

# Exploring the Connection between Landscape and Biopolitics: The Story of Freshkills Park

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Constructed on top of what was the world's largest landfill at Fresh Kills on Staten Island, Freshkills Park is one of the most recent parks in New York, United States of America. The landfill has a history deeply enmeshed with the politics of New York City and this influenced the decision to create Freshkills Park and continues to shape the park itself. Faced with the unenviable task of constructing an enormous park on a landfill site, administrators are raising the profile of the park by linking it to several significant issues that impact the city including climate change, waste management, ecology loss and terrorism. These newer narratives augment traditional narratives of parks and, more importantly, draw into the spotlight the broader political context of parks.

By examining the creation of Freshkills Park through the lens of Michel Foucault's theories of power, biopolitics and governance, this paper argues that parks are a vehicle for biopolitics in an effort to manage the attitudes and behaviour of individuals for practices of self-discipline. Further, the new narratives associated with Freshkills Park also highlight how the park has become a vehicle to manage attitudes and behaviours relating to the vulnerability of the state. In that sense, parks in cities act as a spatial representation and enabler of biopolitical systems. The biopolitical systems evident in parks both shape and reflect the value that government and the broader population ascribe to parks. Consequently, landscape plays a much more significant role in political aspects of the city than has previously been recognised.

Located on the western edge of the borough of Staten Island, Freshkills Park (FKP)<sup>1</sup> is the most recent addition to the assemblage of parks in New York, United States of America. It is being constructed on a landfill site that produced years of social and political disenfranchisement for Staten Islanders. The park represents a bold undertaking and a significant investment by the New York City (NYC) administration. As well as being very large at 2,200 acres or 890 hectares (approximately three times the size of Central Park), it will remain closed to the public until the landfill site has been decommissioned (a process that will continue for around 20 to 30 years). The decision to create this park reflects the positive attitude to parks that consecutive New York administrations have demonstrated over recent decades.

The difficulty of constructing a park on a landfill, the time it will take to decommission the landfill, its imposing size and its location on the edge of NYC present unique problems. Perhaps the most difficult issue for the FKP Office of the Department of Parks and Recreation is funding the construction and management of the park (E Hirsh, pers com, 7 May 2014). If the park is to reach its potential, it needs sufficient ongoing interest to overcome the considerable negative associations with the former landfill, the time lag before it is open to the

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public and its location on the urban fringe. These conditions have been met in part by associating the park with a range of narratives. Some of these narratives are those traditionally associated with parks: playing ‘indispensable roles in our neighbourhoods’, providing spaces for exercise and community interaction, performing ecological functions (New York City Office of the Mayor, 2014, p 34) and promoting health (Serazio, 2010). However, additional narratives are emerging that are specifically associated with FKP – namely, waste management, climate change, preservation of ecology and terrorism.

The adoption of these newer narratives draws into the spotlight the broader biopolitical context of parks. Using Michel Foucault’s theories on power, biopolitics and governance, this paper examines the relationship between landscape spaces in a city and biopolitics. It argues that, while responding to the needs of the population, FKP is also central to the administration and management of the population: in terms of both traditional narratives of parks, such as providing space for disciplinary practices, and also the behaviour of the population in relation to issues that impact on the life of the biosphere and security.

### From landfill to park: A brief history

The former Fresh Kills landfill site was the world’s largest rubbish tip and the last landfill to operate in NYC. Before the landfill was established in the late 1940s, Fresh Kills was a stream that flowed into a tidal wetland. The word ‘Kill’ is based on the Dutch word for river, the Dutch people being the first Europeans to settle in the region. It was apparently very beautiful – so beautiful, Frederick Law Olmsted argued in 1871, that it should be ‘developed into a series of “water preserves and public commons”’ (Staten Island Improvement Commission, 1871; cited in Greene, 2013, p 15).

In 1948, under a plan of Robert Moses, the city began dumping rubbish on the wetland, to fill in what was considered to be wasteland, which would allow a parkway between Brooklyn and New Jersey to be built, followed by housing and industrial facilities (Miller, 2000). Despite promises to close the landfill, it remained open, creating animosity between Staten Island and the rest of NYC as the Staten Island borough administration was powerless to control its destiny (Kramer and Flanagan, 2012, p 11). The decision to close the landfill was eventually made following the 1993 city election, which brought Mayor Rudi Giuliani to power (Molinari, 2001). This produced a rare political alignment of Republican leaders at the borough (Guy Molinari, Staten Island Borough President) and city and state government (George Pataki, Governor). Up to that time, political differences at the three levels of government had held back the political will to address the issues of Fresh Kills landfill. Finally, 50 years of inaction and broken promises to close the landfill ended.

