

Free Speech and the Privatization of Public Space

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Monday, March 11, 2013

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Donald Smith was protesting a sign at Glenmore Landing in Calgary's southwest Sunday that bans political demonstrations. [CBC]The privately owned parking lot near the prime minister's constituency office asserts that protesting is prohibited. On the surface, this looks like the prime minister is impeding the constitutional rights of expression and peaceful assembly.

I'm sure he finds this all quite convenient, but a large hidden issue in this is the privatization of public space.

Can I prohibit protest in a space I own? Possibly.

Can I lament at the amount of space deemed to be public [parking lot, shopping mall] that is really privately owned? Yes.

We need to remember to assert the legitimacy of the public usefulness of space. We need to challenge the amount of space being privatized. This is a difficult task. Any suggestions?

"Political or public protesting or demonstrating, soliciting, use of loud speakers or other similar devices, pamphleteering, loitering [and] skateboarding is strictly prohibited," states the signs, which were installed by the owners of Glenmore Landing.

via [Signs banning protests by Harper's Calgary office questioned - Calgary - CBC News.](#)