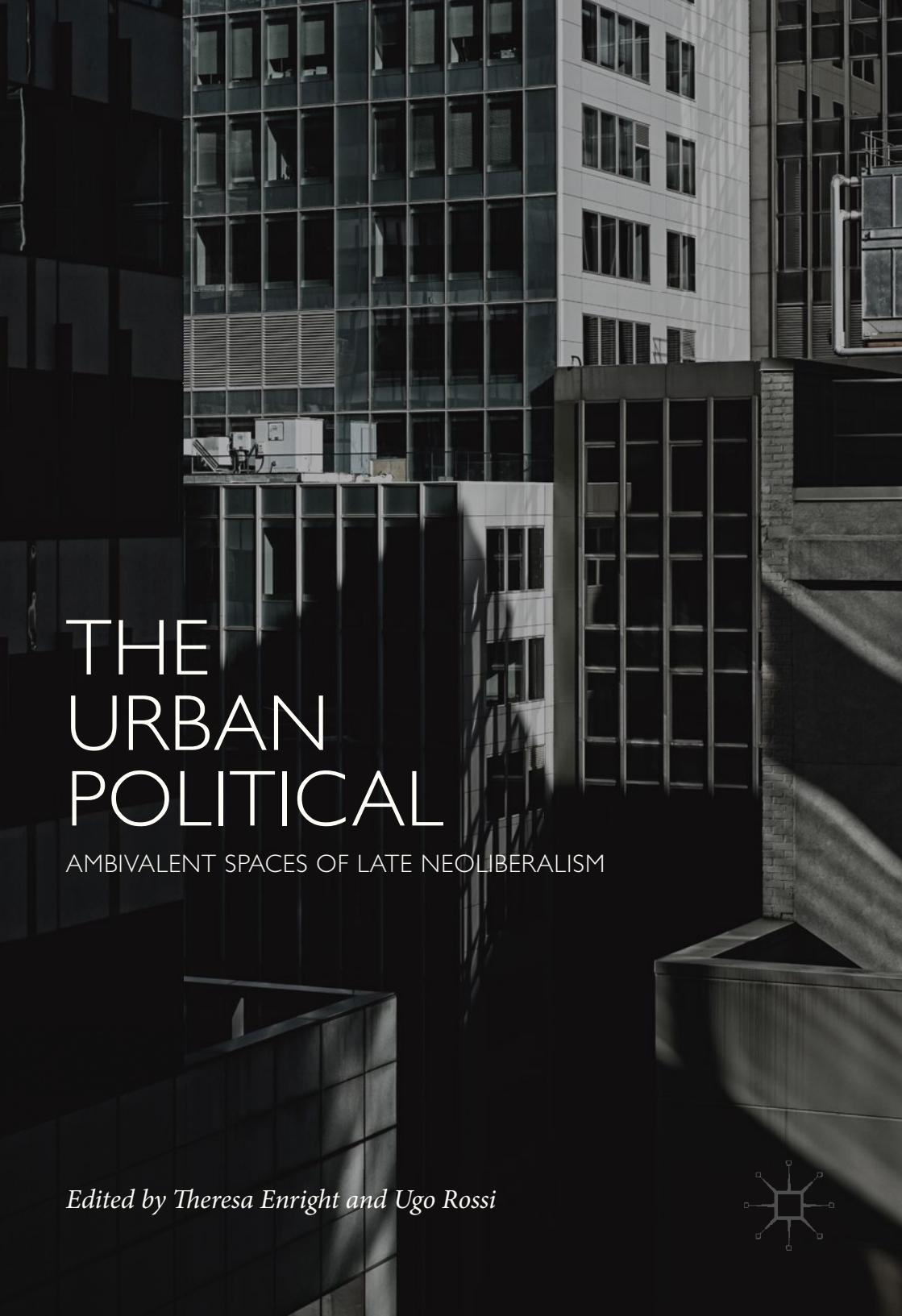

THE URBAN POLITICAL

AMBIVALENT SPACES OF LATE NEOLIBERALISM

Edited by Theresa Enright and Ugo Rossi

The Urban Political

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Editors

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Ambivalent Spaces of Late Neoliberalism

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Contents

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Locating the Political in Late Neoliberalism

Theresa Enright and Ugo Rossi

The ongoing global financial crisis has exposed the limits of post-Fordist growth models and the supposedly democratic structures underpinning them. Economists from different theoretical perspectives are now admitting the shortcomings of deregulated speculative finance, while ordinary citizens since 2011 have been taking to the streets in cities such as Madrid, London, New York, Istanbul, Athens, Cape Town, Sao Paulo, Paris and Santiago to mobilize against the status quo of global neoliberalism and its devastating effects on individual and collective life. If the financial collapse of 2008 undoubtedly signalled an acute failure within the circuits of capital, its aftermath also exposed the related inability of political institutions at multiple scales to provide the basic rights and securities foundational to a stable polity and to effectively manage the economy so as to ensure the necessities of social reproduction. Narratives of "zombie" (Giroux, 2011; *The Economist*, 2013), "post-" (Crouch, 2004), "undone" (Brown, 2015), and "façade" (Habermas, 2014) democracies thus continue to proliferate as the longstanding ills of the modern state are no longer adequately pacified through the highly stratified provision of

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social and political rights or through the myths of universal inclusion, equality, and participation. The putative 'financial' crisis is inextricably tied to other related impasses: an administrative crisis in which state capacity and sovereignty has been undermined, a crisis of legitimacy in which it is harder and harder for governments to act as if the social contract is being upheld, and a crisis of citizenship in which the exclusive nature of the new world order has been laid bare, yet new forms of belonging have yet to fully emerge. These profound transformations have been most viscerally felt in cities.

Yet urban scholarship—itself at a historical impasse—is struggling to fully anticipate or appreciate the revolutionary changes in subjectivity, authority, citizenship, and territory brought about by the end of neoliberalism's heyday. In an era where the ground is rapidly shifting beneath our feet, critical urban theory is losing its capacity to render the world knowable, let alone to change it. How might the events surrounding the Great Recession cause us to rethink the relationships between capitalism, the urban, and the political?

This book is an attempt to take stock of the varieties of critical urban scholarship that mark the contemporary moment and in so doing, to better understand the meaning and significance of the urban political signalled by the late neoliberal condition. The guiding inquiries framing the collection include: What constitutes the urban political today and where and how does it take place? What is the relationship of the *polis* to post-crisis urban spaces in a variety of contexts? How do cities act variously as objects of contention, terrains of action, mobilizing structures, and agential forces in processes of politicization? What material relationships and activities activate and institute these political practices? How have the dynamics between constituted urban orders and constituent powers been transformed in recent years? What do the collective mobilizations of what we might call 'the long 2011' reveal about the constitutive relationship between cities and citizens? And to what extent have these events—as well as less spectacular experiments in collective action—revolutionized global urban organizations and ways of life?

In responding to these questions and in bringing to the foreground not merely the internal contradictions of late neoliberalism's regimes of accumulation, but its inherently political tensions *and* potentialities, the various contributions in this book provide an important perspective on the contemporary urban condition and on its dynamics of power. They provide us with direction, in other words, on how to see the political "like a city"

(Magnusson, 2013). *The Urban Political* provides a bridge linking critical accounts of urban governance and development with scholarship on urban political movements. By focusing on the governmental and the insurrectionary dimensions of urban politics at the same time, the book also sheds light on the related dynamics of control and emancipation and on the inherent instability of late neoliberal regimes. More empirically, in considering the contingent dynamic between urban economic restructuring and processes of political mobilization in particular cities, the book illuminates innovative means of tracing the relationship of the political to its sociospatial conditions of possibility.

As editors and contributors, we seek to better conceptualize and define today's urban problematic and to trace the concrete trajectories of post-crisis politics across a range of sites. Although they vary significantly in terms of theoretical frameworks and empirical engagements, the chapters take the legacy and the present realities of the post-crisis formation as a common starting point for rethinking urban politics and critical urban studies. Even when the chapters do not engage the notion of the financial crisis as such, this is the implicit event that has occasioned the reflection and analysis. This book thus reflects and engages in an important conversation about the meaning of the political and the city-globalization-capitalism nexus in a context of post-recession transition. In so doing, we echo the conviction that more work of this kind is necessary (Dikeç & Swyngedouw, 2017).

The chapters that follow develop a number of key unifying themes. First, the collection asserts that the urban is a key terrain of political activity and is an important site through which neoliberal dynamics are being reworked. While contributing authors are resistant to drawing a direct line between structural conditions and contingent actions, and diverge on whether the urban has any particular provenance in the realm of the political, they nevertheless converge on the idea that the late neoliberal condition is being articulated through place and space specific forces (see also Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2010). Second, the chapters offer more or less explicit critiques of the post-political or post-democratic thesis. Rather than viewing the late neoliberal condition merely, or even primarily, as a process of constraining politics through consensual forms of rule (MacLeod, 2011; Paddison, 2009; Swyngedouw, 2007, 2011; Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014), they equally address co-existing dynamics that may foment democratic possibilities (Davidson & Iveson, 2015; Purcell, 2013a, 2013b). The volume thus emphasizes that we live in highly unstable and ambivalent

times. Third, the chapters offer varied insights on how to re-engage critical urban theory. For while critical urban scholarship has undergone a normative turn toward just, democratic and egalitarian cities, many urbanists have been reluctant "to venture too far down the path of political philosophy" (Barnett, 2014). The authors here boldly take this path in order to deeply reflect on changing realities and representations of the political domain.

In the first part of this introductory chapter, we therefore outline our general conceptualization of the late neoliberal condition. Stemming from its internal tensions as an accumulation regime, neoliberalism gives rise to contradictory political outcomes in urban spaces. These are heightened in times of instability. In the second part of this introductory chapter, we look at late neoliberal urbanization as a process of dismantling and reconstruction. Moreover, in addition to chronicling the reiterated workings of neoliberalism as a destructive and violent political and economic strategy, this book aims to reflect on the new course in progressive politics and the transformative possibilities opened up by the global crisis moment of disruption and unease. In tracing multiple meanings of 'ambivalence' through a range of perspectives, we offer not a unitary or comprehensive narrative of the urban political within late neoliberal societies, but an outline of key frameworks, connecting these reflections to the nature and evolutionary trajectories of contemporary capitalism in our troubled present. Through mapping and assessing a wide variety of critical approaches, both methodological and disciplinary, that constitute the turn to the urban political today, we hope to map out a fuller picture of the contemporary moment.

Urban Neoliberalism (as We Knew It)

Over the past few decades, critical urban scholarship has established that cities are central nodes in neoliberalization processes. Cities are command and control centres of the globalized financial system (Sassen, 2001), sinks for speculative real estate investment and megaproject developments (Hackworth, 2007; Smith, 2002; Swyngedouw, Moulaert, & Rodriguez, 2002), testing grounds for innovations in marketized governance and policy (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore, 2010b; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Jessop, 2002; Keil, 2009), sites for experiments in entrepreneurial subjectivity (Hardt & Negri, 2009), frontline territories where the deleterious consequences of austerity are felt most acutely (Hall, Massey, & Rustin, 2015), and terrains of proliferating struggles over everyday life (Harvey, 2012; Leitner, Peck, & Sheppard, 2007; Mayer, 2009; Purcell, 2008). Although

processes of urban neoliberalization are neither unitary nor universal, around the world urban fabrics have been woven through similar—if highly variegated and uneven—patterns: accumulation strategies that favour free markets and free trade and regulative frameworks that secure private property rights and the commodification of all aspects of life. Critical urban scholars inspired by both Marxist and Foucauldian ideas have provided decisive contributions to the understanding of this increasingly hegemonic economic dynamic and governmental technology.

One the one hand, critical urban scholars have emphasized transformations in the workings of global capitalism in the wake of Bretton Woods trade liberalization, the consolidation of global markets, and the spread of structural adjustment polices associated with the Washington Consensus. As David Harvey (1978) showed in his path-breaking article on the three circuits of capital accumulation, while the manufacturing-centred model of capitalist urbanization since the late 1970s has seen an irresistible decline, the value of the most attractive urban environments has been revamped by the rise of the real estate and knowledge-intensive sectors. Indeed, the production of urban space and rent through what Merrifield (2014, p. 5) calls the "Urban-Financial-Complex" is at the forefront of capitalist processes worldwide. Alongside this shift, the transition towards post-Fordism has privileged technology-driven and service economies in which cities play a central role as concentrations not only of what is customarily defined 'human capital', measurable through formal education and training, and associational forms of social interaction (the so-called 'social capital'), but also through affective relationships, communicative exchanges, cultural production, and lifestyles. Here the 'biopolitical metropolis' (Hardt & Negri, 2009) turns the diversity of urban encounters into competitive assets. Put other way, both the financialized built environment and what Marx once described as the 'general intellect' (see Virno, 2007) have been crucial to the renewed centrality of cities in the evolution of contemporary capitalism. Economically, then, the repudiation of Keynesian or developmentalist orders involves the dual practices of accumulation by dispossession (annihilating existing common goods) and the stimulus of value production through real subsumption, creating new 'common wealth' (Hardt & Negri, 2009).

On the other hand, accompanying these accumulation changes has been a political rationality emphasizing market optimization in urban planning and policy-making and the production of urban subjects as calculating and creative entrepreneurs. In this context, neoliberal cities

have created rule regimes and machineries of authority capable of leveraging this twofold economic potential of urban environments. On the repressive end of the policy spectrum, states have implemented longstanding policies of austerity whereby, through fiscal retrenchment or by a continuation of non-social democratic norms, they disinvest in public goods such as education, healthcare, subdisized low-income housing, affordable food, child-care and basic support services (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Ferguson, 2006; Larner, 2000). Already marginalized urban residents—women, the poor, racialized bodies, youth, the elderly, the displaced—bear the disproportional cost of these policies. As a response to the social instability and fragmentation brought about by these reforms, the (often highly racialized) security and penal apparatuses of the state are moreover strengthened and poverty becomes policed and criminalized (Caldeira, 1996; Soja, 2000; Wacquant, 2008, 2009). More productively, public and private urban regimes feeling the effects of downloading and devolution, have also embarked on aggressive projects of urban economic growth (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Stone, 1989), business pacification (Peterson, 1981), investment in the built environment (Harvey, 1989; Smith, 2002), pandering to the creative class (Florida, 2005; Peck, 2005) as features of a "New Urban Politics" (Cox, 1993). Both nation states and local politico-economic elites have jointly promoted institutional restructuring favouring the creation of urban regions capable of competing in a restless global inter-city rivalry to anchor hallmark events, spectacular exhibition spaces, foreign investment, and international tourism and business travel. Scalar recomposition, particularly the formation of competitive urban regions, is one of the most pronounced "institutional fixes" for crisis (Brenner, 2004; Peck & Tickell, 1994).

These institutional changes have also laid the foundations for a novel moral order based on the ideal of the citizen actively taking part in public affairs and adhering to the founding values of advanced liberal societies, such as meritocracy, accountability, competition, and individual responsibility (Brown, 2003). While this regulation system relies upon the growing influence of the private sector and business interests in convening public policy, civic accountability is nevertheless ensured by participatory processes to manufacture consent and habit in line with the new world order. An agreement on new privatized orientations of public decisions mediates the often tenuous opposition between urban redistributive policies and economic interests. For most scholars, the reduction of the public decision to economic or technical imperatives, the dismantling of

welfare-state institutions, the narrowing of policy horizons away from social to private concerns, and the refashioning of individual behaviours has resulted in a profound process of depoliticization in which necessity replaces deliberation. In the (in) famous words of Margaret Thatcher, 'there is no alternative.'

And yet, the global economic crisis originated from the financial crisis of 2007–2008 has heavily intervened in this context, illuminating cracks in this hegemonic order and suggesting the emergence of new global and urban configurations. Importantly, the advent of the economic crisis has deeply questioned previous assumptions about the benefits deriving from the unlimited expansion of the market-led economy in an increasingly interconnected world. The notion of crisis has therefore disturbed previously generalized growth-centred views of the global capitalist economy and has destabilized the regulative apparatuses that operationalize and normalize these paradigms. This is a particularly salient moment, therefore, for imagination and reinvention by both capital and its opponents.

We define late neoliberalism as the critical period leading up to and following from the financial crisis, in which the political economic underpinnings of late capitalism are in upheaval. While this era most obviously features a deepening of financial capital's institutional architecture and intensified forms of austerity and retrenchment, the late neoliberal condition also entails the strengthening of countermobilizations and power struggles pursuing alternative non-market agendas and policies.

Cities in this era have played a twofold role in the search for a post-recession capitalist reconstitution: as executors of austerity measures and other policies of fiscal retrenchment originally dictated by international financial institutions (the so-called Troika in the European Union context) and adopted by national governments; and as political-economic entities dedicated to the process of capitalist reinvention and experimentation, thus engaging in policy initiatives conveying a more positive image of financialized economies and seek to boost value production in knowledge-intensive urban environments. Even under conditions of global recession, recent years have seen the spread of "fast policies" (Peck & Theodore, 2015) of growth-first economic development and a new phase of resilient global urbanism marked by the planetary circulation of such policy catchwords as 'smart city' and 'start-up city' (Rossi & Di Bella, 2017).

Despite the fact that accumulation dynamics have proven to be resilient in the face of their endogenously-generated crises (Aalbers, 2013), it is undeniable that alternative political economic discourses, norms, and practices have

started gaining ground in more recent years. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, progressive urban scholars have expressed hesitant hope for a post-neoliberal transition (Keil, 2009; Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2010). From the continuation of Latin America's "pink tide" to the unexpected revival of the political left and the rise of new types of progressive parties in different countries in the Western world (e.g. Podemos in Spain, Syriza in Greece, Jeremy Corbyn's leadership in the Labour Party in Great Britain, and Bernie Sanders' growing popularity in the Democratic race in the US), there is evidence of a new wave of political leaders who challenge a market-based commonsense with social democratic and solidaristic ethos. The election of progressive mayors in New York, Barcelona and Madrid also highlight the role played by city governments and radical municipalism within this emerging countermovement. Furthermore, the undeniable resurgence of civic discontent as well as so many experiments in urban commoning over the past decade entail important if inchoate socializations.

This periodization of late neoliberalism is thus not meant as a definitive statement of regime consolidation but as a heuristic device to signal the distinctive reformations in rule regimes governing urbanization as well as the shifts in political discourses, institutional formations, subjectivities and organizational dynamics that have been occurring in diverse urban contexts (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore, 2010a; Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2010). In an era in which the structural ambiguities that have long defined neoliberal trajectories are revealed and called into question, capitalist development and political activity are in a phase of restructuring. The evolutionary trajectory is far from decided upon. As the contributions in this volume show, this entails new potentials for both control and emancipation.