Over the 50 years in which the landfill grew, it began to impact on the lives of many Staten Islanders, both physically by its presence and the all-pervading stench, and psychologically as a tangible representation of how the rest of NYC viewed Staten Island. The city administration well knew the environmental impact that Fresh Kills landfill had on the community of Staten Island. Suspicion about the site and its perceived health risks to the community was considerable.<sup>2</sup> It was perhaps the psychological impact that the landfill had on Staten Islanders

that was most significant. Staten Islanders saw themselves as a working-class borough 'being unduly saddled with all the city's garbage' (A Benepe, pers com, 6 May 2014). The landfill came to symbolise the disenfranchisement that Staten Islanders felt relative to the rest of NYC.

It is not entirely clear who proposed a park for the site, although it is believed to be the Municipal Arts Society. In the end, political expediency probably influenced the decision to create a park. As with the decision to close the landfill, former Assistant Commissioner for Planning and Parklands Joshua Laird notes that 'as a political matter the decision [to create a park] was made very early if not instantly' (J Laird, pers com, 20 May 2014). More specifically, Tom Hess of the New York Department of Planning recalls that it was 'basically made as a Mayoral decision' (T Hess, pers com, 21 May 2014). Subsequently, 'no in-depth analysis' and 'no study or assessment' of alternative options occurred (J Laird, pers com, 20 May 2014). Even though pressure to develop the site for commercial operations later eventuated, the decision to construct a park was relatively uncontroversial for the administration at the time. The decision reflected the administration's belief that the public wanted parks and accepted the dominant narratives of parks. Regardless, it involved a significant opportunity cost.

That decision also created the considerable problem of how a park was going to be constructed on top of half a century of accumulated waste. The first response was to cap the rubbish with an impermeable plastic membrane and cover it with a couple of feet of soil. In decommissioning the site, the NYC Department of Sanitation is processing leachate and methane as well. The rubbish will remain permanently hidden beneath the surface under a range of grasses and groundcovers the NYC Department of Sanitation has planted. Once covered and reseeded, the site is thought to have great potential as parkland due to its 'rolling hills, abundant bird life, gorgeous wetlands and rambling creeks' (New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, 2009, p 2).

On 5 September 2001, the City of New York announced the start of an International Design Competition for FKP. In December 2001, the three finalists were chosen with the opportunity to compete for the consultancy to produce a master plan for the park. First place was then awarded to Field Operations under the direction of James Corner for its entry, 'Lifescape', which formed the conceptual basis for the master plan completed in 2006. Lifescape attempted to create a world-class, large-scale park that capitalised on the unique characteristics of its metropolitan location, vast scale, openness and ecology. Its main design goals were captured in three coordinated organisational systems: habitat, programme and circulation (New York City Department of City Planning, 2013). The programme's organisational system involved creating a wide variety of public spaces and facilities. The park plan offered the space for a range of activities and programmes that were designed to be based around extensive active and passive recreation, educational amenities and cultural enrichment, including sports fields, canoeing, cycling and mountain biking, walking, community events, education, extreme sports, public art, horseback riding, bird watching and outdoor dining (ibid).

The history of the narrative of healthful recreation that is evident at FKP stretches back to the creation of Central Park. Frederick Law Olmsted was active

in promoting that aspect of Central Park, arguing in the Second Annual Report for Central Park of 1859 that visitors should have the opportunity for 'healthful recreation and exercise' (Olmsted Sr, 1973, p 59). In a paper to the American Social Science Association in 1870, Olmsted argued with respect to the park, 'as to the effect on public health, there is no question that it is already great' (ibid, p 172). Coming into the twentieth century, the Progressive Era emphasised that narrative through more sports-minded parks commissioners, who believed that the primary function of parks was as places for playing games (Rogers, 2007, p 3). Some of the activities that will be available at FKP, both recreational and programmes, are similar to what is offered in many parks in NYC. In that sense, FKP would be consistent with narratives around the function of parks that were established up to 100 years earlier. The size of FKP also lends itself to recreational activities less often associated with parks, such as horse riding, mountain biking and canoeing. Notably, from its early conception, FKP started to broaden the role of parks in NYC.

