generosity of Noongar people in sharing their culture through music and theater. The singing of a Noongar-language song by women of different backgrounds on the land under threat, with the consent of Indigenous women, powerfully enacted their joint custodianship of the land. Two participants writing about the song/poem said: "While the content of the poem might be inaccessible to those unfamiliar with [the] Noongar language, its rhythms and sounds in its collective chanting were unmistakably powerful ground" (Bartlett and Chinna 2018). Sewell (2001: 65) described protest sites and their "sacralization as sites of transcendent meaning," where actions take on an enhanced significance due to the heightened emotions of the participants. Participants in "Women in Song for Country" mourned the loss of the Beeliar Wetlands, but also recommitted themselves to protect what remained of them. This event required discussion, and even argument, in order to settle on the final format, and it was not witnessed by the police or by the public. Nevertheless, it spatially enacted protest on multiple levels: the objection to the removal of heritage value, the continued destruction of the life-giving wetlands, and the largely patriarchal system of government and regulation that was being resisted by a majority of women in the movement. Navickas describes the bodily movement of protestors as "a kind of choreography, with gesture and performance designed to change the spaces in which they occur" (2016: 131). These actions produced an affective encounter between the women and the place of Beeliar, which became a space of shared cultural meaning and agency. The alternative social space produced existed simultaneously with the transport network, the road plans, and the regional park.

"Celebration Walk"—Reclaiming Space and Changing Meanings

Bushland clearing for the Roe 8 Highway project only ceased with a change of government following the election of a Labor state government in March 2017. By this time, a rough pathway had been bulldozed along the entire length of the road reserve, splitting the formerly intact bushland into two halves. The weekend following the election, protestors organized a walk from the hillside site of a disbanded protest camp, which was upslope from the Wetlands, to a wetlands education centre next to a lake, which had become the de facto headquarters of the campaign. Not wishing to disturb

the land further, protestors first walked in the regional park immediately adjacent to the then cleared area. As they crossed an existing road onto bushland, walkers traversed a homemade shoe-cleaning station to prevent the spread of soil pathogens—thereby enacting their care for and custodianship of the land. Indigenous people led this walk, and speeches thanking participants and supporters were made at the beginning and end of the walk, punctuating the spatial practice. In one way, the event was like a ceasefire; the protestors had actually said that their campaign experience was like being in a war (Bartlett and Chinna 2018; Darbyshire 2018). But the walkers on that day were quietly festive, having been relieved of their burden. The "Celebration Walk" echoed many other walking practices that had occurred during the long campaign: rambles through the bushland by nearby residents over many years, walks along the temporary fencing line to watch the activities of the contractors, mass actions at the site, and night trips through restricted zones to deliver supplies to tree-sitters. A new community organization had formed during the campaign to plan nonroad uses of the road reserve. Undaunted by the destruction, the organization's members immediately began discussing rehabilitation and community participation in planting and weeding the cleared areas. In this way, the past spatial practices of users of the road reserve, the recent protest actions with spaces of contention opened up between citizens and the state, and the imagined future of the road reserve as a site of community action had all produced a new *representational space* (Lefebvre 1991). While still physically shaped like a road reserve, the Roe 8 corridor had come to represent many other things: a community's defense of place, innovative responses to exclusion, partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants, and plans for future uses.

The results of the spatial practice of protest were not physical outcomes but changed meanings of the space through the agency of protestors (Sewell 2001). Protest actions built on existing meanings of the Beeliar Wetlands (e.g., the beauty and diversity of the reserve bushland) temporarily reconstructed new meanings (e.g., the road reserve as bushland walking trail or a wildlife corridor through the landscape) and repeated this reconstruction of meanings until they replaced older meanings (e.g., vacant land ready for a road) (Endres and Senda-Cook 2011). The space created was one of multiple possibilities rather than a fixed construction. The protestors had not physically stopped the progress of clearing in the reserve but, alongside the other elements of the campaign, they changed the dominant meanings of the Beeliar Wetlands. This article foregrounds the specific, embodied practices that reconstituted space through spatial protest. These actions were components of a multifaceted movement against Roe 8, and it would not have been possible to attract thousands of people to mass protests without the long prior campaign, extensive social media engagement, and other creative protest actions that attracted news media attention. Conversely, the transmission of altered meanings of the place of Beeliar, through traditional and new media, would have been much more difficult without the spatial practices enacted therein. Even the semiprivate "Women in Song for Country" protest echoed back through the networks of the participants. The impact of the changed meanings of place arguably influenced the state election because the newly elected state government, at the Premier's first press

conference, immediately recommitted to halting the Roe 8 project and to protecting the Beeliar Wetlands (Davey 2017).

Conclusion

If space is neither a subject nor an object as Lefebvre (1991) argues, but relational according to spatial practice, then the *representation of space* such as the Roe Highway shown in Figure 1 could be remade. Protestors contested the boundaries of the represented space (the Roe 8 reserve), which was first experienced as a map and later a temporarily fenced-off area. Their pre-project spatial practices had already described an embodied geography of alternative uses and values: for the connection of neighborhoods and for wildlife, recreation, and the enjoyment of biodiversity, as well as for Indigenous connection to country. During the campaign, they created alternative social spaces that were overlaid on the physical space of Beeliar that existed simultaneously with the existing suburbs and transport network, the future road plans, and the regional park.

In the "Enough is Enough," mass walk-on protestors made resistance visible and contested the representative boundary of the highway, which had moved from the paper to the field. During "Silence Speaks," they produced a symbolic space of resistance in the civic center of the city. "Women in Song for Country" affirmed Indigenous connection to land by women-only cultural and spatial practices in the face of government heritage deregistration. Finally, the "Celebration Walk" retraced the steps of previous actions over the landscape and contained new representational spaces of activity. These new social spaces were produced through spatial practices that demonstrated the agency of protestors in changing the meanings of a place. Although physical clearing of the road reserve had continued throughout the campaign, construction of the highway section became, ultimately, untenable. At the time of writing, while state funding has been set aside for the rehabilitation of the road reserve, Roe Highway Section 8 remains part of the Metropolitan Regional Scheme of Perth. This long-standing representation of space could yet threaten the physical space of the Beeliar Wetlands, and it is likely that the continued production of space will be necessary for the changed meanings of this place to be finally ensured by and enshrined in legislation.

Danielle Brady is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Arts and Humanities at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. Email: d.brady@ecu.edu.au

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