The Ambivalence of Late Neoliberalism

In order to draw out these potentials, we highlight here four overlapping ways that late neoliberalism is characterized by ambivalent prospects for democratic and just life. In so doing, we outline diverse intellectual resources for investigating the urban political and we consider how each might engage with a renewed project of critical urban analysis understood as a history of the present.

The Internal Contradictions of Capitalist Urbanization

First we refer to the internal contradictions, tensions and countervailing tendencies within neoliberal accumulation that threaten to undermine its political economic and institutional consistency. This dialectical reading

suggests that the underlying explanatory framework to make sense of the present conjuncture should be rooted in the logics of macroeconomic accumulation processes. There is now, for example, a rich body of work illustrating how crises-ridden processes of capital accumulation and urbanization advance through the enclosure, appropriation and dispossession of land, natural resources, and lifeworlds. Continually surpassing manufactured frontiers, this process of "planetary urbanization" (Brenner & Schmid, 2011) is now relentless. This has been complemented by insightful accounts of urban social movements that mobilize around specific points of antagonism—strategically targeting the particular historical and geographical conditions associated with exploitative value production. Capitalist urbanization, in other words, necessarily produces the seeds of its own negation.

The literature on the right to the city (Harvey, 2008; Lefebvre, 1996; Marcuse, 2009; Mitchell, 2003; Purcell, 2003), in particular, has done much to encourage the sustained reflection on the structural conditions of contemporary capitalism and how these structures in turn generate anti-capitalist resistance at key points in the production process. The right to the city is thus a strategic cry to universalize the local battles against dispossession, exclusion and exploitation of financialized capital accumulation (Harvey, 2008); a task that becomes all the more pertinent in post-crash "rebel cities" (Harvey, 2012). Against an elite determination of space, the right to the city on the one hand affirms the democratic ideal that those affected by decisions should have the ability to deliberate and take part in a deliberative process. On the other hand, in direct opposition to capital's imperative to continuously turn urban space into new exchange values, the right to the city affirms a counter right to appropriation, occupation, and use.

Despite the seductive appeal of the right to the city in the academy, social movements, and formal institutions, there are several (often self-avowed) significant shortcomings of this literature: its inability to distinguish politics *of* the city from politics *in* the city; a reluctance to specify what city and what kind of right; the easy appropriation and manipulation of the discourse in ways that may pervert its initial intentions; and the fact that in many struggles, the people in the streets, at the barricades and in the parks do not have 'urban' demands and may actually have alternative visions (e.g. feminist, indigenous, antiracist) than those relating to the urban realm as such (Merrifield, 2011). All too often, this literature also claims the urbanity of city-located contestations without specifying their constitution within this context (Miller & Nicholls, 2013). These tensions highlight the enduring questions of what is meant by "urban" politics and

what, given the complex global interdependencies of city spaces and the highly socialized relations of contemporary production, the proper loci of class antagonism might be. Nevertheless, the literature highlights the necessity of connecting how the actual and the possible meet (Brenner, Madden, & Wachsmuth, 2011). It also affirms struggles over urban processes as central to urban politics, and provides a model for bringing the deliberative common of the polis into discussions of the production of urban space. Drawing out this latter dimension—the spatio-temporal character of the political—is central to the works that comprise this volume.

The Negative and Affirmative Forces of the Biopolitical City

Second, as a variation of on this fundamental political economic critique, we emphasize ambivalence in the twofold accumulation dynamics of late capitalism as both annihilating and productive of life and subjectivity. While the 'negative,' disciplinary effects of neoliberalism are more obvious, the 'affirmative' and life-creating implications are equally as important to consider.

Particularly notable in this latter respect is the interpretation of neoliberalism as a "political rationality" that infuses market logics into all aspects of life and refashions *zoon politikon* into *homo oeconomicus* (Brown, 2003). Michel Foucault's notion of governmentality is used alongside neo-Marxist analyses to explain why urban subjects acquiesce to rule that is uneven, violent and not in their interest; each actively participates in her own governing. This has been especially salient in unpacking the workings of the neoliberal penal state (Dikeç, 2007) and for exploring the creation of calculating, self-responsible, entrepreneurial, global citizens (Raco & Imrie, 2000; Roy & Ong, 2011). This concept has been mined to show how the interests, ideas and values of urban life become embedded in subjects through multi-scalar urban rule (Raco, 2003; Raco & Imrie, 2000; Uitermark, 2005). It also stresses how urban planning is a prime apparatus of biopolitical power insofar as it seeks to organize the space of the city and thereby produce a particular mode of urban life and urban subject (Lemke, 2001; Pløger, 2004; Roy, 2009a). More generally, urban neoliberalization works to forge particular kinds of life through state mechanisms parallel to changes in capitalism whereby the production of life, knowledge, affects, language life worlds is embedded in and becomes the primary driver of contemporary production circuits (Hardt & Negri, 2009).

While primarily used as a critique of the techniques and tools of elite control and domination, less common but also notable are Foucauldian inspired accounts that focus on resistance—that are always necessary counterpart to domination in any relation of power. Here the system is not total; its constitutive forces are excessive and resistance is therefore immanent. For Hardt and Negri (2009), for example, the post-Fordist metropolis as the site of biopolitical production is thus also the site of new commoning where people live together, share resources, communicate, exchange and create in ways that are increasingly autonomous from state and capital. As biopolitical production must continuously invent new forms of life and technical, social, and subjective ecologies that cannot be fully appropriated, looking to these modes of production can reveal emergent practices, visions, and relationships that increase collective capacities for action in and against structures of control.

A less obvious impetus for rethinking the urban political is through the 'acceleration' of value production and stimulus of creativity driving post-crisis economic stimulus and growth. Here too we witness possibilities for non-neoliberal futures. Rather than being organized as resistance movements repudiating neoliberalism (as in anti-austerity movements) these struggles "within and against" the status quo (Hardt & Negri, 2000) emerge immanent to capital accumulation pathways and seek to escape recapture by apparatuses of commodification and privatization. The creation of affects, language, information, communication and relationships—capacities so crucial to post-industrial production—are being channelled across a range of examples into "new lands" of political possibility (Purcell, 2013a). From open source politics to creative sector unions to "twitter revolutions," decidedly post-capitalist activities and norms are circulating from the heart of neoliberal's functions. At the same time, few critical urban scholars have engaged with an evaluation of the transformative potential offered by the capitalist mode of production: within critical urban scholarship, the interpretation of capitalism is confined to its predatory dimension (the accumulation by dispossession thesis) while its capacity to produce new value and to stimulate novel forms of biopolitical production even in times of persisting economic impasse and environmental crisis has only started to emerge in this burgeoning field of research and thinking (Arboleda, 2015; Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015). In this volume, the notion of 'potential' is used to highlight some of these political emergences.

The (Post)Politics Pendulum

Third, we invoke the vacillation between, and the simultaneous existence of, politics and post-politics. Notions of the "post-political" and "the political" are at the center of vibrant debates today in the social sciences in general and critical urban studies in particular (see, for example, Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Davidson & Iveson, 2015; Dikeç, 2007, 2015; Mouffe, 2005; Purcell, 2013b; Rancière, 2001, 2004, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2007, 2011, 2014; Uitermark & Nicholls, 2014; Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014; Žižek, 1999). These existing works productively foreground the political as distinct from the economic, the social, or the geographic dimensions of urban restructuring. They have thus been especially useful for revealing the depoliticizing tendencies of consensual urban rule as well as the resurgence of progressive collective movements across the world.

The most direct engagement with notions of the urban political and post-political have come from those engaging in post-foundational political, theory. Urban geographers have used the work of radical democratic theorists such as Chantal Mouffe, Claude Lefort, and especially Jacques Rancière, to diagnose the limits of liberal democracies and their technocratic and entrepreneurialist modes of urban policy-making. Contemporary neoliberal governance works through a deeply held consensus over how people and functions are distributed in space (i.e. "the police order") and who is to be included in the life of the city and in partaking in public affairs (Dikeç, 2007). This state-managed consensus over the aims of city living does not provide venue for dissent or antagonism and thus effectively stifles the properly political dimensions of urban life (MacLeod, 2011; Swyngedouw, 2007). Public decisions are primarily made in terms of technical know-how, expert knowledge and market optimization. To the extent that urban residents are included in these deliberations, they participate as collaborators with or stakeholders in an already decided upon agenda deemed necessary and unquestionable. Putative democratic involvement thus legitimates the system as it entrenches civic control. In terms of its particularly urban agenda, Davidson and Iveson (2015) identify a broad post-political commonsense today around projects in pursuit of the competitive, global, secure and sustainable city. Such a post-political framework is especially pertinent to understand the 'negative' (destructive, annihilating) dimension of neoliberalism, in both its pre-crisis and post-crisis configurations.

While some urban scholars look at post-crisis events as symptomatic of a structural erosion of the urban public sphere or as a manifestation of "the times of riots and uprisings" signalling an impotent class politics in

the "intervallic" period of neoliberal crisis and restoration beginning in the 1980s (Badiou, 2012), others focus on the transformative potential of the urban field (Purcell, 2013b). Indeed, against grand evental narratives and self-fulfilling prophecies of failure, the latter in particular use Rancière's insights to account for hopeful experiments in politicization. The properly political moment here is the assertion of agonism, conflict and disagreement, marked by a rupture that calls into question the prevailing urban order and makes visible, thinkable, and/or sayable, alternative ways of organizing collective life. Political acts of dissent suggest a staging of radical equality and a new accounting of who can partake in collective (urban) life (Rancière, 2004). Beyond 'the event' as such, many have identified processes of politicization with more micropolitical challenges to the status quo, the creation of new urban subjectivities (Davidson & Iveson, 2015), and the emergence of a resurgent radical imagination (Haiven, 2014; Purcell, 2013b).

These political analyses are useful for drawing our attention to the abstract logic of the political whereby superfluous populations, supplements to a given order, make themselves apparent through disrupting the status quo (Rancière, 2004, 2006). And insofar as they posit that the political is irreducible to its social or spatial preconditions, they usefully call into question the project of a properly "urban" political analysis as such. Yet there are also troubling aspects to these frameworks. Perhaps most prominently, the popularity of the post-political framework (without its political counterpart) works performatively to dissuade the possibilities of practices of democracy and equality (Davidson & Iveson, 2015). As Jodi Dean (2009) argues, contemporary accounts centered on the idea of post-politics tend to idealize the Twentieth Century as a golden age for heroic politics and, in so doing, they fail to grasp the progressive potential in contemporary social relations at a time of communicative capitalism. The authors in this volume work to relate the joint processes of politicization and depoliticization to unpack the processural and urban character of these activities.

Multiplying Resistance: Poststructuralist and Postcolonial Topologies

Last, we draw out the insight of authors such as James Ferguson (2010), who claim that neoliberal techniques can be frequently oriented and enacted to unexpected ends (see also McGuirk, 2017, forthcoming). Not merely

double, late neoliberalism in this perspective is *multi*valent. Arguing that the political economic and postfoundational theories of the political are totalizing and insufficiently materialist, those favouring a poststructural analytic locate urban politics in more contingent mobilizations and demobilizations. Rather than a focus on pitted class struggle or abstract antagonism, those engaging Latourian, actor-network theories (ANT), and Deleuzian-inspired "assemblage urbanism" instead stress the local, discrete, and often non-conscious ways in which actors and networks assemble with the outcome of enlivening or diminishing political capacities in infinite, unpredictable, and difficult to evaluate configurations. In this framework, cities are nodes of connections where forces are gathered and politics is a processual movement of transformation that takes place through dynamic relations of social agency. The urban here is neither the direct stake or stage of struggle, but plays multiple roles in assembling policies (McCann & Ward, 2011), communities (Barnett, 2014), institutions (Allen & Cochrane, 2007), infrastructures (McFarlane, 2011), social movements (McFarlane, 2009), identities and values. Global urban politics is comprised of a nexus of connections and their relational and multiscalar moments of alliance and engagement (Roy & Ong, 2011). In times of shock, the potentials for radical realignment and recomposition multiply.

The urban political is not crudely dialectical, but is "topological" (Allen, 2011; Allen & Cochrane, 2010; Toscano, 2004). Assemblage accounts emphasize the microphysics of power, the more-than-urban dimensions of the urban political, a broad range of actors (or actants) that are deemed to "matter" politically, a wide range of identities and issues around which politics form, and the non-rational character of politics. They thus are an important challenge and complement to post-political theories as well as classical understandings of local politics and governance (community power, public choice, regime theory etc.). This literature thus extends and stretches notions of the political into novel post-humanist urban domains, be they ecological, digital, material or affective. Complex, if uneven, webs of interdependence are generative of action and political change happens not through dialectical contradiction, but by "the lines of flight that run through them" (McFarlane, 2011). The Spinozian-Deleuzian strains of post-structural urban political thought especially stress the radical immanence of urban politics and thus indicate a multiplicity of realms of contestation, for being and becoming otherwise and for actualizing virtual worlds (Massumi, 2002; Enright and Rossi in this volume).

The postcolonial critique of Western universalism and positivism is also a notable complement to these perspectives (Robinson, 2006; Roy, 2009b; Sheppard et al. 2013). Comparative urbanism embraced under the aegis of the postcolonial critique is intended to uncover the irreducible diversity of urban development pathways, the particularities of places, and the various intricacies of everyday urban life (Simone, 2010), especially from the viewpoint of the global South (Robinson, 2011). They also call attention on the multifaceted and continuously evolving relationship between cities and capitalism in a variety of geographical contexts in ways that exceed any fixed and pregiven neoliberal framework. Provincializing the crisis, for example, demands that we consider how place matters and how the post-2008 conjuncture undoubtedly looks and feels different in Belo Horizonte, Dar es Salaam, Berlin, or London. It puts an emphasis on the living dynamics of colonialism and racism upon which global capitalism was formed and continues to rely. It therefore also requires that we account for how differently positioned bodies and subjects—the smart-city entrepreneur or the shackdweller, for example—might articulate and respond to crisis moments.

Thus between this approach and political economy lie the important questions of how to account for cities within "a world of cities" (Robinson, 2015), how to situate context within 'the context of context' (Brenner, Madden, & Wachsmuth, 2011), and how to avoid both the Scylla of the imperial gaze and the Charybdis of decontextualized localism. Through their thick empirical accounts from a variety of iterative locations, the chapters in this volume indicate some fruitful directions of engagement with these challenges. They thus contribute to the endeavor to trace the micro, idiosyncratic and the dynamic coming-into beings of unique political orders and organizations, while also attending to the cross-case relational engagements and patterns of which these are a part.

The Urban Political in Theory and Practice: Overview of the Book

From a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives and a diverse set of empirical coordinates, the contributions variously engage and recast the urban political question across a variety of terrains. Here theory "unmoored" from its traditional reference points—grounded instead on diverse formulations of city-ness and diverse patterns of urbanization—is absolutely

crucial. The polyvocal, geographically diverse, and multiscalar approaches provide exciting new concepts, methods, and directions for understanding the challenges and predicaments of the contemporary moment, and for reinvigorating urban theory.

The contributions do not offer a single analysis of urban politics or the urban political that is invariant across time and space. Rather, they focus on the practices and activities through which urban relations articulate processes of politicization and depoliticization. The urban political is understood as a continuously evolving terrain of struggle, negotiation, and emergence. Thus, instead of categorizing the political horizon of cities today through sweeping generalizations of opening or closure, deliverance or damnation, the contributions gesture at a radical undecidability to the late neoliberal condition; a scenario in which potentials for transformation are immanent, but unequally distributed and realized, and frequently met with neutralizing forces. From the notion of ambivalence, it is possible to map out some potential orientations for progressive change. The book thus also offers a timely intervention to praxis.

To sum up, *The Urban Political* assesses the prospects and the limits of the existing literature and practice through three main interventions: (1) Against the self-fulfilling prophecies of some post-political thinkers, the book asserts that the late neoliberal era does not signal a revolutionary expiration, but rather a condition of ambivalence in which radical politics are commonplace and potentializing although unevenly distributed and actualized (2) Contrary to accounts of static policing and evental ruptures, the book instead seeks to emphasize dynamic processes and practices of consensus-formation, politicization, subjectivation and organization (3) Building on existing accounts of spatial politics, the book investigates what is particularly urban about social and political relations, thus refusing to treat space merely as a descriptive metaphor or as a physical container, or the urban as a universal condition. Although the chapters do not present a unitary or uncontested account of the urban political, overall they enable a robust understanding of the passage in political economy signalled by the late neoliberal condition and they account for the kinds of diverse critical urban scholarship that mark the contemporary moment.

In order to articulate these main lines of argument, the book is organized in four thematic sections that correspond to what we understand to be important windows onto the questions of the urban political today.

Theorizing the Urban Political

The contributions in this section rethink the political from an urban perspective. Situating contemporary debates of political theory within the context of contemporary global urbanization they offer distinct but complementary reconsiderations of the meaning of politics and the political in the 'urban age.' Davidson and Iveson consider how the "persistent disruptive possibility" foundational to democratic societies is often, though not exclusively, realized in urban contexts. Using Jacques Rancière's "method of equality" as a conceptual framing, they trace the spatial dimensions of dissensual processes in order to highlight the irreducible relationship between the urban and the political. Cuppini also considers the location of political practices today through tracing a genealogy of 'logistical urbanism.' He puts Warren Magnusson and Carl Schmitt into conversation to argue that the complex arrangements of authority constitutive of the contemporary globalized city offer an alternative political foundation to that of the nation-state. In their contribution to this section, Enright and Rossi contend that in order to account for the historical and cultural specificity of urban political processes within a global framework, the nature and workings of contemporary capitalism must be foregrounded. Engaging workerist theorists such as Antonio Negri and Paolo Virno, they unpack some key dynamics of late neoliberalism and the progressive potentials to which they give rise, taking into account the distinctively ambivalent nature of today's politics, as showed by the co-existence of antithetical political phenomena, such as the persistence of progressive movements after 2011 and the recent chauvinist-populist explosion. Beyond the specific interventions of each respective chapter, the section as a whole highlights the important intersections between political philosophy and urban scholarship and reframe the task of critical urban theory today.