The real brilliance of Lifescape is that it offered a way to manage the immense difficulties of size, scope, complexity and timing that the site presented. One of the main challenges to implementing the design was staging to give the public maximum access to the site as early as possible while providing such access safely and without affecting the ongoing landfill closure, sanitation and monitoring operations (Field Operations, 2006, p 14). Time is required for the landfill to become safe for full public access, for natural processes to occur and for the park to be built, which Field Operations factored in to the park's programme. Corner (pers com, 21 May 2014) argued for 'a time based approach because that was ... the only way you were ever going to get anything done'.

Field Operations mapped out how habitat would diversify over a 30-year timeframe and how the park would grow through implementation of the plan for every 10 years across that period (Field Operations, 2006). This time is necessary for the habitat to evolve, for plants to grow and soil to build up, for the park to become 'richer through time and more elaborate in terms of habitat and recreation' and, indeed, to make it possible to direct sufficient funding to undertake the activities needed to complete the park (ibid, p 56). The staging involved developing the park as a patchwork series of projects that could be done through periods of intermittent funding but 'add up to a unified whole' (J Corner, pers com, 21 May 2014). In that sense, the master plan was less a completed vision for the park than a plan to manage the complexity of the task over a long timeframe.

In a general sense, therefore, the design of FKP maintains elements of a health and recreation narrative and broadens the scope of recreation and programme activities. The park maintains existing narratives on the role and value of parks in the city. Despite significant resistance to the site from Staten Islanders, growing numbers of visitors on open day events are showing that FKP meets a latent need for recreation space. Staten Islanders are beginning to appreciate what the park can offer: even with the currently restricted access, the potential of FKP has been clearly established. However, with unsecured funding, the difficulty that administrators now face is how to gain and maintain ongoing interest in and consequent funding for the park.

## Biopolitics and parks

The work of Michel Foucault on disciplinary power and biopolitics of the population has been applied to the creation of space and subjects by numerous authors, including Wylie (2007), Osborne and Rose (1999), Matless (2000), Chang (2014) and Gabriel (2011). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979) discusses how disciplinary practices formed in the prisons of the classical age began to act on the body in less direct ways than in the preceding era, when power had acted on the body directly and visibly – for example, through public floggings and hangings. In particular, he cites Jeremy Bentham’s concept of the Panopticon, which was a proposed prison architecture that enabled authorities to control and observe people based on the way they were spatially distributed. This form of power grew largely undetected through society as the number of ‘techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations’ expanded (Foucault, 1978, p 140), spreading through different settings of power, such as factories, schools, universities and state administrative offices (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983). One of the practical applications of disciplinary power suggests that individuals internalise the power and manage their own behaviour through self-discipline, the governance of the self through the ‘examination of conscience’ (Rutherford, 2007, p 299). Through these mechanisms, disciplinary power became the basis of governance, and Foucault argues that it is the basis of modern liberal government (Foucault, 2008, p 67).

Paralleling the rise of disciplinary power, Foucault argues, was the growth of intervention in and regulation of the biological processes of life. The supervision of these processes led to ‘an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population’ (Foucault, 1978, p 139). Biopolitics comprises the political practices and economic observations focusing on the administration of all aspects of life and is concerned with ‘social, cultural, environmental, economic and geographic conditions under which humans live, procreate, become ill, maintain health or become healthier, and die’ (Dean, 2010, p 119). Thus, through biopolitics, the state cared for its people to maintain its stability, and people were a resource that it could use for its own purposes (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983). The body became a tool of the state as, being both useful and productive, it had a value through its economic use (ibid).

Also of interest is Foucault’s understanding of governance. In the simplest sense, governance is the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Foucault, 2007, cited in Dean, 2010) or, as Dean (2010) argues, it is ‘any more or less calculated and rational activity ... that seeks to shape conduct by working through the desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs of various actors’ (p 18). This paper is interested in the decisions of government, the ‘conduct of conduct’, and its power to make decisions in relation to parks in general and FKP specifically. This is not to suggest that the ‘state’ is the holder of power while citizens completely lack agency. Foucault (1978) argues that power is not held in and does not consist of an institution or structure, and is not limited to the ‘state’, although power sometimes crystallises out into state institutions (Sluga, 2012). Foucault saw power as a matrix that operates in two directions: from the top down and from the bottom up (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983). Therefore, biopolitics can be seen as a multidirectional relationship involving the population and the administration, in which each has a degree

of power. However, Rose (2014) argues that the reason ‘state’ power looks all pervasive in Foucault’s work is that it ‘is all pervasive within the parameters that the state pre-establishes’ (p 220), and of interest are those parameters of decision making in relation to parks.