Materializing the Urban Political

This section brings into focus questions of materiality and power in contemporary cities. The contributions interrogate the limits of what counts as political by accounting for the visceral, affective, and infrastructural forms of political activity. Using the notion of organization as a site, mediator and causal agent of local politics in the UK, Fuller looks at where and how the political is emplaced within cities. Rizzo's concern is with the technicism that guides infrastructural provision in Dar es Salaam. Against the neutralizing discourses of economics and engineering which dominate

policy-making, he argues that the new Bus Rapid Transit network is not an inert 'solution' to the city's woes, but is itself a highly political vehicle actively accelerating the neoliberalization of the city. McFarlane and Silver also consider the powers embedded in, and expressed by, infrastructure by examining Cape Town's "sanitation syndrome." Tracing the politicization of waste, they evaluate the progressive potentials of various "poolitical tactics." With an emphasis on the constitutive assembling of urban relations across human and non-human connections, this section thus highlights the processual and contingent nature of political activity and the complex socio-material processes through which cities are being continually reconfigured.

Governing the Urban Political

Authors in this section shift the focus more explicitly to consider the durability of consensual regimes of urban governance. While they reveal a familiar repertoire of techno-managerial tactics—apartheid, austerity, privatization, and the marketization of urban problems and solutions—in a variety of contexts, they also question the stability and degree of consolidation of neoliberal regimes. While Penny looks at cooperative councils and participatory planning efforts that enlist citizens in new forms of crisis administration in London, Vogelpohl unpacks the role played by experts in generating policy consensus in Berlin and Essen. In both of these analyses, urban politics seems to rely on a transformation in which the realm of popular decision is progressively narrowed. However, each also points to surprising potentials opened up in the messy and contingent practices of governance. Al-Bulushi also visits the question of neoliberal adaptations in rule, arguing that the post-apartheid development state in South Africa does not merely signify a shift from a racial to an economic mode of governmentality, but that there is a continuation of racialized logics of marginality rewoven into ostensibly colorblind practices. He contends that contemporary structures of neoliberal precarity must therefore be understood through the lens of anti-black violence. The chapters in this section thus reveal in rich detail the variety of ways that cities are taking up the challenge of governing late neoliberalism, and the differentiated effects these arrangements have for democracy and equality.

Politicizing the Urban Political

Providing an alternative reading to the grim proclamations of a post-political condition, the chapters in this final section concentrate on examples of re-politicizing the city outside of the conventional frameworks of party politics and formal social movements. They thus broaden our understanding of 'legitimate' political activity to include riots, practices of grassroots cooperation and self-organization, and the creation of alternative publics. Drawing on empirical examples from London, Belo Horizonte and cities of the United States, these chapters demonstrate how the lingering potential for radical urban politics is actualized on the ground through contextual socio-spatial pathways. In particular the contributors reframe key concepts of social movement analyses—'articulation' (Dzudzek), 'the right to the city' (Magalhães), and 'counter publics' (Nicholls and Uitermark) respectively, through the lens of the urban political. Thus, each offers a rooted analysis of how neoliberalism is being contested through iterated struggles for recognition and equality, and of the vital urban dimensions to these processes.

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PART I

Theorizing the Urban Political

CHAPTER 2

Presupposing Democracy: Placing Politics in the Urban

Mark Davidson and Kurt Iveson

Introduction

The idea of the 'post-political city' has entered the lexicon of critical urban studies (Swyngedouw, 2009) influenced by a range of political theorists including, Wendy Brown (2011), Chantal Mouffe (2005), Jacques Rancière (1999, 2006) and Slavoj Žižek (1999), among others. To be clear, the damning diagnosis of the 'post-political' or 'post-democratic' that emerges from their work does not imply that there is no dissent, that there is only silence. A post-political or post-democratic society may be full of critique, discontent and alterity. The question is: does such critique and discontent equate with the presence of politics? Or is such dissent either contained within a broader consensus on the *necessity* of being 'global', 'competitive', 'creative', 'sustainable', and the like (see Davidson & Iveson, 2015a). Is it reduced to mere noise or nostalgia that is outside the limits of acceptable debate?

As we've noted elsewhere (Davidson & Iveson, 2015b), if we go looking for the post-political, we will surely find it. But what does this tell us about

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the nature of the relationship between the urban and the political—the relationship that sits at the heart of the interventions in this book? When we see the fading prospect of an alternative city, defined by something other than the straight-jacketed entrepreneurialism which seems only to reconfirm a leftist melancholic self-righteousness, we might ask: is there any prospect of the city on the hill, of a re-politicised city or a re-energised urban politics?

Deeper still, we may ask: is this even the right question for our times and places? Alongside the emergent discussion of the 'post-political city', another group of scholars have begun pushing us to question the very ways in which we understand 'the urban' and its utility for critical theory and politics. For instance, in their provocative work on planetary urbanization, Brenner and Schmid (2015) suggest that we need to displace the centrality of 'the city' in our thinking, in favour of a concern with different forms of urbanization. In his consideration of the political implications (and requirements) of planetary urbanization, Andy Merrifield (2011) asks whether the contemporary focus on the 'right to the city' involves a kind of spatial mismatch between the geography of our political ambitions and the geography of our world:

> The right to the city quite simply isn't the *right* right that needs articulating. It's too vast because the scale of the city is out of reach for most people living at street level; and it's too narrow because when people do protest, when they do take to the streets en masse, their existential desires frequently reach out beyond the scale of the city, and revolve around a common and collective humanity, a pure democratic yearning. (p. 473)

In our own efforts to grapple with these diverse and profound questions about the urban and the political, we have found the work of Jacques Rancière (1999) especially useful as a tool for thought and action. In this chapter, we offer an interpretation of Rancière's key concepts and approach, and then proceed to draw those concepts into dialogue with the contemporary debates and developments in urban theory surveyed briefly above.

We begin by outlining the central components of Rancière's political theory. We seek to demonstrate how our self-proclaimed democratic societies contain within them a persistent disruptive possibility that resides in the gap between the existing social order and its claim to universal inclusion. This disruptive possibility is realised when people assert their status as equals in the face of social orders that deny their equality. Challenging

the tendency towards the 'post-political' is a matter of exploiting this disruptive possibility, through a dissensual process of political subjectification in which people *pre-suppose their status as equals*. The chapter then moves on to identify and examine the spatial, and distinctly urban, implications of this approach to politics. The equality pre-supposition, we argue, has two distinct but related spatial pre-suppositions. First, we show how the enactment of the equality pre-supposition necessitates a parallel pre-supposition of the existence of a *stage* for the political claim. As we will see, urban public spaces therefore continue to have a vital, though not exclusive, role in the political process. Second, we show how the enactment of equality also pre-supposes a *common space* whose terrain is not fixed or contained, but is open to division and the disruption of existing forms of order and authority. Although a democratic community must be presumed to exist, usually somewhere, we argue that we cannot make presuppositions about the agents and subjects in this community who might enact a political claim. The final section of the chapter reflects on the implication of this reading of urban politics and signals the problematic, and somewhat under-examined, connection between political claims and socio-spatial reordering.

Politics, the Particular and the Plebs

The basics of Rancière's (1999) theory of politics can be outlined using three concepts: politics, police and democracy. Within this triad, politics is defined in contrast to the police. Rancière's usage of the police/policing distinction closely relates to Foucault's (1977) theory of power. Policing, for Rancière, is not state-based. Rather it is a set of hegemonic arrangements that serve to assign social roles, and to regulate who can speak, make decisions, perform certain functions and define what is possible. Policing is "thus first an order of bodies that defines the allocation of way of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task" (Rancière, 1999, p. 29). Policing is therefore not a purely disciplinary process, but is a "system of self-evident facts" (Rancière, 2004, p. 13). It emerges as "a configuration of occupations and the properties of the spaces where these occupations are distributed" (ibid., p. 29)—a configuration that Rancière calls the 'distribution of the sensible'. It is premised on the naturalisation of forms of authority that allocate these 'occupations' a part in the social order according to undemocratic principles like wealth, race, gender, expertise, etc. The police

order, then, positions subjects in relation to one another, and also allocates peoples and activities across space. As Dikeç (2005, p. 186) argues: "[S]pace is pertinent to the police because identificatory distribution (naming, fixing in space, defining a proper place) is an essential component of government". The police operates in and through space, the allocation of names and roles being intricately related to geographical identity and emplacement (also see Soja, 2010).

Politics is defined in distinction to the regulatory function of the police. Politics is a particular type of contestation that emerges from within a policed order. A contestation within the police order becomes politics when an activity "shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place's destination" (Rancière, 1999, p. 30). The central concept Rancière (1999) uses to frame political change is equality: "politics exists wherever the count of parts and parties of society is disturbed by the inscription of a part of those who have no part. It begins when the equality of anyone and everyone is inscribed in the liberty of the people" (p. 123). An equality claim disrupts the police order by claiming it is unjust: "Wrong is simply the mode of subjectification in which the assertion of equality takes its political shape" (p. 39). Politics therefore revolve around the recognition and signification of an inequality that is inconsistent with a pre-supposition of equality. In identifying "the part who have no part", politics works to expose the inequality of a given distribution and thereby de-legitimate the existing police order.

Rancière (1999) illustrates this operation of politics using the example of the Roman plebeian revolts (Secessio plebis) on Aventine Hill. While traditionally interpreted as simple revolts articulating dissatisfaction, Rancière looks to Pierre-Simon Ballanches' early nineteenth century revisionist interpretation to read the revolts as politics. The conflict between the plebeians and patricians centres on the former refusing to assist the latter in the defence of the city. This refusal was manifest as a plebeian abandonment of the city. The plebeian refusal was insisted upon until the Roman patricians recognised the plebeian right to participate in government. Refusing to operate within a social system that did not grant them this role, the plebeians left the city and established their camp on Aventine Hill. There they created their own council, an act Rancière describes as the "staging of a nonexistent right" (ibid., p. 25). In establishing a governing body the plebeians contravened the police order they had walked away from. They had spoken (and governed) when they had been allocated roles that did not grant them this right. When forced to talk with the

plebeians, the patrician's Consul Menenius is described by Rancière (ibid., p. 33) as unwittingly demonstrating their equality. Consul Menenius confronts the plebeian body and explains to them their role as stupid servants. The crucial mistake Menenius makes is that in explaining to the plebeians' their subservient role, he grants them a status of equality by assuming they are "speaking beings" (ibid., p. 33). The plebeian act of establishing their own order leads to another distribution being established: "the plebeians have actually violated the order of the city." (ibid., p. 25). That is, the plebians did not so much demand equality, they *pre-supposed* their own equality and acted on that pre-supposition. (This pre-supposition of equality will be crucial to the way we articulate the relationship between politics and the urban in subsequent sections of this chapter.)

The lesson Rancière draws from this episode is that plebeians' equality claim transforms the entire distribution by reallocating the existing structuring of places: "Politics exists because those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account, setting up a community by the fact of placing in common a wrong that is nothing more than this very confrontation, the contradiction of two words in a single world" (ibid., p. 37). In developing this example Rancière presents politics as disruptive: "The specificity of politics is disruption, the effect of equality as the litigious "freedom" of the people." (ibid., p. 70). A democratic society is therefore one of punctuated disruption. A society can claim to be democratic when it has the capacity to recognise equality claims and re-inscribe a police order so that it reflects the founding principle of politics: equality. Politics can therefore take place anywhere, but it is not in evidence every day. Further, while politics transforms the police order, it does not remove processes of policing from the social. New police orders inevitably emerge from the political process, only themselves to be then the potential target of further instances of politics and verifications of equality.

The attempt to extract lessons about the (urban) political from moments like the plebian revolt begs the question: what does the relationship between the urban and the political look like today, in our times of megacities and capitalist globalization? A story from ancient Rome evokes a very particular kind of urban formation that seems quite distant from the urban formations of our own times and places. Can a political theory that draws its lessons from such episodes have any relevance for politics in contemporary cities with their complex flows of capital, labour, resources, cultures and beyond?

Rancière (1999, 2007) argues that today, in our increasingly "post-political" times, the essence of politics is being lost. While we continue to valorise the workings of a corrupted set of institutional mechanisms, he claims the reasons for their very existence and their source of legitimisation are now displaced. In this "post-democratic" era disruptive equality demands have been de-legitimated. They have been replaced by an "idyllic state of politics" that "generally goes by the name of consensus democracy" (Rancière, 1999, p. 95). The notion of post-democracy—or the post-political (Žižek, 2006)—develops from the idea that properly (political) disruptive demands have been erased, discredited and/or suppressed by an insistence on consensus within the established police order.

Consensus presumes the possibility of inclusion within the established order: "What indeed is consensus if not the presupposition of inclusion of all parties and their problems" (Rancière, 1999, p. 116). This presupposition "prohibits the political subjectification of a part of those who have not part" (ibid., p. 116) in such a way that exclusion can only be addressed within the very police order that produces the exclusion. In the post-democratic climate, institutional and legislative arrangements that are seen as the mechanisms and guarantors of democracy now cultivate an adherence to the police order through the imposition of consensus.

One way to think about the relationship between space and politics is therefore to consider it as having been simply erased. Without politics, this relationship cannot exist. As Slavoj Žižek (2006, p. 117) has argued: "In the age of 'post-politics', when politics proper is progressively replaced by expert social administration, the sole remaining legitimate sources of conflict are cultural (religious) or natural (ethnic) tensions". And yet, the post-political critique is not directly concerned with a lack of capacity. Rather it is concerned with an inability to articulate certain (political) claims within the consensual context. If we are to understand—and perhaps to rekindle—the relationship between the urban and the political today, we must therefore seek to understand how political claims emerge in relation to the spatial organization of our societies. Here, what we take from Rancière especially is his emphasis on the pre-supposition of equality as the foundation of the political, and we ask: what form might such presuppositions take today, and how might they relate to contemporary patterns of urbanisation?

Politics and the Urban

In what follows, we articulate two related but distinct intersections between the urban and the political for our contemporary urban experience. Across the broad field of urban studies, and not for the first time, the integrity of 'the city' as an empirical and conceptual category has recently come into question. This questioning has taken a variety of forms. All start with the idea that anything we might describe as a 'city' is inevitably the product of economic, social, cultural political and ecological processes that extend beyond its putative boundaries. In general terms, the identity of any place we call a city is not fixed or essential to it, but the product of relations that stretch across space. Some interventions on this topic have emphasized the diversity of these relations and the different kinds of cities they produce (e.g. Massey, 2005; Robinson, 2006). The most provocative interventions in these discussions argue that these relations are now planetary in scale, such that it is no longer enough to contest problematic ideologies of the city as a bounded, universal spatial entity. Brenner and Schmid (2015, p. 154) worry that even relational approaches to the city persist in problematically "viewing the unit in question—the urban region or agglomeration—as the basic focal point for debates on the "urban question"". They advocate instead that we dispense with "city-centric epistemologies" (ibid., p. 169).

We have argued elsewhere that while relational approaches to the urban question are vital for understanding and transforming our urban reality, 'the city' remains a useful concept, so long as it is kept in dialectical relationship with 'the urban' (Davidson & Iveson, 2015b). Yes, urbanization involves relations and processes that stretch well beyond the boundaries of any place we might refer to as a 'city'. And yet, 'cities' persist also as 'things', even in their diversity. Here, we prefer Harvey's (1996, p. 50) formulation that that the "thing" we call a "city" is the outcome of a "process" we call "urbanization". The urban, in other words, is simultaneously process and object, imagined and material, relational and relative. And crucially, for our purposes, the urban relates to the political across these distinct but related manifestations. So, when Rancière says that "The call for equality never makes itself heard without defining its own space" (Rancière, 2007, p. 50), this can have at least two distinct but related meanings for us today. In what follows, we elaborate on two intersections

between the urban and the political which reflect the duality of the urban as both a 'thing' and a 'process' (Harvey, 1996; Davidson & Iveson, 2015b). First, we discuss the urban as a stage for the political. Second, we discuss the urban as a horizon for the political.

The Urban and the Political Take 1: The City as a Stage for Politics

For Rancière, politics consists of a confrontation between the police logic and the logic of equality. How are such confrontations enacted? At various points in his work, Rancière draws on theatrical concepts to elaborate on the ways in which such confrontations take place. He argues that such confrontations depend upon the construction of a *stage* where actors can establish themselves as parties to a disagreement. There is a complex circularity to this argument—the staging of politics depends upon the existence of such stages, but such stages do not pre-exist politics. In *Disagreement*, he suggests that:

> Politics is primarily conflict over the existence of a common stage and over the existence and status of those present on it. It must first be established that the stage exists for the use of an interlocutor who can't see it and who can't see it for good reason *because* it doesn't exist. (Rancière, 1999, pp. 26–27)

So, one way in which the enactment of equality 'defines its own space' is the manner in which it both pre-supposes the existence of a stage upon which parties might confront one another as equals, and produces such a 'stage'. Just as the pre-supposition of equality is crucial to its particular verifications, so too *the pre-supposition of a stage through which those verifications can be articulated* is crucial to the political.

What kind of relationship does the city have to this staging of politics, as formulated in Rancière's work? In Rancière's view, *any* space has the potential to become a stage for politics, if and when another space is articulated within that space, such that a confrontation between the police and politics is enacted:

> What makes an action political is not its object or the place where it is carried out, but solely its form, the form in which confirmation of equality is inscribed in the setting up of a dispute, of a community existing solely through being divided. (Rancière, 1999, p. 30)

This staging of politics confronts the police order by asserting the presence of another world within the existing distribution of the sensible. In the political process, a configuration or distribution of spaces that was once deemed natural and uncontested becomes a matter of disagreement. From this perspective, cities as 'things' offer no ontologically privileged sites for the enactment and staging of political claims.

And yet, while any 'where' can potentially be a stage for politics, it is also clear that certain kinds of sites in cities (understood here as a kind of 'thing') seem to remain significant for politics across diverse historical and geographical contexts. In recent years, once again, urban 'public spaces' like city squares, parks and streets have been crucial spaces for political subjectification and for the staging of political claims about 'the people' (Davidson & Iveson, 2015b). Sites like Tahrir Square (Cairo), the Puerta del Sol (Madrid), Zuccotti Park (New York), Gezi Park (Istanbul), and Syntagma Square (Athens) are among many such sites to have come to global attention in recent years as sites associated with political dissensus. How, then, might we explain the persistence of such urban public spaces as stages for the political, if there is no privileged or proper site for politics?