Therefore, the question arises: in providing parks, how are authorities attempting to shape conduct? Clearly one role of parks is to provide space for recreation. Large segments of the population have internalised the ideals of maintaining peak health, expressing self-discipline through exercise and achieving personal regeneration. In crowded cities like NYC, it is parks that provide the spaces where activities of recreation can freely occur. In that sense, parks provide the spatial requirement for practices of self-discipline. Thus, in part, the provision of parks in a city is responding to the perceived needs and desires of the population and adds a positive element to the fabric of a large city. Power ‘is more than simply preventing or forcing others to do something they would not do on their own’ (Darier, 1999, p 17); instead biopolitics works with the “grain” of human behaviour, to seek paths of least resistance; in short, to govern in line with the dictates of “human nature” (Lee, 2013, p 27). People use parks because they want to, and derive some benefit from doing so.

The recreation narrative, among other narratives associated with parks, exists in part because the population itself perceives a need for spaces that allow such activity. Indeed, the design and promotion of FKP represent the provision of spaces for active and passive recreation as one of its core benefits – an existing need in Staten Island (A Benepe, pers com, 6 May 2014). The desire for recreation spaces can be understood within Foucault’s conception of the ‘technologies of the self’ – the operations that individuals choose to perform ‘on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality’(Foucault et al, 1988, p 18).

In providing for ‘the processes that constitute the health, happiness and well-being of the population’ (Dean, 2010, p 63), it must be assumed that the ‘state’ has a degree of intentionality. In this situation, power has the effect of contributing to the cohesion of the social body (Foucault, 1980). The biopolitical benefits of recreational spaces of a city are to produce a stronger, more productive, more contented population for the greater good of the state. The biopolitics associated with parks and FKP is a multidirectional power relationship that is based in the perceived needs and desires of the population, and thus can be understood as a mutually beneficial relationship. Foucault argues strongly that, rather than being only repressive, power is also productive (ibid). Power ‘creates new subject positions and new regimes, new knowledges and practices’ (Wylie, 2007, p 111). Consequently, the production landscape space and the subjects who use that space can in part be attributed to power relations. In that sense, it is reasonable to argue that biopolitics contributes to the creation of parks in NYC.

### **Freshkills Park and biopolitics in the twenty-first century**

While FKP can be read through the lens of existing recreation and health narratives, it introduces a number of narratives relating specifically to issues of the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. From 2006, the Freshkills Park

Office of the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation took over responsibility for implementing the plan under the leadership of administrator Eloise Hirsh. Ms Hirsh faces the monumental task of constructing FKP: a park that is large, expensive to develop and on a difficult site that has been the source of angst to the people of Staten Island. Support for the park is essential to maintain the interest of the administration and the public and, therefore, to attract the necessary private and public funding to build and maintain it. Yet achieving a significant and highly visible profile is another challenge given FKP's location in the lowest-density borough and on the edge of the city. As James Corner (pers com, 21 May 2014) recognises, these 'are very complicated projects, and they need real leadership and commitment', while competition jury member Laurie Olin (pers com, 16 May 2014) similarly notes that 'like all great visions, it can go off the rails'. Although Ms Hirsh (pers com, 7 May 2014) believes that her office's job is to 'make this thing [FKP] inevitable', continued support for the park is not guaranteed through changing administrations, economic fortunes and changing priorities.

Yet building and maintaining a high profile is rendered especially problematic because of the limited public access to the park for the next couple of decades (A Benepe, pers com, 6 May 2014; J Corner, pers com, 21 May 2014). Consequently, the Freshkills Park Office is trying a variety of ways to get as many people to visit the site as possible in an attempt to increase support. One of its approaches has been to align FKP with a number of broader issues that affect the people of NYC – namely climate change, loss of ecology, waste and the threat of terrorism.

### *Climate change*

An important outcome of the public consultation process between 2001 and 2006 was to include renewable energy projects in FKP. While methane was always going to be produced at the site through the decomposition of the waste, the consultation process raised the possibility of other sustainable energy demonstration projects that harnessed solar, wind and water power as well. Field Operations had not included wind farms or at least did not feature them in early renderings of FKP. However, by 2006 wind farms featured prominently. The technical issues for including wind turbines still need to be addressed, but a solar array has been approved for installation in the coming years.

The connection between the park and climate change was reinforced in 2012. The flooding and the damage that was inflicted by Superstorm Sandy had a big impact on New Yorkers' attitudes to the potential threat of climate change. Manhattan, 'developed right out to its edges right now' (J Laird, pers com, 20 May 2014) and with literally no buffer to the ocean, was severely affected but the storm impacted other areas of New York too. While it has been acknowledged that New York cannot be made climate-change proof, the tactic of the NYC administration has been to try to develop a 'stronger, more resilient New York' (New York City Office of the Mayor, 2014). Part of that approach is to use landscape as a buffer from the ocean. Hence the NYC administration has a new resolve to protect the wetlands and other natural areas because, according to the NYC Mayor, 'wetlands, streams, forests and other natural areas offer substantial sustainability and resiliency benefits' (ibid, p 199).

Since Superstorm Sandy in 2012, FKP has stood as a symbol of a response to climate change as it provided a buffer against the worst of the effects of the

storm on adjacent neighbourhoods (New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013), absorbing ‘a critical part of the storm surge’ (Kimmelman, 2012). While other urban landscaped areas in New York also acted as buffers, the wetlands, in particular, have subsequently been identified as essential natural elements in mitigating damage to property in the likely event of similar storms in the future. Consequently FKP and indeed landscaped areas in general have become strongly and positively associated with the role of protecting the city from the effects of climate change, and a number of proposals have been put forward to re-establish landscape around the riparian edges of the city to mitigate against damage from storms and rising sea levels (Aiolova and Joachim, 2013; Drake, 2013; Reed, 2013; Thomann 2013).

### *Waste*

The closure of the Fresh Kills landfill also brought to the surface issues of waste in the city. The production of rubbish in New York was invisible to public consciousness while the landfill operated. As Pollak (2007) argues, ‘putting garbage out of sight, far away from the city centre, made it possible to ignore it’ and to ‘the extent that the Fresh Kills landscape is a consequence of our own material desires and consumption, its location away from the city hub reflects a desire to forget about our own waste products, to look in a different direction rather than risk being identified with them, to have them go away’ (p 91).

The Department of Parks and Recreation is particularly keen to keep the memory of the landfill embodied within the park, wanting it to ‘really speak about land renewal and land reclamation, personal responsibility, about waste ... about sustainability’ (E Hirsh, pers com, 7 May 2014). Consequently, it changed the name of the Fresh Kills site to ‘Freshkills’ Park to retain the association of landfill with the site, and it runs educational programmes in schools about waste production. The department believes in the value of the educational aspect associated with waste and recycling that the site embodies (ibid), and drawing people to the park allows it to provide a message about the ‘environmental consequences of that type of lifestyle’ (R Nagle, pers com, 13 May 2014). In using the park as an educational tool and a way to promulgate a message about rubbish production, it is keeping the issue of waste alive and in the collective consciousness of the population.

### *Ecology*

The *Fresh Perspectives* newsletter, published by the FKP Office biannually between 2007 and 2013 to promote the park, has publicised the ecological credentials of FKP quite prominently. The evidence from the site seems to be that its ecological integrity is improving as more species are identified there. Cranz and Boland (2004) favour developing parks with sustainability as their primary function. The desire to promote FKP so strongly as ecologically vibrant does seem curious given that the public image of the site was so dominated by landfilling, health concerns, polluted waterways, and toxins. It is necessary to convince the public that the park is now not just safe and clean, but also ecologically sound. One reason for investing in the ecology of the site is that natural habitat is rare in the rest of NYC. Consequently, as former Freshkills Park community coordinator Raj Kottamasu (pers com, 14 May 2014) argues, the habitat is valued because ‘the rest of the city is so developed that it [ecology] becomes rarer and rare’.

Equally, the value of wetlands is now being reconsidered, and a genuine regret is felt over the loss of this ecosystem. Robert Moses led significant in-filling of wetlands as people at the time ‘thought of them as a place of pestilence rather than a place of flood control’ (E Hirsh, pers com, 7 May 2014). Fresh Kills was the last of the great marshes that existed in New York to be filled. Consequently FKP is ‘making something good out of what is fundamentally an ecological disaster’ (E Barlow Rogers, pers com, 19 May 2014) and is being developed and promoted in that fashion as a reminder to the population of the importance of ecosystem health.