For us, the persistent mobilisation of such spaces points to one of the ways in which the political and the urban intersect. A political imaginary premised on the pre-supposition of equality depends upon a *geographical imaginary* which pre-supposes the existence of certain (kinds of) places where the disruptive possibility inherent in the social order can be realised, and where politics can be staged (see also Iveson, 2007; Warner, 2002). In enactments of politics, the declaration of equality both pre-supposes and creates a public space: "I declare, I demonstrate: something appears in a public space and constructs a specific public space by so appearing" (Rancière, 2016, p. 122). In the occupation of *urban* public spaces, we clearly see this geographical imaginary at work. The designated or normalised 'publicness' of some spaces within cities is a valuable political resource for the politics of equality. This 'publicness' is not an ontological essence or even a characteristic of their everyday use. Rather, the publicness of such spaces is both (a) a pre-supposition that activists have used to legitimise and organise the appropriation of certain spaces that are 'meant to be public' for popular assemblies and occupations, and (b) a (temporary) characteristic that is produced through those very assemblies and occupations (see also Mitchell, 2017). As such, these urban sites can function to illicit a presumption of democratic equality and therefore offer an important vehicle to articulate a political claim.

The announcement of an equality claim in certain public spaces can serve to insist that a dialog about the claim takes place with reference to the world-in-common.

So, while we would not claim that urban public spaces are either ontologically privileged in relation to other spaces, or that they operate in isolation to other spaces,[1] we do think that particular kinds of urban public spaces have a persistent attraction as stages for the enactment of politics. Over the past decade, there have been numerous political events where urban public spaces have served this purpose. As such, there is a sense in which the city as a 'thing' remains crucial for the political.

The Urban and the Political Take 2: The Urban as a Community of Equals

The second intersection between the urban and the political is less about the *mechanics* of staging political claims, and more about the *geography of the community of equals* that Rancière suggests is at the heart of democratic politics. Put crudely, we might ask: does it still make sense to think of 'the city' as the horizon of political efforts to enact equality, when the processes that produce our urban condition stretch well beyond 'the city' as such? This gets us to the second half of our urban dialectic, relating to the urban as process rather than the city as a thing.

To talk of urban or city politics can sometimes evoke the idea of a bounded political community, somewhat like the Roman example discussed earlier. Of course, this idea has been subject to considerable debate in an era of globalisation (e.g. Brenner & Schmid, 2015; Harvey, 1997). For many, localised or even national scale politics have become inadequate due to transformed global conditions. Harvey (1997, p. 324) has argued (drawing on Raymond Williams' phrase "militant particularism") that localised movements often become diluted and diminished as they are extrapolated: "The potentiality for militant particularism embedded in place runs the risk of sliding back into a parochialist politics". In an era of profound capitalist integration, Harvey's (1997) concern lies with the necessity to formulate a socialist politics that can avoid becoming defined by parochial interests and engage with the contestation of global economic conditions.

Others have argued against Harvey's call for a transcendence of the local. In Doreen Massey's (1991, 2005) extensive writings on the politics of place, the couplings of local/global and concrete/abstract (i.e. politics)

embedded in Harvey's (1997, p. 184) work are thoroughly critiqued: "The global is just as concrete as is the local place. If space is really to be thought relationally then it is no more than the sum of our relations and interconnections, and the lack of them…" Massey rejects Harvey's "problematic geographical imagination" (ibid.) in that she sees it carving up the world into spatial categories that do not reflect the co-constitution of local and global. Such criticisms have generated interest in developing more relational understandings of space and politics: "Conceptions of the spaces of the political as the products of flows and networks have become increasingly influential both in geography and across the broader social sciences" (Featherstone, 2007, p. 432; see Jacobs, 2011 for review of the relational turn in urban geography). The move away from scalar and localising framings and towards more relational understandings of political constitution has, for some, resulted in a rethinking of political subjectivity. For example, Hardt and Negri's (2004) theory of multitude is based on a flat, networked conception of space where politics must transcend place and the particular to be subsumed into the necessary diffusiveness of the multitude: "Here is a non-Eurocentric view of the global multitude: an open network of singularities that links together on the basis of the common they share and the common they produce" (p. 129).

Recent theorisations of transnational and networked politics are also connected to the rethinking of state and power. Much of this work has sought to understand the geographies of state within the context of globalisation (Brenner, 2004). Although some have attempted to understand the changing geographies of state—and by extension politics—as a rescaling process (ibid.), others have rejected this framing. Allen (2004, p. 19) has argued that state power is not scalar, but rather a topological arrangement constructed "as a relational effect of social interaction where there are not pre-defined distances or simple proximities to speak of". Power neither exists at the local or global level, but is a mediated relation with multiple spatial forms. As a consequence we find that points of/for politics become multiple across the networked relations: "the mediated relationships of power multiply the possibilities for political intervention at different moments and within a number of institutional settings" (ibid., p. 29).

Harvey's (1997) concern with militant particularism here becomes radically transformed since every space is by definition part of the wider network relation. The problem of identifying the geography of politics becomes a question of connection (Amin, 2002). A choice of local or global politics is dispensed of: "a richer spatial politics may also be constituted through the

actions of those close at hand working in alliance with others more distant from the immediacy of power's presence" (Allen, 2004, p. 29). An appropriately global politics is to be found within already existing networks.

Topological accounts of power therefore attempt to transcend the local/global frame (Allen & Cochrane, 2010). State power becomes arranged in ways that are "multiple, overlapping, tangled, interpenetrating, as well as relational" (ibid., p. 1087). The state loses its scalar integrity and becomes a "structural effect" (Mitchell, 1991) that exerts power through a host of techniques. One consequence of this reading is that it becomes necessary to identify state power in a variety of spaces and practices often not associated with politics (e.g. Painter, 2006; Peck, 2003). State power operates in a potentially endless list of venues and, as such, points of contestation and struggle become similarly numerous. The geographical question associated with achieving political change is therefore not about an appropriate scale, but rather is concerned with identifying those points and relations within topological arrangements that are most effective with respect to generating political change (Allen & Cochrane, 2010; Amin, 2002).

This rethinking of space/politics often understands politics as being every day and everywhere. Politics map onto power (Foucault, 1977) and, therefore, seeking the "right" type of politics or (political) space appears futile. But Jacque Rancière (1999) rejects such a reading. For him, it is not so much that politics is 'everyday' and 'everywhere', but that politics have the *potential* to take place anytime and anywhere. While aspects of Rancière's (1999) political theory map onto relational theories of politics and space, his approach demands a concern with particular enactments of politics *and* space. This linkage has to be established, it cannot simply be assumed as an allegory of power.

Mustafa Dikeç (2001, 2005) has drawn upon Rancière's conceptualisation of politics to reconsider the dominant ways in which geographers understand the relationship between space and politics. Dikeç's (2005, p. 172) reading rejects an "understanding of politics merely as power relations". The short-circuit of power relations equating to politics is replaced by an argument "that space becomes political in that it becomes the polemical place where a wrong can be addressed and equality can be demonstrated" (ibid.). When a political contestation is staged it requires a space of articulation: "Space is pertinent to politics because it is this very distribution, this very partitioning of space, that is put into question" (ibid., p. 186).

Dikeç (2005, 2007) therefore poses different questions of the space/politics relation. The geography of politics is not principally concerned with scales or relations and instead is initially focused upon identifying excluded spaces (i.e. unequal spaces) within a hegemonic socio-spatial arrangement. In being able to articulate exclusions within the socio-spatial arrangement it becomes possible generate politics: "Space becomes the place from which to become actors of democratic pronouncements" (Dikeç, 2005, p. 186). Reading politics through Rancière positions Dikeç's interpretation of space/politics as primarily concerned with forms of socio-spatial exclusion and their ability to articulate political claims.

Politics has no proper scale, because it enacted in relation to wrongs that might exist at any scale—from the institution, to the neighbourhood, to 'the city' and beyond to the 'planet'. And yet, as above in our discussion of the staging of politics, this is not the end of the matter. What is required for politics to 'take place' is a capacity to disrupt existing spatial orders and their associated essential identities. Politics does not emerge from a unity, but acts and makes claims upon such unities in the name of the 'parts who have no part' in those unities.

So, while is not a privileged scale of the political per se, perhaps the very idea of the urban as relational space (the second half of our urban dialectic) is a particular resource for the political imaginary? Perhaps, in contrast to parochial unities that are frequently imagined with respect to the neighbourhood (and its associated fixation with 'the locals') and the nation-state (and its associated fixation with the need for unified national identities and values), the urban imaginary has a particular utility for the political imaginary? Precisely because urbanization involves constant comings and goings, because its spatiality is defined not by territorial fixedness but by cross-cutting mobilities and relations, maybe the very idea of the urban lends itself pre-suppositions of equality defined through strangerhood and dissensus, rather than common identities and consensus? As Rancière puts it, the community of equals has a distinct form that distinguishes it from a community bound by blood or ties to territory:

> equality shapes and defines a community, though it must be remembered that this community has no material substance. It is borne at each and every moment by someone for someone else—for a potential infinity of others. It occurs, but it has no place. (Rancière, 2007, p. 82)

This matter of spatial relations and connections that stretch beyond any bounded urban territory may seem to be a very contemporary development. And indeed, the diversity and intensity of such connections may well be stronger now than in the past. But this issue has always been present in intersections between the urban and the political, even from antiquity. In the opening pages of *On the Shores of Politics* (2007), Rancière see Plato's attempt to tame the political as an attempt to ground governance in a bounded territory—which in the case of Athens, necessitates a futile attempt to exclude the comings and goings of the nearby port that sustain the city itself. This effort to situate politics through 'enclosure instead of the open sea' is a hopeless one, he says: "The *almuron*, the tang of brine, is always too close. The sea smells bad. This is not because of the mud, however. The sea smells of sailors, it smells of democracy" (2007, p. 2). His point is that claims for equality and dissensual enactments of democracy do not simply emerge from marginalized members of some pre-existing political territory. Rather, they call into question the very idea of a bounded political territory within which all things can be included and accounted for.

Conclusions

We have therefore moved a little closer to explaining why cities seem to have persistent political relevance in a world of connections and networks. Still, geographical questions remain. If we recognise that any police order contains a particular spatial form with respect to the ways that it allocates roles and assigns place (Dikeç, 2005), we are left the questions of how to change this ordering and what an emancipated spatial arrangement looks like. It is one thing to identify why (urban) space still matters for politics, it is another to understand how (urban) space can help transform social orders! Perhaps one clue to the answer to this question comes with the recognition that equality must always be assessed within the particular; there is no universal form of equality—in the social or spatial dimension—to be established. Proffering static utopian urban solutions can therefore only promise the end of equality, since, for Rancière (1999), equality is a democratic commitment not a particular socio-spatial arrangement.

In this chapter we sought to articulate a relationship between the urban and the political that engages with recent debates about the nature of both. In effect, our dual claim is that a dialectical concept of the urban as both 'thing' and 'process' is a helpful resource for the political, and that

Rancière's (1999) approach to the political helps us to better understand how that dialectic might be democratized through verifications of equality. We've made this claim by spatialising Rancière's approach to the political, showing how the pre-supposition of equality that is central to his contribution is also a spatial pre-supposition in two related senses: to enact equality is also to pre-suppose (1) the existence of a stage and (2) a community that is only produced through such enactments.

The urban is both a site and a subject of the political, but these connections between the urban and the political are not ontologically fixed or guaranteed. Social scientific attempts to fix the site or scale of the political through theoretical or empirical investigation will always fail to completely grasp the processional constitution of space and politics. The purpose of our critical urban research ought to be to contribute to the development of democratic political imaginaries and enactments, not to dictate their proper place or orientation. As much as this will require us to interrogate the specifics of our particular urban condition, it will also inspire us to see the connections between our own demands on the present and the actions of others across distant spaces and times—perhaps even the plebs of Ancient Rome.

Note

1. Of course, the staging of claims through assemblies in, and occupations of, cities also frequently mobilizes mediated forms of address. While we would not go so far as Wark (2016) in his suggestion that "The thing to occupy is media time; the way to do it is to take space", there is clearly a deep relationship between the city and the media that has only become more intense with the recent growth of mobile media technologies and platforms.

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CHAPTER 3

Desiring the Common in the Post-crisis Metropolis: Insurgencies, Contradictions, Appropriations

Theresa Enright and Ugo Rossi

Introduction

This book suggests using the notion of 'late neoliberalism' to make sense of the current post-crisis period characterized by feelings of uncertainty and fear about the future that have the effect of frustrating aspirations for a progressive social change. The threat of a nationalist-populist backlash along with the geopolitical tensions emanating from the weakening of Western hegemony have raised concerns about the state of liberal democracies in the globalized world, particularly after the presidential election of Modi in India, of Trump in the USA, as well as the authoritarian drift in a growing number of countries including Brazil, Russia, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Hungary. In many respects, the current situation evokes what Antonio Gramsci's (1971) identified as the 'crisis of authority' behind the rise of fascism in the 1930s:

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> if the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer 'leading' but only 'dominant', exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously, etc. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear. (pp. 275–276)

Contrary to conventional bourgeois interpretations of fascism as a pre-modern, backward force, Gramsci urged his readers to look at it as an outcome of capitalist contradictions. In order to understand the ongoing crisis of legitimacy affecting established elites (Gramsci's crisis of authority) it is therefore necessary to look at the dynamics of capitalist economies and their political-regulatory trajectories following the crisis of 2008. Contravening earlier expectations, the crisis of neoliberal economic governance has not (yet) paved the way to state-led forms of wealth redistribution, as Keynesianism did in response to the Great Depression of the 1930s (Streeck, 2016). Recent political developments in Western countries such as the United States and the UK have destabilized first-generation neoliberal politics and economics: from Tony Blair's Third Way, to Clintonite market-led reformism, to elitist conservatism. However, these developments have not led to the purported 'death of neoliberalism' envisaged by some commentators (see for example Jacques, 2016). Instead, the neoliberal regime has been transmuted into a form of chauvinist populism characterized by a peculiar mix of anti-minority stance, isolationist ideology and free-market revanchism. Neoliberalism, in other words, "has once again risen from the ashes of crisis" (Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2013).

A progressive post-neoliberal transition is therefore far from being attained within mainstream politics, even though there have been promising signs in this direction. In addition to national gains such as Bernie Sanders' almost successful presidential candidacy in the United States, the recent electoral exploit of Jeremy Corbyn in Great Britain, and the election of left-leaning coalitions in Southern Europe, cities around the world have also elected socially-minded mayors. Despite these signals, the distinguishing trait of the current era of prolonged post-crisis transition lies in the perseverance of neoliberal governance practices dictated by the imperatives of austerity and market competition and their fusion with authoritarian modes of government. Cities play a distinctive role in this context.

From a political-economic viewpoint, cities deserve attention not only in their proactive role as local administrations but also as re-enlivened

nodes of the biopolitical age. The post-recession transition has been defined most prominently by austerity within critical urban studies. However, austerity tells us only part of the story. Cities are not only cutting essential services deemed unprofitable (Donald, Glasmeier, Gray, & Lobao, 2014; Peck, 2012), but are also committed to stimulating growth within currently anemic capitalist economies through innovative public-private partnerships (particularly in infrastructure) and the incentivization of new business practices. Urban societies, particularly within large metropolitan conglomerations, indeed offer an especially fertile ground for the production-communications-consumption circuit characterizing cognitive capitalism in late neoliberal times (Lazzarato, 2014). Taking advantage of the interactional opportunities offered by digital technologies, neoliberal capitalism has come to encompass a logic of social cooperation within its own mechanisms of entrepreneurialization of the individual (Bröckling, 2016; Rossi, 2017). As a result, particularly after the Great Contraction of the late 2000s, capitalist economies and societies have seen the rise and rapid growth of a number of closely interrelated phenomena that have intensified the economization of life and collaborative social relations: the expansion of social media, the emergence of 'prosumption' (user-generated content, crowd-sourcing, etc.), the rise of the 'sharing' and 'experience' economies, the digitalization of infrastructure based on consumer-driven data extraction (the so-called 'smart city' phenomenon), and the general proliferation of technology-led startup entrepreneurship in cities and metropolitan regions across the world. Rather than supporting the generalized economic empowerment of city dwellers and strengthening the cohesiveness of local communities, however, the urbanization of technology-based economies has by and large ended up reinforcing existing socio-spatial inequalities between the winners and the losers of the new economy (from the housing crisis to increased regional disparities), while enabling a handful of high-tech corporations to act as de facto monopolists within today's rent-based capitalism.

At the same time, since 2011 cities have been crucial arenas for a new wave of justice movements across the globe, which have produced a revitalized sense of the urban political that is reflected in countless experiments of radical municipalism. The early 2010s saw the shaping of both spectacular, 'revolutionary' movements (the Arab Spring, the Indignados, Occupy Wall Street, the urban protests in Turkey, Brazil, Hong Kong) and 'minor' mobilizations in which the political potential of cities and their environments has been re-appraised as a politics of the encounter (Merrifield,

2013) and struggle for the common (Hardt & Negri, 2012; Stavrides, 2016). In more recent years, however, as a result of the so-called "populist explosion" (Judis, 2016), the political landscape of Europe and North America has also been characterized by an exclusionary, 'us vs. them' common sense, particularly scapegoating Muslims, refugees and other subaltern minorities (Alliez & Lazzarato, 2016). The 'explosion' of communitarian-chauvinistic populism—we will contend here—has capitalized in a distorted form on the politics of the common that emerged from the first half of the 2010s. This 'opportunistic move' (Polanyi, 2001; Virno, 1996), which has led pundits to warn about an increasingly likely return to fascism with the political ascent of Donald Trump (Douthat, 2015; Kagan, 2016), has sparked from the unresolved contradictions of existing capitalist urbanization and economic development. Writing in the 1940s, Karl Polanyi saw the fascist threat as a 'move' (rather than a proper political movement) constantly looming over communities experiencing the failures of allegedly self-regulating market economies (Polanyi, 2001). In more recent times, in the early 1990s, Paolo Virno and other Italian theorists warned of the opportunism of post-Fordist economies and their political champions, turning insurgent social behaviors into economically productive skills in order to accommodate capitalism's relational-linguistic turn (Virno, 1996), as well as into active components of elites' subversivism, as Gramsci would have put it. Today's populist backlash is especially evocative of the socio-political dynamics described by Karl Polanyi and Paolo Virno.

In this chapter, therefore, we first examine how different urban forces—namely, mass justice movements, on the one hand, and capitalist economies, on the other hand—have fostered a 'communist desire' for the urban political understood as a space of the common; we then point to the contradictions that have allowed the populist backlash to emerge in more recent times. Having outlined this scenario, we turn back to what we call the 'spirit of 2011,' emphasizing the political potential that still resides in urban environments in our troubled present. It is here that the chapter offers its more constructive contribution to current debates over the urban political, calling for a cross-sectional politics of 'joyful encounter' (Hardt, 1993) challenging the negative sentiments of nationalist-communitarian populism.

Desiring in Uncertain Times

This chapter aims to unpack the ambivalence of the present troubled time, suspended between a potential for radical social change and a recalcitrant reality of déjà vu (Virno, 2015a). Against this backdrop, drawing on the

work of Marxist-Deleuzian-Spinozian authors (Deleuze, 1988; Hardt, 1993; Hardt & Negri, 2009; Ruddick, 2017), our approach draws attention to the productive dimension of contemporary capitalist societies in terms of subjectivation and political possibilities. In doing so it does not deny the possibility of the negative: rather, the two are viewed in a relationship of alterity and equivalence at one and the same time (Macherey, 2011). Through this lens, the current populist backlash is interpreted in this text as a distorted manifestation, a "disturbing double" (Luogo Comune Editorial, 1993) of the urban desire for 'communism.'

In a post-crisis period, the productive dimension of capitalist societies in its different manifestations is construed upon an ontology of perseverance. The notion of perseverance derives at one and the same time from Spinoza's concept of *conatus* and from 'desire' understood as a central engine of capitalist transformation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1977). Desire, in this sense, is not an individualized libidinal expression, but is intimately associated with material relations of collective production. As Frederic Lordon has recently maintained:

> For the conatus is the force of existence. It is, so to speak, the fundamental energy that inhabits bodies and sets them in motion […] it is the energy of desire. To be is to be a being of desire. To exist is to desire, and therefore to be active in the pursuit of one's objects of desire. Indeed, the link between desire as the effectuation of effort for the sake of persevering in being and the setting in motion of the body is expressed synthetically by the very term conatus. The Latin verb *conor*, from which it derives, means 'to undertake' [*entreprendre*] in the most general sense of 'to begin'. (Lordon, 2014, p. 1)

Through the lenses of conatus understood as 'the desire to do something', as in Lordon's definition, we look at the productive dimensions of late neoliberalism's economic relations, subjectivities, and organizational forms. In particular, we explore how a socialized urban experience has fostered a resurgent "desire for the political" (Berlant, 2011), and particularly for a communal "use of life" in response to the crisis of neoliberal individuality (Virno, 2015b). We argue that this desire for the political, that is, for a renewed experience of a 'life in common' is illustrated by two distinct but overlapping insurgencies during the post-crisis transition: the 'communism of the commoners', brought to light by the mass justice struggles that erupted in different countries across the world between 2011 and 2014 (Hardt & Negri, 2012; Merrifield, 2013), and the 'communism of capital', instigated by the capitalist valorization of the 'biopolitical metropolis' (Hardt & Negri, 2009).

This eruption of desire for the common on both the social and economic sides has not been without contradictions. On the one hand, the 'communism of the commoners' has played a significant role in the crisis of political-economic institutions and global elites whose legitimacy had been undermined by the financial crisis of 2008. Yet the claims and emotional politics of these uprisings have often unwillingly resulted in the rise of communitarian, nationalistic populism, given the absence of durable political alternatives on the progressive side of the political spectrum. On the other hand, the 'communism of capital' has generated hope for non appropriable shared forms of creativity. It has done so, however, by pursuing an 'objectified kind of desire', as Lauren Berlant (2011) defines it, as post-crisis urban economies are impassably forged by the promise of individual happiness (Ahmed, 2010). In times of relatively steady economic growth (that is pre-2008), this promise primarily associated the expectations of happiness with individual competition, fostering the formation of 'sad passions' within recently neoliberalized societies (Benasayag, 2003).

Drawing on the legacy of post-Freudian anti-psychiatry, in the early 2000s Miguel Benasayag (2003) engaged Spinoza's notion of 'sad passions' to analyse the neoliberal governmentalization of capitalist societies. As he saw it, when desire takes form as an individualized conatus, social actions are aimed at a merely adaptive behavior that confirms and reinforces the neoliberal logic of narcissistic identity-formation, notably through the anxious pursuit of success. With the growing divide between the 'winners' and 'losers' of the technology-driven post-crisis economy, a phenomenon that is particularly visible in the housing-market dynamics of major cities, these atomized 'sad passions' have turned into more virulent negative sentiments, giving birth to today's 'age of anger' (Mishra, 2017).

Before turning back to the populist backlash and the discussion of possible political alternatives, we focus our attention on the emergent desire for the urban political as an engine of today's capitalist societies and particularly on what we recognize as a multifaceted 'desire for the common' within the post-crisis transition that has followed the financial crash of 2008.

The Hopes of the Early 2010s, or the Communism of the Commoners

For over two decades, following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the alleged 'end of history,' the word communism had been largely unpronounceable. When it was spoken—primarily by the right and the new conservatives—it

was used in an instrumental fashion, evoking the horrors of twentieth-century totalitarianism as a way of justifying the necessity of neoliberal reason. However, the Great Recession of the late 2000s has caused an increasing number of theorists to interpret our current 'post-ideological' era through a communist lens (Badiou, 2015; Dean, 2012; Douzinas & Žižek, 2010).

In this chapter we (re)turn to the notion of communism as a point of engagement with the urban political and as a means of coming to terms with the profound transformations of today's capitalist economies. We look at two intertwined manifestations of communism at the urban level: on the one hand, the urban encounter of insurgent subjectivities, singularities and newly formed social movements around the world after the neoliberal crisis of 2008, the 'communism of the commoners'; on the other hand, the 'communism of capital' taking shape through the increased socialization of value production essential to the contemporary 'biopolitical metropolis.' In this sense, communism does not refer to a twentieth-century state form or utopian political ideology. Rather, its force lives and breathes in the tissue of the city, an ontological machine challenging binary distinctions between the public realm and the private interest, between society and the economy that customarily inhabit political discourse.

This immanentist understanding of communism departs from neo-dialectical Marxist perspectives that see communism as a project that needs to be strategically built over and *against* capitalism (Badiou, 2015; Dean, 2012). From the latter perspective, communism names a constitutive 'other' postulated as the negation of the status quo. Despite their differences, both immanentist and dialectical conceptions of communism emphasize the fundamental energy of desire within a collectivist approach to life and politics. Jodi Dean (2012, p. 158) conceives the 'communist horizon' as 'a collective desire for collectivity.' For their part, Hardt and Negri (2009) underline the variety of ways in which urban political movements around the world are pursuing relationships, connections, and intensities that make life more 'joyful' (see also Purcell, 2013). Through this affirmative politics of emotional engagement, the proponents of the affirmative-immanentist approach aim to offer an alternative to the political mobilization of virulent sentiments such as anger and, in some respects, indignation as a privileged manifestation of social discontent, particularly associated with communitarian-populist politics. In their view, desires and passions are constitutive of forms of a 'life in common', as they are motors of 'biopolitical' processes producing and re-producing the common as a

collective artifact resulting from cooperation and the juxtaposition of different singularities. In contemporary societies we observe this desire for communism not just in spectacular events (e.g. Tahrir Square, Gezi Park, 2011 London riots) but in a wide array of radical political activities (e.g. squatting, slumdwelling, occupying, guerilla gardening) and in the more mundane practices of co-operation, co-management and co-use that comprise the urban commons (see Borch & Kornberger, 2015; Dellenbaugh, Kip, Bieniok, Müller, & Schwegmann, 2015; Ferguson, 2014; Gidwani & Baviskar, 2011; Huron, 2015). Here Marxist-immanentist authors encounter critical feminists: the desire for new modes of being in common is thought by critical feminists to be animated by an heterogeneous array of forms of coexistence, social endurance, experimentation, and play that support everyday life amidst suffering in turbulent socio-economic transitions (Berlant, 2011; Povinelli, 2011).

Both post-Marxist feminists such as Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Povinelli and Marxist-Deleuzian-Spinozians such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri thus locate desire within the living body of capitalist relations and of the constitutive forces underlying them. Indeed, what Deleuze and Guattari (1977) call "desiring production" is the force of potentials that exist in the constitutive relationships of the urban fabric "as the very source of life, as a human power to be liberated" (Purcell, 2013). Communism in the metropolis as such pre-exists, sidesteps, and escapes state and capitalist apparatuses of capture even as it supports these (Toscano, 2004). It is the excessive nature of collective desire that enables communism to be thought of not as an end-state (desires are never truly satisfied), but as a mode of becoming, change, and transformation. Communism as commoning is active and processual. Across the range of choreographed but contingent "co-motions" (Massumi, 2015) witnessed in the wake of the financial crisis, this dynamic feature is especially crucial. Thinking of desire in this sense requires recasting the urban political away from pre-fixed, trans-historical, heroic, and essentialized forms and procedures (of states, parties, and social movements), and toward more 'situational' practices of disruption and initiation that shift what can be thought, said, or heard in a given time and place (Boudreau, 2016; Enright, 2017).

While this situational conception of the political leads us to abstain from too constrained a definition of the 'urban,' we associate the emergent desire for communism with an experimental politics of encounter across the global 'biopolitical metropolis.' In the Fordist-Keynesian era, the urbanization of capital shaped the spatial and social trajectories of class

struggle (Castells, 1983). At that time, production located and framed conflicts of industrial labour in cities, while reproduction of the communities in which workers and their families lived gave rise to multiple antagonisms across collective consumption realms such as housing, education, and transit. These societal and economic dynamics have created the myriad identities and concerns that still form the bases of the politics of resistance challenging neoliberal dismantling of residual welfare-state institutions (Mayer, 2009, 2013). In the contemporary capitalist city, a biopolitical movement of capital overlapping with the neoliberal politics of welfare-state dismantling has further complicated this picture, increasingly blurring the boundaries of work and nonwork, the productive and reproductive.

Today, what Hardt and Negri call the 'biopolitical metropolis' operates across all these dimensions, as the labour process becomes increasingly socialized. They write:

> in the biopolitical economy, there is an increasingly intense and direct relation between the production process and the common that constitutes the city. The city, of course, is not just a built environment consisting of buildings and streets and subways and parks and waste systems and communications cables but also a living dynamic of cultural practices, intellectual circuits, affective networks, and social institutions. (Hardt & Negri, 2009, pp. 153–154)

With the real subsumption of life under capital, value creation extends from the factory floor to the entire fabric of the metropolis. Everyday life practices are now bound up in "the production of ideas, information, images, knowledges, code, languages, social relationships, affects and the like" (Hardt, 2011). As these living social relations cannot be fully appropriated (although they are continuously privatized in the form of rent) there is fertile ground for new forms of emancipatory collaboration. In the biopolitical age, productive desire suffuses all aspects of life. For Hardt (2010, p. 143), there is thus a close "proximity between the idea of communism and contemporary capitalist production." In this perspective, common goods are not to be conceived only as pre-existing entities, merely needing to be defended through political action. Rather, the common is incessantly created and re-created through labour. The biopolitical metropolis is thus intrinsically political: multitudinous politics understood as a subversive politics of cooperation among equals is not something external that has to

be created from scratch by political vanguards, socialist parties and grassroots movements; rather, it is integral to the mechanisms of the biopolitical metropolis: it is already *there*, waiting to be activated.

Yet, as we will underline in the next section, the capitalist appropriation of the biopolitical metropolis—what we define the 'communism of capital'—has also exacerbated socio-spatial polarizations and inequalities, leading to the unraveling of the hopes of the early 2010s, while contributing to the rise of national-populist forces from 2014 onwards originally sparked by the legitimacy crisis of global neoliberal elites.

The Communism of Capital and Its Contradictions

Writing in the late 1960s, Antonio Negri put forward the provocative idea of the 'communism of capital' in his interpretation of Keynesian economics as a political, state-centred project aimed at the integration of the working class within capital. Keynes' seminal *General Theory*, which provides the groundwork for the New Deal politics of capitalist reform before and after World War II, has to be understood, Negri argued, not only as a response to the 1929 financial crash, but also as a reaction to the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. It was, in other words, an attempt to rescue capitalism from its own crisis as well as from the temptations of a communist revolution. The links between 1917 and 1929 are of central importance to understanding the advent of the Keynesian era. The question that needed to be answered, according to Negri, was "how to block, how to control, the impact of the October Revolution on the capitalist order" (Negri, 1987, p. 9). The crisis of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression created widespread expectations for a new management of capitalist economies. If the expansion of supply was an untenable solution owing to the fact that overcapacity had led to the crisis itself, then the only solution to the self-preservation of the capitalist order was to act on the side of 'effective demand.' This meant integrating the working class within the mechanisms of capitalist development. Keynes' final and extreme formulation of this idea was the 'euthanasia of the rentier', as he put it in the last chapter of the *General Theory*. Here, he argued that rate interests must be reduced to zero and that the uncertainty customarily arising from 'liquidity traps' must be offset by enhancing predictability through state expenditure, thus ensuring constantly increasing levels of effective demand (see also Mann, 2017). In making this argument, Keynes even acknowledged that, as profit and interest are reduced to zero and money becomes a

merely accounting unit, labour value is bound to become the standard measure of economic calculation. "[T]he law of value," Negri concluded, "would come to govern the entirety of development. Capital becomes communist" (ibid., p. 16). At the macro-economic level, workers' struggles in the 1960s for higher wages, along with US trade balance deficits, eventually led to the Federal Reserve's anti-inflation, monetarist turn in 1979, marking the crisis of the Keynesian social state and thus putting an end to the twentieth-century 'communism of capital' experiment.

While its original association with Negri's theorization of Keynesianism remains unacknowledged (see for instance Beverungen, Murtola, & Schwartz, 2013), the notion of the communism of capital has seen a revival in recent times, being mobilized with reference to the phenomenon of financialization (Marazzi, 2012), as a radicalization of Peter Drucker's idea of "pension fund socialism" (Drucker, 1976), and in relation to Marx's concept of general intellect. In both instances of financialization and informatization of production, the post-Fordist transition is thought to have grown into the living tissue created by social struggles refusing the wage-productivity linkage in the Fordist factory (Virno, 2004). Even though more recent theorizations of so-called 'post-capitalism' tend to offer an optimistically techno-centric—rather than political and historicized—interpretation of the 'communism of capital' variously defined (Mason, 2015; Rifkin, 2014), the financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath sheds new light on this notion.

Pre-crisis processes of financialization took form not merely as a capital accumulation regime, as those described by Giovanni Arrighi (1994) with reference to the ascent of pre-industrial capitalism, or as a dynamic internal to the capitalist corporation, rewarding shareholder value, as in twentieth-century corporate capitalism. Rather, its distinctive trait was the intense financialization of life as such (Joseph, 2014; Martin, 2002), leading the household to increasingly act "as a unit of financial calculation" (Bryan, Martin, & Rafferty, 2009, p. 462). This means that within neoliberal economies, the home functions to reproduce the workforce and as a distinct agent of capital accumulation. "'[W]e' are all accumulators, and our individual success is entirely contingent on our own performance, not just in accumulating 'human capital,' but also in evaluating and managing opportunities and risk" (ibid., p. 468). The neoliberal regime of capital accumulation, circulation and reproduction, therefore, has entailed the incorporation of "labor-as-capital" into the mechanisms of financialization. A peculiar type of 'private Keynesianism' has taken form in this context,

one in which the risk of indebtedness has been transferred from the state to the household (Crouch, 2009).

It is against this backdrop that one has to understand the capitalist transition from the primary circuit of capital, based on trade and manufacturing, to the secondary and tertiary circuits, centred on real estate and the built environment and knowledge-intensive sectors respectively (Harvey, 1978). After the bursting of the real estate bubble in 2007, the subsequent financial crash of 2008, and the 'Great Recession' of 2009, Harvey's theorization of the centrality of the built environment within the financialized economies of global capitalism has gained renewed diagnostic importance. The financialization of urban development and the housing sector more specifically has to be viewed, however, not as an arrival point but rather as a departure point in our analysis: namely, as a symptom of the wider involvement of urban societies and economies within biopolitical capitalism. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have stressed, real estate can be viewed as a "specter of the common," as its increasing values are indicative of the positive externalities—as mainstream economists put it—generated by urban environments in 'good' locations: notably, what they define the common wealth—the 'biopolitical value' autonomously produced within 'the metropolis' which is internalized within the proper capitalist process (Hardt & Negri, 2009). Finance capital, with its own esoteric products, Hardt and Negri point out, has to be understood as a representation of the common created within the living environments of the metropolis. The 'communism of capital' has thus travelled from the Keynesian social state to the 'biopolitical metropolis' of neoliberal capitalism.

This shift has become even more tangible in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. In fact, far from materializing expectations of a Keynesian revival, the post-recession transition has largely seen a further entrepreneurialization of the biopolitical metropolis. As crises function as moments of 'creative destruction,' the figure of the entrepreneur has re-gained wide currency within the common wisdom (Bröckling, 2016). After the financial crash of 2008 and the subsequent Great Recession, many expected to find Keynes at the door, but Schumpeter eventually showed up in his place (Jones & Murtola, 2012). As soon as the economy stabilized, the United States in particular saw a surge in venture capital flows directed towards an elite of cities and metropolitan areas known for their 'creative economies,' 'high-skilled workers,' 'smart labour' and 'urban entrepreneurs' (Cohen, 2016; Florida, 2012; Moretti, 2012). The geography of venture capital in the United States has proven to be particularly city-centred, exhibiting a

significant correlation with the sustained increase in housing costs since 2010 in a select circle of economically thriving urban centres and metropolitan areas (Florida & King, 2016).

The common wisdom emphasizes how the intensified influx of venture capital and its urban concentration, along with the opportunities offered by digital technologies, potentially enables the entrepreneurialization of everyone: "we are all entrepreneurs now; everyone will have to become an entrepreneur," so the mantra goes (Szeman, 2015). Indeed, the apologists of the current urban revolution celebrate the rise of what can be defined the 'happy-city entrepreneur' whose priority is the pursuit of the common good through the development of a collaborative ethos rather than the realization of profit (Brugmann, 2010; Glaeser, 2011; Montgomery, 2013). The individualized risk-taking investor citizen at the centre of the financialized economy before the 2008 crisis has not disappeared, but she is increasingly told that her success depends, in fact, on community, sharing, cooperation, happiness and the common good. Consequently, co-working business spaces, corporatized sharing economies, start-up co-managed incubators have proliferated in cities and metro areas across the globe, becoming distinguishing traits of an increasingly socialized capitalist economy over the transitional decade of the 2010s. Although largely associated with cities of the North Atlantic, informal settlements and densely populated areas in the urbanized Global South have also started stimulating the appetite of global investors as collective reservoirs of entrepreneurial energies and capacities. A peculiar 'communist' imaginary, therefore, has come to characterize the discourse of capitalist renaissance during the post-crisis transition. As a result, the common is no longer a specter hidden behind the obscurities of financial products, as described by Hardt and Negri in *Commonwealth*, but has started to become an increasingly visible part of the capitalist resilience.