### *Terrorism*

The relationship between the park and the site’s landfill history also changed during this period, in part due to the temporary re-opening of the landfill to receive the residue from the towers destroyed during the 9/11 attacks. Field Operations offered a design that acknowledged the disaster at the site, proposing an earthwork structure that would represent the towers lying down across the mound. The towers were huge but, on top of the mounds, they would seem relatively small on the far larger FKP site. The size of the towers would nonetheless become clear to anyone walking their full length as the walk would take them 20 minutes (J Corner, pers com, 21 May 2014). FKP is now intrinsically attached to the story of 9/11, and will represent the loss to the city through the memorial. From the 9/11 terrorist attack, which reflects what has been traditionally understood as a significant risk to the physical state, comes another example of how FKP has come to symbolise the vulnerability of NYC while also embodying the idea that the city is resilient at the same time. As the location of a memorial to the collapse of the Twin Towers through a terrorist act in 2001, FKP is bound with the discourse about NYC’s vulnerability to terrorism.

Using these issues as a frame to promote the park is an attempt to make the park itself take on a greater relevance and importance to the people of NYC. Eloise Hirsh (pers com, 7 May 2014) states that ‘a piece of the site’s job [is] to be talking about these issues’, and therefore the park will align itself with these broader narratives. Indeed, the park must do so if it is to become a reality. The Freshkills Park Office has to build ‘a constituency that is not just going to be the constituency that supports the park but also hopefully defends it’ (J Laird, pers com, 20 May 2014), because at any stage funding could dry up (A Benepe, pers com, 6 May 2014). Aligning the park with these broader issues extends the biopolitical mechanisms from a recreation and health narrative to much bigger and broader issues, attitudes and behaviours.

Dean (2010) argues that the government uses biopolitical mechanisms to manage ‘several “non-political” spheres’ (p 64) that it must control for its own purposes; that is, given the limits to its role, the state manages those processes that fall outside the political sphere by using biopolitical mechanisms to create the desired effect. Since the late twentieth century, biopolitics has not been confined to practices to increase economic profitability and prosperity, but has also embraced practices associated with the life of the biosphere (Dean, 2010 Reid, 2012). Such an expansion of its conceptual framework emphasises that biopolitics influences the lives of populations in much broader ways than Foucault

envisaged. Biopolitics can no longer be seen as simply relating to ‘technologies of the self’ that impact on individual health and docility, nor as just a tool to manage the body for economic use and productivity; it is now associated with the essential vulnerability of the state to a range of internal and external threats, and with the protection of the biosphere itself. More than being a space for practices of self-discipline, FKP has become a mechanism for making the concerns and fears of the city known to the population of the city and therefore, by inference, for trying to manage the behaviour of individuals in relation to these issues. That is biopolitical in its essence.

## Conclusion

Through its unique and poignant history, FKP has become associated with issues relating to climate change, loss of ecology, production of waste and terrorism. Given the enormously difficult task of bringing the park to fruition, these broader narratives have been used to raise its significance in the eyes of the public and administration of NYC. The decision to align FKP so clearly with these issues may have been driven by necessity. However, linking these issues to the park has a biopolitical dimension in that the park becomes a mechanism to publicise these issues, persuade the public of their significance, and ultimately modify the attitudes and behaviours of the population. FKP also demonstrates how biopolitics now extends to the issues that impact on the life of the biosphere and processes that relate to the vulnerability of the ‘state’.

Reframing parks through the lens of Michel Foucault’s ideas of power, biopolitics and governance offers new conceptions of landscape. It is argued that landscape in cities acts as a spatial representation and enabler of biopolitical systems; that is, the rationally ordered and designed spaces that are the parks of the city are connected to biopolitical mechanisms of governance and become fundamentally political objects. While the traditional narratives of the role and value of parks are still valid, they are reshaped through a biopolitical lens.

Ultimately, it is argued that landscape plays a much more significant role in political aspects of the city than has previously been recognised. Landscape has become intrinsically associated with administration of all aspects of life primarily through providing the space in a city for carrying out the disciplinary practices related to recreation and health. FKP also demonstrates that biopolitics has extended into practices relating to waste, climate change, ecology and terrorism, all of which impact on the ‘state’ in far more significant ways.

## NOTES

- 1 ‘Freshkills’ is the name of the park. ‘Fresh Kills’ refers to both the landfill and the general site where the landfill was located, on top of which the park is being constructed.
- 2 Interviews conducted in 2014 indicate a significant degree of suspicion about the site remains. However, this suspicion appears to be waning over time (E Hirsh, pers com, 7 May 2014).

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