In always mutating ways, the communism of capital follows in the wake of systemic shocks: the October Revolution and the 1929 crisis, the workers' struggles of the 1960s and the crisis of the mid-1970s, the crisis of 2008 and the mass justice movements of the early 2010s. As in previous manifestations of the 'communism of capital,' this phenomenon tends to renew the dynamic of capitalist cycles by reproducing, intensifying, and shifting around in space, its inherent contradictions.

Cities that have been at the centre of the so-called 'technology boom 2.0' are experiencing an unprecedented housing crisis that particularly afflicts lower-middle class households (Madden & Marcuse, 2016). In New York City, which is the second largest venture capital destination after

Silicon Valley, the soaring numbers of the precariously housed include not merely 'superfluous' urban populations, but also the lower and middle classes. In addition, the stark inter-regional inequalities between the economically losing and the winning regions under this extractivist order have become pronounced resulting, among other things, in highly polarized electoral behaviours after the 'populist explosion'. In the United States, the country that most explicitly pursues the 'happy-city entrepreneur' ideal, absolute numbers of start-ups are decreasing (Cowen, 2017), while the technology-based economy of so-called 'platform capitalism' appears dominated by a handful of powerful high-tech corporations using urban environments as sites of data extraction (Srnicek, 2016) as well as of commercial expansion. Amazon's recent acquisition of Whole Foods Market—a powerful actor in the grocery industry in major cities in the United States—is particularly illustrative of the latter trend. Therefore, despite the celebration of the era of urban entrepreneurship, embarking on an independent entrepreneurial venture has become increasingly difficult within an economy dominated by a few corporate giants. As we have argued, the eruption of communitarian, conservative populism, particularly epitomized by the election of Donald Trump in 2016, but in its essence anticipated by that of Hindu nationalist Narendra Modi in India in 2014, can be interpreted as an effect of the promises and delusions associated with the concomitant rise the 'communism of the commoners' and the 'communism of capital' after the neoliberal crisis of the late 2000s. The next, concluding section will present the idea of an urban-rooted 'joyful politics of encounter' as a way to return to what we call the 'spirit of 2011' in response to the rise of nationalist populism and its negative sentiments in contemporary liberal democracies.

Reviving the Spirit of 2011: A Joyful Politics of Encounter

This chapter has interpreted the current wave of nationalist-populist politics that has swept both Western and emerging economies as a result of the internal contradictions of the 'post-crisis metropolis' and its politics of the common. The populist forces have capitalized on the longstanding sad passions of the neoliberal era (individualism, narcissism, etc.), and turned them towards sentiments of fear and social resentment that have stabilized in the current 'age of anger.' These more forceful, openly or implicitly

exclusionary sentiments have particularly target perceived Others to the dominant order, held responsible for large-scale social problems: minorities, racialized populations, refugees, and undocumented migrants. Liberal democracies' current state of affairs reproduces at a larger scale what happened in Greece during the debt crisis of the early 2010s. When the Greek government accepted the economic shock therapy dictated by the 'troika,' the resulting delegitimation of Greece's elites and mainstream politicians led to the emergence of aggressive rightwing parties that blamed immigrants for the lack of jobs and affordable housing. Yet all was not lost. The revitalization of the Greek left occurred largely in response to these threats, building solidarity across different sectors of society, particularly between the immigrants and those more hit by the unemployment crisis, such as women and young people: as a result, at the general election of 2014, the coalition of the radical left unexpectedly obtained the majority of seats in the Parliament.

Similarly, in response to the political ascent of Donald Trump, since the summer of 2016 local leaders across the United States have given rise to the 'sanctuary cities' campaign, which since then has incarnated the most visible opposition to federal policies, along with a resurgent women's movement increasingly challenging a narrow conception of identity politics. In disrupting conventional forms of political belonging, both the sanctuary cities initiative and the women's movement have prepared the ground for subsequent 'encounters' among insurgent singularities, such as the alliance between the fast-food workers involved in the $15 minimum-wage campaign and the Black Lives Matter movement. Furthermore, globally, examples of a renewed urban politics of the common abound. In June 2017 city officials and urban activists representing about two hundred cities from four different continents have gathered in Barcelona—the popular Catalan capital governed by *Barcelona En Comú*, a grassroots coalition which developed out of anti-eviction housing campaigns—for the 'Fearless cities—Internationalist municipalist summit ' conference aimed at building 'global networks of refuge and hope.' "Around the world," the official conference website reads, "towns and cities are standing up to defend human rights, democracy and the common good. The Fearless Cities summit will allow municipalist movements to build global networks of solidarity and hope in the face of hate, walls and borders" (http://fearlesscities.com/).

These examples show how cities and urban societies have much to offer to the revitalization of a politics of hope reviving the 'spirit of 2011.' This does not mean that the contemporary metropolis, even under the most progressive conditions, should be viewed as a 'heaven on earth' for liberal ideals of happiness, equality of opportunities and justice. While the metropolis itself is constituted around an excessive desire for the common, the unresolved contradictions of existing pathways of capitalist urbanization and economic development generate the inequalities that are behind the rancorous politics of ethnic-majority revanchism that has come to the fore across the world. We believe, in conclusion, that the ambivalent confrontation between potentiality and actuality characterizing the contemporary metropolis can only be resolved through the pursuit of an imaginative politics of joyful encounter aimed at wiping away the negative sentiments that nourish today's populist backlash.

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CHAPTER 4

The Globalized City as a Locus of the Political: Logistical Urbanization, Genealogical Insights, Contemporary Aporias

Niccolò Cuppini

The construction of the planetary scale of urbanization as a city can be seen, after all, as an attempt to investigate what aspects have to be taken into account by the physics of a political space attuned to the scale of globalization (Barrio, 2015).

Introduction

"The era of the state is now coming to an end," famously stated Carl Schmitt in 1932 in *The Concept of the Political*, meaning that states should not be considered any more as the unique actors of the political landscape. During recent decades, although within different approaches and perspectives, many theories and empirical researches have demonstrated the deep *crisis* of the modern state's ability to own the monopoly of the Political. The political field has progressively been *de facto* inhabited by an increasing number of new powers.

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Within this multiplication of powers, the (globalized) city is a historical-political concept we need to focus on in order to grasp some of the fundamental elements of the ongoing transition of the global present. The dispersion of many different centres of power within the global (dis)order is producing new articulations and assemblages. It is precisely within this complex vortex that the city finds a new space of political action. Contemporary cities are specific political poles beyond the state.

These considerations do not point to establishing a rigid contrast between the state and the city, but rather outline alternative entry points to an understanding of contemporary politics. The adoption of the lenses of the state has been the most widespread way to elaborate political theories, at least during the modern era. Nevertheless, these lenses become blurred when used to view the intensifying processes of planetary interconnection; in this lies the proposal of the city as an experimental *kaleidoscopic* political gaze.

Systems of production, commodity circulation, migration, communication and transport technologies and other sets of interdependent phenomena—usually mentioned under the problematic label of 'globalization'—tend to shape a world where every single metropolis is nothing more than a neighbourhood of a unique, globalized city. In other words: we are living in a city-world, a world that has become as one city. The assumption of the globalized city as a perspective point to comprehend dynamics and tensions of the present is mainly based on two influent contemporary urban theories: The conceptualization of planetary urbanization (Brenner, 2013; Merrifield, 2013), that gives the concrete infrastructural base of the city-world; and Saskia Sassen's framework of 'the Global City' (1991), that indicates the global dimension of the city. However, her conception points to a network of financial core centres, located in few cities, that lead globalization processes. The hypothesis of the globalized city on one side updates Sassen's conception. But, on the other side, it points to something different.

The globalized city is a *process* of configuration of a new locus of the Political, an emerging political city at the global scale, due to an ambivalent and contradictory move. Effectively, the point is to contextualize the emergence of the globalized city within a paradoxical condition: On one hand, the city is affirmed everywhere, making the world a meta-city; on the other hand, it is precisely this process that is dissolving the characters and characteristics that have historically described the city and made it intelligible. The city is everywhere and disappearing at the same time.

This aporia, a productive antinomy between the evaporation of preceding equilibriums and the unstable emergence of new configurations, is inscribed into the sunset of the 'second globalization' (Baldwin & Martin, 1999), i.e. the crisis of the processes of the so-called neoliberal era. Stretched out in multiple directions, ubiquitous, the globalized city is obliterating the constitutional equilibriums in which it has been enmeshed in the last centuries. In other words, the becoming political of the globalized city is one of the vectors of crisis of 'late neoliberalism.'

The city is a contested historical becoming, an always contingent product characterized by a plurality of practices, actors and authorities. The city is the locus of the provenance of the Political. However, during the modern era, the state has dominated the city, and this explains why today the very concept of the city is confused. The re-semantization of socio-political concepts occurring during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not touch the city. Consequently, the city was not being charged by a projection of the future, while today—in a period when historical time appears to be compressed in the present, completely reversing upside down the whole theoretical architecture of the political reflection—the city finds itself on the forefront of the overall redefinition in which we are living.

This chapter sketches a new emergent political figure, the globalized city, defining its historical provenience and some contemporary profiles. The globalized city is a mosaic, a still quite obscure concept, and the attempt of this paper is to shape this political image collecting some of its tiles. Moreover, the globalized city is framed as a specific political pole beyond the state, and its definition is elaborated against the backdrop of Carl Schmitt's definition of 'the Political.'

The first and second parts of the chapter collect some theoretical and historical fragments to provide a conceptual background, and to elaborate a genealogy showing how the city has been de-politicized by an understanding of the Political based on the state paradigm. Then, it focuses on how a logistical conception of urbanization processes has been used since the nineteenth century to govern the emerging metropolis. Hidden as a technical set of tools and urban interventions, this logistical rationality needs to be emphasised and politicized to grasp contemporary dynamics at play within the globalized city. Finally, the last part of the chapter discusses an alternative definition of the Political premised on the city rather than on the state.

Theoretical Sketches

As Max Weber (1986) demonstrates, the city is the political form that allows an analysis of the fundamental production of forms of power. A specific traction between order and disorder, government and self-government, is constantly at play within cities. The city has never been an established and fixed 'object.' Instead, it has always been a field of tensions, a contested order. Moreover, even though we usually consider cities as spatial entities, they are, in fact, first of all temporal processes. Many different strategies, typologies, generations of cities have existed throughout history.

The city is a *political* idea. Today, the general emphasis on 'the urban' (i.e. the city considered as the *urbs*) rather than on 'the city' (i.e. the city considered as the *civitas*), signals the profound crisis of traditional paradigms to grasp what is happening on the ground within the city as a political process. The predominant focus on the built environment rather than on citizens, expresses the (unaware?) neglect by urban theorists of the political dimension. One of the main hermeneutic problems to solve is the global dimension of the city. Within different hierarchies, and to different degrees, every city is nowadays part of a *globalized city*, part of a complex urban texture that contributes to shaping the contemporary global (dis)order. However, there is a dearth of concepts, imaginaries, and concrete frameworks to endow this tendency with an adequate representation.

Gravitating around *polis* (unity), *polemos* (war) and *stasis* (conflict, threshold of politicization; see Agamben, 2015), the globalizing capabilities of cities have been constituted and rise again over time, passing through many different historical frontiers and consequent de-generations. To define this perspective, it is useful to implement the concept of 'seeing like a city' (Amin & Thrift, 2016). Setting it in historical terms allows us to shed light on many genealogical scenes where the city emerges as a very specific order, a constantly contested one, that cannot be governed from a unique centre (Magnusson, 1996). Moreover, these genealogical scenes recur and insist (Foucault, 1977) on the globalized city concept, making it a complex asset with heterogeneous forms of centres and sources of power. Again, this point of view represents a *dislocation* in respect to the 'gaze of the state' usually adopted by political theorists. This latter conception presents the Political as absolute, indivisible, and vertical. Recalling Warren Magnusson's (2011, p. 69) words, we learn more "if we put the state under erasure and investigate what people do politically and how they are

governed as denizens of particular cities within the global city." Moreover, it is emblematic that the word 'polis' is frequently translated as 'state' and "what makes the polis recognizable for us, as a state, is that [it] is a kind of rational order, intelligible in terms of human needs and possibilities conceived in the most general terms" (Magnusson, 2008, p. 5). This kind of interpretation can also be connected to some influential Greek thinkers, who "were not comfortable with the *cityness* of the polis. They feared its disorder, its openness, its variety, and its multiplicity of contending authorities" (Magnusson, 2011, p. 117).

In the present historical moment, when sovereignty is increasingly becoming polycentric and fragmented, seeing *through* the city allows the opening up of new horizons of research, starting from the necessity of urbanising political thought and politicising urban studies. This methodology resonates with Egin F. Isin's attempt to experiment with an "exercise of critically distancing myself from the state categories of perception that have come to dominate the social sciences in the last few decades" (Isin, 2005, p. 374). Moving away from the state's analytical categories means also looking at the city not as if it is a 'container' where differences meet, but rather regarding it through the concept that the city itself generates differences. This is a crucial political point; The city is a 'difference machine', a space that constitutes 'dialogical' (meaning polemological) encounters of social groups formed and generated immanently in the process of taking up positions, orienting themselves for and against each other, inventing and assembling strategies and technologies, mobilizing various forms of capital, and making claims to that space that is objectified as 'the city' (Isin, 2002, p. 283).

The city is not the "background to these struggles against which groups wager," nor the "foreground for which groups struggle for hegemony" (ibid.). Instead, the city is the *battleground* through which social groups define themselves, impose their interests, conduct their battles and articulate rules, rights and principles. This is the intrinsic politicalness of the city. In opposition to the Political of the state, this politicalness emerges as inherently multiple, fragmented and marked by difference.

This opposition is a problem for the state, which has continuously tried to erase this political heterogeneity and its conflictual consequences as an attempt to govern and control the transformations of the city. Starting from these considerations, there is a need to find some entry points to outline acts of radical de-politicization of the city. My angle is to look at how logistics (as a concept, a set of practices and a rationality) have been

used in order to achieve depoliticization. I approach these concerns with a genealogical methodology, focusing on specific episodes and turning points in this process (Foucault, 1977).

Genealogical Insights

The city is never static. Without the contribution of the stranger it goes into decay. Moreover, the city can persist only if it is inserted into a composite network of other cities and logistical relationships that permit the inflow of resources (food, hydraulics, raw materials and so forth). This relational, interconnected and circulating matrix of the urban system brings us to contemporary planetary urbanization, which confirms that cities arise and evolve from the merging of people, dwellings and communication routes. Following this direction, and pushing the discourse even further, it is possible to maintain that cities and globalization are nothing more than two sides of the same coin.

Michel Foucault and others have demonstrated how the application of 'ordinances of police' have been crucial to the development of the modern state (Foucault, 2009). The aim here was to organize the whole territory of the rising state as if it was big city. It is not an accident that since the sixteenth century, walls are no longer the distinctive character of the city. As Leonardo Benevolo puts it: in that period "the architecture of the city grows from the streets rather than from the edifices" (1967, p. 124). In the same period, the German geographer Georg Braun edited the *Civitates orbis terrarum*, which contains more than 500 maps of cities from all around the world. This global perspective on the city has a hidden implication: this new way of representing the city contains a radical de-politicization of the city itself. Now, the city is only a specific scale (i.e. the local) subordinated to the emerging Leviathan, as we can see from the frontispiece of Thomas Hobbes famous book. The *civitas*, the city conceived as the citizens, is evacuated from the *urbs* (the multitude of the individuals here enclosed in the body of the sovereign), and the city remains only as a concentration of houses, streets and squares. The attempt is to reduce the city to a pacified market.

It is possible to focus on the development of this synthetic genealogy within the ongoing acceleration of historical processes that characterizes the European cities of the nineteenth century. At this point, the expulsion of the nobility from the cities has occurred, and new subjects have moved in. This city is ideologically constructed by its new 'bosses' as a market, a

place of pacified exchange where 'free economic interaction' is realized. This purpose is achieved within a Hobbesian contrail. The *Encyclopédie* of the Enlightenment states that "[i]n order to define the city more precisely […] it is [first of all] a walled settlement, which contains several quarters, streets, public places and other buildings." The citizens here are definitively erased from the concept of 'city.' This depoliticizes the city, hiding the new political rule intrinsic to the new forms of production and trade, now distributed on the planetary scale. Expunging the citizens also implies the strategic removal of social and political conflict from the city, relegating it to 'the countryside' or the 'colonies' (which are, within this discourse at least, the same thing).

Logistical Urbanization

However, something changed during the nineteenth century. A combination of different processes, usually labelled as the 'industrial revolution,' also led to what many have termed an 'urban revolution.' Masses of people moved from the countryside to the city, and the city became (again) a conflictual arena. In fact, most major European cities were scenes of insurrection in 1848. The state needed to regain its sovereign order over the city. Two centuries before, the question was how to urbanize the territory. Now the aim was to 'territorialize' the city, or to make the city a more ordered territory.

The nineteenth century metropolis grew as a *response* to social conflict. It was a dialectical and conflictual system, and it is impossible to comprehend this metropolis without focusing on power's claims expressed in it by the inflow of an increasing number of poor people and the growing working class.

The conventional example of this is the work of Baron Von Haussmann in Paris between 1853 and 1869. He destroyed all traces of the traditional city, considered to be a *disturbance* for the possibility of *smooth* circulation. The city itself became the locus in which to apply a series of transformations driven by infrastructural reasons (e.g. big routes for commodity circulation), for social reasons (e.g. the expulsion of the poor from the city centre), for military reasons (e.g. against the possibility of erecting barricades) and for economic reasons (e.g. the city needing to be place of commodity valorisation). This tangle of different processes and rationalities is in fact what we nowadays call logistics. We have to keep in mind that the metropolis, that is to say the modern city constructed during the nineteenth century, *is* a logistical place. All the interventions of Haussmann, taken

here as an example of a broad logic/rationality, were driven by the vector of circulation. While Haussmann's project was the expression of a conservative politics, Idelfonso Cerdà, an influential theorist of urbanization in that same period (1867), was a liberal and a progressive. He elaborated the concept of *vialidad* (circulation) as the core vector of the new cities. Urbanization was seen by Cerdà as a project to unify humanity in a single global society interconnected within a global *urbe*.

Cerdá's frequent reference to the sea in describing the *urbe* ('*mare magnum*') is a crucial model for constructing a fluid space whose power lies in its transcending of limits—a political quality Cerdá saw as a historical duty for modern society to fulfil. The urban was to be a space of administered circulation whose connectivity would undermine all firm spatio-political boundaries. Instead, the infinite and mobile qualities of space experienced in the early modern Atlantic voyages would reemerge in the endlessly expansive process of '*urbanización*' (Adams, 2015).

So, be it from this perspective based on the idea of a rational planning or through the violent intervention of the French State, the metropolis must be a place of circulation and connection. The old city was seen as an obstacle to that project. Therefore, since the beginning of the modern city this *logistical logic* shapes the urban fabric.

There is a second point that must be taken into account: the link between logistics, infrastructures, the concept of frontier and the transformations of urban spaces. Modern logistics evolves following new necessities of moving people and goods through new modern spaces: the state-space, colonies, Atlantic routes and so forth. Modern logistics is linked to the global market and to the movement of armies through continental spaces. In that context a set of specific knowledges, practices and infrastructures was developed. In the second half of the nineteenth century, these tools and logics, developed in continental and oceanic spaces, are applied within the space of the city. There is, somehow, a specific resonance from 'the colony' to the metropolis (using metropolis here in its double meaning of 'mater polis' and 'modern city'). The work of the historian Frederick Jackson Turner provides an emblematic insight of this dynamic. At the end of the nineteenth century Turner (1921) elaborated a famous theory about the relevance of the *frontier* for the American history, for its democracy and the vitality of its society. Turner was afraid that the frontier had ended. One of the most symbolic event that sustains the idea of the closing of the frontier happened in 1869, the same year of the dismissal of Haussmann. In that year, in Utah, two lines of the railroad

were finally connected. The East and the West coast were now welded by this train line, the first transcontinental railroad. This immense work, made possible thanks to a sort of public-private partnership, is the infrastructure that connects the new nation and, paradoxically, also 'closes' it. But what is suggestive is that in those same years this new technology (the railway) started to be applied to a totally different context: the city. The first line of a subway was introduced in London, and all the most important cities started to construct their own inner railway. The logistics, the movement of people and commodities within the city (and also the perception of time and space), was completely revolutionized.

After the entrance of the railway to the city, the frontier follows. After the Second World War the imagery of wilderness and frontier was applied less frequenty to the plains, mountains and forests of the West—now handsomely civilized—and more often to US cities back East. As part of the experience of postwar suburbanization, the US city came to be seen as an 'urban wilderness.' It was, and for many still is, the habitat of disease and disorder, crime and corruption, drugs and danger (Smith, 1996, p. 5). Neil Smith here describes the ideological foundation of the phenomenon of gentrification. But in the context of so-called globalization, national and international capitals alike confront a global 'frontier' of their own that subsumes the gentrification frontier. This link between different spatial scales, and the centrality of urban development to national and international expansion, was acutely clear in the enthusiastic language of supporters of 'Urban Enterprise Zones,' an idea pioneered by the Thatcher governments in the 1980s, and a centerpiece of 1990s urban privatization strategies (17).

Again, the logic of the zone, a typical colonial logic, is now applied to the city. But here there is a shift from the past. The emphasis on (capital) circulation is accompanied by the necessity of new bordering capabilities. Far from the linear marks of Cerdà and from the *grand boulevards* of Haussmann, urban texture increasingly becomes complex, rhapsodic, and heterogeneous. Recently, Saskia Sassen has expanded the concept of the city as a frontier zone:

> The global city is a new frontier zone. Deregulation, privatization, and new fiscal and monetary policies create the formal instruments to construct the equivalent of the old military "fort". The city is also a strategic frontier zone for those who lack power, and allows the making of informal politics. […] The […] transformation of the city in a frontier zone […] far from making

> this a borderless world, have actually multiplied the bordered spaces that allow firms and markets to move across conventional borders. Cities are therefore one of the key sites where new neoliberal norms are made and where new identities emerge. (2015, p. 295)

The nineteenth century metropolises have been the spur that sustained and pushed the process of the 'first globalization'—the vertiginous increase of the international interchanges between the last three decades of the nineteenth century and the first world war. The contemporary scenario seems somehow to propose again some nodes that marked the end of that cycle of globalization: a political crisis, linked to the limitless growth of inequalities, and therefore leading towards the crisis of legitimacy of political systems. The link between the metropolis and the first globalization has been repeated by the nexus between global cities and the second globalization. The disruption of this nexus is precisely what is at stake at this present moment.

The Political and the City

Pierre Manent (2010, p. 19) maintains that "politics is the origin of Western world, and therefore the city. The movement of the West begins with the movement of the city." This movement acts in criss-crossing the city, carves it with a gesture that goes beyond the city itself. This movement is internal and external, is class struggle and war, bringing into question the viability of such a binary definition of these dividing lines. Moreover, this movement produces political energy, an energy that is the guarantee of its freedom and autonomy and the threat of a constant internal and external hostility at the same time. This is the destiny of the city: a permanent search of a political form swinging between freedom and dissolution.

The city arises and develops through conflict, through the strenuous attempt to recompose the terms of this tension—a tension that, nevertheless, is unsolvable. "The city in its history is the never-ending experiment to shape the contradiction" (Cacciari, 2004, p. 7); it is a path determined by a field of contrasting forces which become constitutive elements of its own reality. This means that cities are places of constant production of friends and enemies, and cities are theatres of their clashes, alliances and positioning. Here lies the aforementioned concept of the *politicalness* of the city.

The friend/enemy distinction is one of the main criteria that Carl Schmitt proposes, originally proposed in a 1927 essay, in describing the Political: "It is possible to bring back political actions and reasons to a specific political distinction, the one between friend (*Freund*) and enemy (*Feind*). It offers a conceptual definition, namely a criterion, not an exhaustive definition nor an explanation of its content" (1932, p. 108). The friend/enemy dyad indicates the extreme degree of intensity of a union or a separation, an association or a dissociation, and it is precisely around the hegemony over the definition and application of this criteria that the modern era has defined itself through its main political subject, the State. To put it in a very simplified way: state-building is a strategy to gain legitimate control over the Political, expelling it from the urban texture and de-politicizing the city as such. Modernity is the creation of an international system where states are the only subjects who can play the Political.

Consequently, since the early twentieth century, social and political theorists have considered the state as the insurmountable horizon of modern politics: "in the concept of the political [im Begriff des Politischen], the concept of the state is already implied" (Jellinek, 1922, p. 108). Against this background, Schmitt inverted this paradigm: "the concept of the state presupposes the concept of the Political" (1932, p. 19). Schmitt is *de facto* disclosing the end of the modern epoch and re-opening the possibility of political figures *beyond* the state (Mezzadra, 2011).

If during modernity the state has been able to conquer "the monopoly of the Political," today, after being hit by an 'excess of the Political' (Ricciardi, 2013, p. 79), it is under a crossfire of many different forces, showing (again) the existence of a distinction between 'stateness' and 'the Political.' However, it is necessary to clarify a point: this disconnection does not entail a step backwards of the Political to other defined political bodies. The forms of the political bond are subjected to an impressive transformation, where the Political indeed appears as dispersed. Basically, this Political is no longer a Schmittian Political, which was dominated by an imperative to reduce every conflict to two counterparts.

The historical disjunction between 'the Political' and the city is nowadays finding new complex articulations. Unlike the state-centred metropolis of the nineteenth century, the contemporary globalized city sees the progressive withdrawal of the (social) state, while there is simultaneously the localization of many global actors (enterprises, networks, migrations and so forth) within it. These facts are generating multiple tensions,

creating a productive aporia: On one hand, the coexistence of processes of dissolution of the preceding urban order; on the other hand, global power is expressing itself through the city, making it an alternative locus of the Political, maybe even more powerful than the state.

Today we still are within this long process of evaporation of the political architecture of modernity, maybe at one of its extreme margins. The world is no longer structured as a rigid system of scales centred on the state. Global, continental, state, metropolis, local, are all geographical dissolving frameworks. On one side, there is the scenario depicted by planetary urbanization theories (i.e. the urban as a 'matter' that is furnishing the globe and giving shape to whole society), and on the other side, the image of the world as one city. Logistics is the analytical perspective that could connect these two conceptions, or, to put it better, the logistical politics of urbanization are the hidden side of the rise of globally-integrated urban production networks, which are intricately linked to the transformation of economic geographies. "Just-in-time production has recreated the city in its image," Boris Vormann writes, and as commodities "are shipped from their point of production to the point of sale, they pass through and depend on the urban hubs and bottlenecks of international trade, in turn reshaping the physical layout and the multiscalar governance logics of global- and mega-cities" (Vormann, 2017).

Logistics simultaneously improves the traffic of flows and constantly traces new bordered spaces—which are, it is important to note, always contested. Logistics connects, shakes and inverts the different scales of the modern world. The paradigm of logistics applied to the city has created a new urban habitat, a contemporary battlefield, that circulates worldwide. Moreover, logistics exemplifies the concept of governance as a process of de-constitutionalization of the categories of the Political (like the progressive elision of the concepts of civil and military or of public and private; Cowen, 2014). Logistics commands the restructuring processes of frontier spatiality and is the organizing principle of heterogeneous territorialities. Logistics synchronizes times and spaces of capital accumulation and organizes these processes in an holistic and strategic way, veiling this political processes with technicality.

Conclusions

The so called "logistics revolution" (Vahrenkamp, 2012) is one of the main vectors that allow the structuring of what is usually called globalization—that is the second cycle of powerful increase of exchanges and of economical

interconnections on the global scale. The logistical policies that lead this second globalization have transformed the political and infrastructural aspect of the planet. Seeing from a satellite, the writing that humanity has traced on earth does not describe state boundaries. What results is rather the frenetic growth of logistically interconnected urbanized areas. To grasp the troubled geographies of the contemporary *imago mundi* we need to adopt new lenses.

The logic of just-in-time and localization drives a global urban politics that is no longer commanded by state actors nor by the holders of specific scientific knowledges. We assist a tendency towards a becoming-hub of the city. Cities are organized as new large dispositifs for the immediacy of consumption—an inclination inscribed in metropolitan historical development that today is enlarging to unprecedented intensities. This logistical logic is completely redefining streets, buildings and everyday life, and it is a productive observatory point to try to decode the actual hieroglyphic of global urbanization. However, it is necessary to make explicit and to advise some caution within this perspective. There is a risk of assuming the imaginary of a smooth urban space of flows that can be perfectly managed by software and new technologies. Certainly, logistical apparatuses shape the *nouvelle raison du monde*, but they are not autopoietic systems. The new designers of the urban, although within technical lexicons and imaginaries, are bearers of a concrete politics of the city, that is, needless to say, constantly contested, contrasted and counteracted by a myriad of different subjects, either within the logistics sector or in the different dwelling practices of metropolitan spaces.

The dream, the fantasy of a logistical government of urban processes, incessantly clashes against the conflictual matrix of the urban substance. If every city is nowadays part of a globalized city—caught in the tension between localness and becoming part of a unique global world city, is precisely because they are crossed and constituted by contradictory phenomena. These entities in metamorphosis that we still call cities are connected through the infosphere, moulded by global dynamics like gentrification, marked by multiple conflicts, are loci of transit and destination for migrants, monotonous landscapes of cars, chains of multinational shops and supermarkets, architectural gestures in sequence, places of a continuous circulation of imaginaries and signs (from cultures to ideas, arriving to the tags that scar the walls of every city of the world). Furthermore, the globalized city is the coming scenario of a planetary civil war in bits and pieces, molecular, diffuse, of a low intensity, it is the locus of the incessant production of new hostilities as well as friendships, pacts and alliances. The globalized city—this bizarre political dough of terrestrial, maritime and aerial "logics" (Schmitt, 1942)—seems to be on the edge of a twofold

process. On the one hand, it carries its global traits of de-politicization to the extreme (with its becoming-hub); while on the other hand, it seems that the city is surrounded by the twilight aura that is leading to the dusk of the second globalization and to a planetary stasis.

If the second globalization has been prompted by neoliberal rationality, the profound ambivalences described so far point to this late neoliberal moment as a transitional phase. The coming years are probably the time when many of the ongoing tendencies here discussed will intensify their effects. The clash between the constant growth of urban poverty and inequalities and the logistical and financial logics of networked value extraction are going to make more explicit the lines of politicisation of the logistical production of the *urbs*, in front of an increasingly divided *civitas*. The emerging globalized city displays a contrast between the de-politicization via technicalization of the production of the urban, on one hand, and the specific tension over autonomy of the city on the other. This friction materializes a claim of power on the globalized city, a contested and continuous production of encounters and clashes, of friendships and hostilities, that demonstrate the need to rethink the urban Political.

Therefore, this chapter has given a backdrop to the ways in which the state has historically de-politicized the city, focusing on the logistical techniques of urban government and production. Then, it has been described how the global expansion of the metropolis tends to re-activate an historical character of the city, its specific Political aspect which is defined, far from the Political of the state, as multiple, unstable and irreducible to a synthetic and binary form. The world is becoming a unique city, a globalized city shaped by the tension between a planetary logistical urbanization and the rising of a worldwide *stasis*, and within these dynamics a new complex locus of the Political is emerging.

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PART II

Materializing the Urban Political

CHAPTER 5

Where Is the 'Organisation' in the Urban Political?

Crispian Fuller

Introduction

Urban geography has significantly advanced our understanding of the various social, political and economic actors, practices, events and process-structural conditions constituting, working through and being the consequence of the 'urban.' This broadranging area has not however fully theorized or empirically examined the 'organisation' as an endemic actor within the urban. Emphasis has rather been placed on individual actors (e.g. politicians), or there has been the complete under-theorization of actors such as voluntary or state organizations. This has been particularly notable in urban political studies, and where there has not been recognition of this failing (see commentaries by MacLeod & Jones, 2011; McCann, 2016). Without a more comprehensive emphasis on the organisation it is not clear how we can fully understand the extent of post-politics or the nature of everyday contestation in the everyday urban. The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate a path towards placing the organisation as a central actor requiring greater examination.

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Contemporary Debates in Urban Political Theory

Political urban theory has tended to be dominated by political economy and post-structuralist accounts. The former has evolved from early Marxist, quasi-Marxist (e.g. Urban Growth Machine) and Regulationist perspectives, with the subject matter more recently emphasizing urban neoliberalism through various forms. This is evident in the literatures on the continuation of neoliberalism (Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2013) and policy mobilities (McCann & Ward, 2012). These approaches generally work on the assumption of 'out there' circuits, domains and logics of neoliberal tendencies that are imbricated with and produced in urban areas, largely in relation to conflictual governance arrangements and crisis tendencies (Peck et al., 2013). What such a perspective downplays is the antecedents, genesis and enactment of neoliberal tendencies by actors.

Most notably, many political economy perspectives tend to focus on the manifestation of neoliberal tendencies, rather than how they come about and are enacted through various deliberative arenas, often characterized by negotiation and argumentation between actors. This is despite widespread recognition that neoliberalism comes about through contestation with alternative institutions, ideologies, values, and practices (Peck et al., 2013). Many accounts tend to lack consideration of the disparate governance arrangements in which such tendencies are enacted. For instance, with regards to "austerity urbanism" Peck (2012) and others (e.g. Warner & Clifton, 2013) view austerity as globally hegemonic, with local forms of resistance to a dominant overarching structure. In contrast, one can view neoliberal tendencies and austerity as emergently created through various socio-spatial relations, encompassing divergent forms of governing and resistance to market values. Neoliberalism and austerity are performative and deliberative, rather than working through a generalizable logic, involving on-going justification, contestation and agreement (Clarke & Newman, 2012; Donald, Glasmeier, Gray, & Lobao, 2014). This is a landscape of unevenness and potential contestation working through various actors and practices (Milbourne & Cushman, 2015; Williams, Goodwin, & Cloke, 2014). Correspondingly, many accounts do not conceptualize why resistance to neoliberalism and austerity urbanism is lacking, disregarding the role of politics, alternatives and the 'subject.' This also suggests the need to understand how legitimacy, subordination and passivity work. In essence, there is a lack of consideration for how neoliberalism, including austerity, has to be continually performed in order to obtain hegemonic status.

Within post-structuralist accounts the onus has been on heterogeneous landscapes of politicized actors and practices, and broader values and norms guiding behaviors. Such perspectives have sought to elucidate alternatives that co-exist, circumvent and are in conflict with neoliberal tendencies (Nolan & Featherstone, 2015). Yet, while studies have been important in examining what are heterogeneous governing spaces, including the importance of the 'particular,' they typically treat agency in an undifferentiated manner, in contrast to their perspective on heterogeneous motives and governing landscapes. More broadly, even if one follows Foucaldian beliefs of dispersed power and governmentalities, one has to understand that these are fostered and facilitated by actors situated within what are complex organizations, in respect to internal dynamics, rather than simply being generated through society (see Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006). Central to such accounts should be the understanding that the organisation, as the space where such governmentalities are facilitated, is a site of power/knowledge, surveillance and discipline (Clegg et al., 2006). Such criticism can also be extended to the literature on the rise of post-democratic/political conditions.

Urban Post-Political/Democracy

Swyngedouw (2009, 2011), building upon Rancière (2004), argues that urban governance has increasingly moved towards a post-democratic/political set of tendencies. This encompasses managerialist biased forms of 'policy logic' governing favoring particular groups, and particularly private economic actors (Beal & Pinson, 2014). Consensus is the preferable form of governing, based less on agreement through deliberation, and more on agreement through a limited number of governing and policy options (Oosterlynck & Swyngedouw, 2010). This is most notable in term of the displacement of alternative values, priorities and actors, and the prioritization of deliberation around the actual mechanisms of governing, rather than priorities (Inch, 2014). Such post-politics/democracy occurs through the 'policing' of citizens by way of discourses, semiotics and practices, whereby they are designated particular roles in accordance for support of hegemonic positions. The purpose of this is to ensure a 'distribution of the sensible' that involves legitimization of authority, but on the basis of political equality between all citizens. Equality is subsequently manipulated by experts seeking to govern, based on legitimization through the ballet box.

Whilst such an approach has advanced our understanding of contemporary urban political processes, it does tend to ignore the possibilities and nature of contestation (Fuller, 2014). For McCarthy (2013) and Davidson and Iveson (2014), it is an approach that downplays the possibilities of political action and democratic politics (see also Williams, Cloke, & Thomas, 2012). Returning to Rancière (2004), these accounts emphasize marginalized and dissenting political actors demanding recognition and action based on equality with the rest of society. The purpose of such action is to produce dissensus, challenging the policing and distribution of the sensible. In this sense the perspective is comparable to accounts emphasizing resistance to neoliberal tendencies (e.g. Featherstone, 2015), but as with this perspective, there is far less critical interrogation of the actual constitution of agency (Fuller, 2017). The focus is instead on actual actions rather than the causal organizational spaces in which they are formed, mediated and enacted.

Barnett and Bridge (2013) argue that radical democracy perspectives avoid critical engagement with the types of normative justification and values deployed during contestation. Building upon the "all affected" principle, Barnett and Bridge (2013) proposes that analysis needs to encompass normative values that are utilized within everyday 'situated contexts' of deliberations, contestations and compromises between actors as they seek to bring about social coordination. Actors deploy particular normative values in processes of contestation as they make political claims through forms of 'justification' based on conceptions of worth (Fuller, 2014). For Jagd (2011), such processes are intrinsic to the "organization" as a site where differing values, based on conceptions of worth, are deployed by actors in "justification work." Such accounts allude to Boltanski and Thevenot's (2006) belief that organizations are essentially efforts towards "compromise" between differing "orders of worth," but where these compromises are not guaranteed, and thus organizations are emergent and process driven. However, what is lacking in such accounts is an understanding of the actual practices through which such "justification work" takes place, and how it is interwoven within the organisation.

More generally, all these perspectives tend to not just downplay the complexities of agency, but also understate 'how' post-democracy/political (e.g. managerialism) practices and equality declarations occur through agency and deliberative relations. As emphasized by Huault, Perret, and Spicer (2014), policing and the "distribution of the sensible" work partly through "organizations." Actors are critical in post-democracy/politics, but such actors are embedded within and work through organizations,

characterized by particular cultures, values, norms, social practices, power relations and forms of organising (e.g. performance management) (DuGay, 2009). Managerialism is produced and mediated by actors within the 'organisation' structures, systems, cultures and strategies of the organisation (Clegg et al., 2006).

Furthermore, there is a need to more explicitly decipher the relationship between the constitution of the human 'subject' and contemporary capitalism. This is an area of analysis that is distinctly lacking in urban political theory, but which is critical to understanding the importance of the emotional "sentiments of disenchament" (Virno, 2006) that produce and work through human agency. For Virno (2006), this is characterized by interdependent socio-psychologically constructed opportunities, fear and cynicism, in a social landscape of "uncertain expectations, contingent arrangements, fragile identities, and changing values" (p. 14.5). Opportunities are open-ended, never fixed and without content, and lead to fear and cynicism. Fears result from these abstract possibilities and threatening opportunities, such as losing working autonomies that have been granted. Arising from this instability is cynicism, but this is more importantly associated with the onus placed on learning through heterogeneous rules, rather than facts, but in what are abstract environments. Cynicism, and its subsidiary, sentimentalism, are essentially coping mechanism, providing an outlet in which to critique, but it "picks up only the minimum signals needed to orientate its struggles for survival" (Virno, 2006, p. 16.7).

Whilst compelling, such an analysis ignores the multifaceted constitution of agency and its enactment through the 'organisation,' falling into the Marxist trap of treating agency as undifferentiated. The alternative is to bring the organisation to the forefront of analysis, recognizing that such emotional tendencies arising from capitalism' are intrinsic to the organisation. Such thinking has become increasingly important in sociological organizational analysis, epitomized by accounts such as Bloom and Cederstrom (2009). Deploying a Lacanian pyschoanlysis perspective, they argue that fantasy is critical in the role of narrative and affect in the dominance of 'market rationality' in organizations. This market rationality fantasy is deployed as a form of organizational control by promising subjects "psychological wholeness," and is characterized by "dis-identification" (such as cynicism), "empty transgression" (i.e. radical thinking, perceived autonomy, and bringing the 'whole' of oneself to work), and "envy" as a means in which to psychologically attach and motivate individuals in the workplace, such as in encouraging workers to work harder because of envy of the lifestyles of those at higher management levels.

While such a psychoanalytical approach has its own problem, what this account demonstrates is the critical role of the organisation as a space in which market rationality is (re)produced and performed by subjects. Indeed, with regards to the urban political, scholars such as Newman (2013) and Kornberger and Clegg (2004), have all recently conveyed the critical role of understanding the organisation as a site of urban politics, including as a space of internally and externally configured power relations. It is with such issues in mind that this paper explicates a conceptual framework for examining the organisation within deliberative political landscapes.

The Nature of the Organisation

The main analysis of the 'organisation' has developed within the broad-ranging field of 'organizational sociology.' In contrast to the more positivist perspectives within business and management studies, this approach generally views the organisation as a verb, with the onus on "organizing" (King, Felin, & Whetten, 2009). Intrinsic to this is the belief that it is an unstable ensemble of social relations, reflecting an unbounded social arena that is imbricated with broader societal actors, practices and institutions (Cooper & Burrell, 1988). The organisation seeks to configure particular cultures based on differing values, norms, beliefs and rituals (Morgan, 1990), which seek to guide action towards particular ends, but where divergent purposes and practices are always evident. One element of this is the situation of the organisation within an overlapping contextual environment that is also constantly changing, not least since individual actors are grounded in the everyday life within and beyond the organisation (Starbuck, 2003). Generally speaking, organizational sociology concentrates on examining the practices of 'organising' within unbounded and disparate social landscapes.

This does inevitably lead to the issue of understanding the actual agency of the organisation when it is understood as unbounded, heterogeneously configured and constantly emergent. For King et al. (2009) this heterogeneity makes it critical that 'their' agency is understood, since it works as a causal agent in a disparate way. Consequently, we have to work out the differing manifestations of its causality both in the process of organising, and through deliberative relations with other actors in urban governance. Within this it is important to examine intentional and tacit self-governing arrangements. Yet in human geography more broadly the conceptualization

of the organisation has not taken place, with an "outside view of the organization" dominant (Müller, 2012). The likes of Kuus (2011) and Müller (2012) have sought to address this deficit, conceptualizing the organisation as a (Deleuzian) "socio-material network." However, this perspective ignores many aspects of the internal organisation, instead focusing on governance (at a distance), governing technologies (e.g. relation building), production of geopolitics (e.g. geopolitical narratives), and 'circulation' (e.g. practices and representations). One way in which to take this forward is to adopt a multi-dimensional practice-based perspective of the organisation, whereby the practices of 'organising' are placed at the forefront of the analysis.

A Practice Theory of the Organisation

Building upon Heidegger and Wittgenstein, Schatzki (2002) argues that practices of doings and sayings co-constitute actors and the 'social'. He puts forward a "site ontology" where the onus is placed on the need "to theorize sociality through the concept of a social site is to hold that the character and transformation of social life are both intrinsically and decisively rooted in the site where it takes place" (2002, p. XI). For Schatzki (2005), social life comprises a "nexuses of practices and material arrangements" (471). Practices relate to "organized, open-ended, spatial-temporal" nexus of human activities (bodily doings and sayings), while material arrangements are linked people, organisms, artefacts, and elements of nature. These practices and arrangements come together in "bundles," such as that of the organisation.

For Schatzki (2002) a set of actions composing a practice are organized by, first, 'practical understandings' involving knowledge and practices relating to the tasks at hand. Second, there are the 'rules', which are "explicit formulations, principles, precepts, and instructions that enjoin, direct, or remonstrate people to perform specific actions" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 79). Third, 'teleoaffective structures', defined as a "range of normativized and hierarchically ordered ends, projects, and tasks, to varying degrees allied with normativised emotions and even moods" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 80). Finally, there are "general understandings," relating to parts of practices linked to the site of practice, expressed in the way people undertake tasks. Importantly, within this framework rules and teleoaffective structures are understood as emergent, constantly produced in deliberation with other actors and broader social relations (e.g. institutionalized values).

For Schatzki (2005) these elements underpin the nature of the organisation as it "happens," a site where practices are performed with the aim of 'ordering' material arrangements (Ahrens & Chapman, 2007). The organisation consists of persistent social elements that inform and guide "real time" practices and material arrangements, and with practices not bounded by the organisation (e.g. local government financial accounting), but constituting the organisation (Nicolini, 2012). Thus, the organisation is a site of stability and change, with the latter occurring as practices and material bundles are reconfigured as they are performed, whilst the former occurs because of a continual desire for stability and inertia in social life (Schatzki, 2010).

Through such practices, objects, humans and processes are produced and enacted. The relationship with human agency is one in which it presupposes practices, but is influenced by and embodies such practices as they are performed, with practices providing meaning to human actors (Orlikowski, 2010). Critical to this is the understanding of the role of 'teleoaffective structures' as the practices in which teleological motivations interact with affect. Thus, rather than treating emotions as limited to a few, such as fear, and independent of other social practices, in this approach the type and role of emotions is emergent, largely in regards to site ontology. It is therefore an approach that provides considerable conceptual purchase in analyzing and understanding what are performative organizational spaces with urban political sites.

It is with this in mind that this study utilizes a Schatzkian practice-based conceptual framework in which to undertake an illustrative analysis of austerity at an anonymized city government in the English Midlands. The city has been anonymized because of the substantial politics associated with the various austerity measures that are being implemented, itself representative of contestation and resistance, rather than post-politics/democracy. The case study city has a population of a third of a million, with widespread poverty, and with many areas consistently ranking in the 10% of most deprived local authority areas in England (see IMD, 2015). The Council has experienced substantial austerity measures, including significant service cuts in adult and children social care, environmental services, regeneration and education services. This has culminated in Council income falling substantially from £360 m to £243 m between 2010/2011 and 2016/2017. This includes a major reduction in central government grants, which dropped from £243 m to £117 m during this period ([Anonymized] case study, 2015).

Urban Politics, Practices and the Organisation: A Case Study Analysis

The Organizational Legitimation of Austerity

In accordance to Rancière's (2004) understanding of "policing," senior manager and politicians at the Council have sought to organizationally legitimize austerity measures. This has required the construction of new social orders embedded within "integrative" practices, which are defined by Schatzki (1996) as "the more complex practices found in and constitutive of particular domains of social life" (p. 98). Senior managers define austerity in terms of a unavoidable necessity deriving from democratic legitimacy: "We have no choice … this is the will of the people through the national ballot box, irrespective of the damaging effects it has on the Council, or [anonymized]. They might not have voted for it, but they can't reject it" (author's interview). This translates into the post-democratic/political idea of there being no alternative, that this is consensus by default, imposed from above via the ballot box and the will of the people. This subsequently legitimizes a 'legal budget': "The most important thing to understand about the council's budget is that by law, it has to balance" (Anonymised, 2014). Policing thus stems from the societal legitimacy of an elected national government and legal system.

Such policing occurs through the organisation, manifest in social practices that come to constitute the site. Schatzkian 'rules' are particularly important, with the legal parameters of the nation state providing the main set of formulations guiding actors, principally in terms of incentives and sanctions. This includes, for instance, the main understanding that the Director of Finance has a legal responsibility to ensure that Council budgets, and thus annual programmes and targets, are financially sustainable. This is defined principally in ensuring that the accounts balance, but is typically deployed by managers as a means in which justify particular financial cuts and program restructuring. For example, the youth service in the city has been significantly reduced, leading to only one center remaining, and was a highly politicized decision, justified in reference to a lack of "business mentality" in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. It has contributed to and is now performed by actors through rules guiding their actions, namely around the need to take a more business-centered approach. Such rules are also evident in many other services areas, most overtly in Education Services where schools are no longer required to

acquire services from the Council. It is now a market environment where the Council's education services are in competition with private sector providers to sell services to schools. This has led to an overt focus on rules emphasizing the need for market entrepreneurship, and business efficiency and effectiveness around streamlined service provision.

The consequence of this is to favor the development of 'practical understandings' relating to the ability to fulfil more market-orientated tasks. This is not to dispel the role of civic practical understandings, since the public service ethos remains critical and, indeed, continues to be a resilient feature of local government (see John, 2014). What this represents is the deliberative and potentially conflictual nature of different forms of practices, which for Schatzki (2010) are mediated through the practical intelligibility of actors within the site. However, such processes of deliberation are most pronounced through teleoaffective structures.

Teleoaffective structures are spaces of transformation in which the debates over austerity are taking place. Where there is debate on austerity at the Council it largely relates to the 'how' of austerity, rather than a critique of the actual 'why' of austerity, reflecting broader societal debates, and strongly suggesting a post-politics/democracy landscape. More importantly, the role translates into practices through normativised 'ends' that assign meaning to tasks. This is particularly evident in discussions on the future role of the Council: "We will have a role in the future but it will probably be very different to the past. When I started we provided everything for the people, we were their community leaders, we shaped the City. We now see our future role as providers of key statutory services for the most vulnerable, and facilitating economic development" (author's interview). The organisation is therefore partly designating its role in the face of cuts, involving the reconfiguration of statutory services, and renewed emphasis on economic development, with the intention of creating particular teleoaffective structures. This is an approach firmly embedded with urban entrepreneurialism, or as Warner and Clifton (2013) argue, a "riding the wave" austerity scenario where councils engage marketisation. As one senior manager noted: "We do not have power to ensure the well-being of our communities anymore. We need to create the jobs that will ensure people have a good standard of living, and supporting them in getting skills. We can get people out of poverty then, meaning that they won't require all those services they previously needed from us" (author's interview).

Other services are subsequently being withdrawn and downgraded, such as library opening times and the dramatic culling of neighborhood wardens across the city. What we see therefore is 'policing' based on the infusion of market principles and values projecting the ability to have a smaller government that is more 'efficient', but with a discourse of unaffected service provision for the majority of the population (see Blyth, 2013). This involves the construction of new integrative practices: "We are changing as an organisation. Many people are gone, those that couldn't handle the change of role. We now recruit more dynamic people, those that can see opportunities, make changes, serve the people of [anonymized] in a different way" (author's interview).

Such changes are particularly evident in Education Services, with greater powers for schools, and with the Council's education department now run with a business mentality of ensuring an income from selling services. With this comes efforts to ensure there are officers with particular 'practical understandings' based on market entrepreneurship, whereby they are able to sell services to schools. Rules based on democratic values of community service and equality are increasingly replaced by market principles of *competition* for contracts, most notably in 'the bottom line' principles, but within the confines of having to work with the bureaucratic legalities of Councils. The developing teleoaffective structures being engaged are based on ensuring that there is a growth of contracts with schools to make profit for sustainability, representative of the desire to expand services sub-regionally. Finally, there are general understandings based on the survival of this council service requiring entrepreneurial actions and sayings, evident in having to 'talk' with schools like a salesperson (author's interview).

Importantly, and an advantage of this approach, is the recognition that the organisation is constituted by many 'sites', involving various bundles of material arrangements and practices, in different services. One such example is children's services where there are strong normative ends geared towards professional values around the protection of vulnerable children, and the overall welfare of all children. Such values are not just teleological 'ends', but are also constituted by emotions, not least in the need for social workers to 'regulate' their emotions when this involves the protection of vulnerable services. Such practices are presently being reconfigured as the 'ends' are being further emphasized through austerity, driven by the need to take a more 'business approach', evident within New Public Management,

whereby the onus is on measurable commissioning services, outputs and cost effectiveness, particularly in terms of the rationalization of provision. This is largely a reinvigoration of a managerialist approach that has long been evident in social work. However, as a 'site', it is a space where 'practical intelligibility' is evident, as managers and social workers navigate bureaucratic responsibilities, imposed from central government, with the particularities of individual cases, mediated by their own experiences, beliefs and values. What it does produce is a 'messy' organizational landscape, not one embedded within post-politics/democracy, but full of heterogeneous and contingent practices and negotiations that are highly politicized.

Economic development and regeneration services have been notable causalities of austerity at the Council, but at the same time it has not disappeared from the agenda. In the face of austerity, and correspondingly to the pro-market agenda of post-New Labour governments, economic growth as a 'local' agenda has gained in importance (Clarke & Cochrane, 2013). It is now one of the main strategic priorities of the Council, but focused on particular geographical sites and vulnerable citizens (e.g. long term unemployed), both of which have not had to be significantly defended from political and managerial scrutiny. Senior politicians and managers have successfully instilled a belief that the detrimental impact of service cuts on the city's population can be mitigated by economic growth. As one senior politician notes: "My colleagues realize that the way to respond to the austerity challenges is through growth," but where the lack of resources is not viewed as a significant problem (author's interview). This would suggest a situation of post-politics/democracy, but what is important is the constant negotiation of what economic growth means for the City, who benefits and through what mechanisms.

Such issues are not new, but what a practice-based organizational perspective allows us to examine is the actual negotiations and actions of both routine and creative action by actors (see Joas, 1996). For example, economic development is one policy area where teleoaffective structures are reconfigured along the lines of national electoral cycles, with the private sector-led Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) now the main vehicle for economic development. This is a landscape where the Council is seeking to control the LEP, relying upon teleoaffective structures based on it being 'the' democratic civic leader and an "intermediary" between various organizations, critical to the successful delivery of projects through partnership working. This does not just imply the importance of 'practical understandings'

around knowing the correct people and procedures, and how to work with different sectors, and being an "all-rounder" rather than expert in a specific field (author's interview). It also means the co-constitution of the 'site' through material arrangements, such as the importance of economic data software packages, planning guidance, and the actual physical configuration of desks. In the case of the latter, desks are arranged on the basis of teams encompassing planners and regeneration specialists, each facing each other, with aim of promoting holistic working.

Experts and Austerity

Organizationally embedded 'experts' have a critical role in the legitimation of austerity, both as a site of austerity and as a causal agent. Policing depends on the 'distribution of the sensible' which legitimizes particular experts. There are a complex set of processes occurring within the organisation which makes this a case area of interest. The expert is being reconfigured, as is the greater designation of the role expertise, expressed through integrative practices. Entrepreneurial, market-focused civil servants have increasingly been defined as required experts. Their role has been to be agents fostering and enacting an organizational entrepreneurial culture, in which to "survive" in a new organizational regime of low 'cost' 'efficient' service provision. In the realm of economic development this has been particularly important as experts are defined as those about to 'save' the city in a new service vacuum by bringing economic growth.

This extends to social workers who are increasingly defined as agents of 'externalization.' They are able to produce 'self-responsibilization' in an age of growing service demands from older people and vulnerable (West, 2013). This includes, for instance, promoting more foster families, and enabling older people to live independently. Such mandates conflict with practical understandings, such as lack of knowledge on being entrepreneurial, and professional values ('general understandings'), as well as teleoaffective structures around the emotions towards civic duties. Nonetheless, such activity is legitimized by a logic of austerity deriving from a sense of equality via the national 'ballot box' that elected the Coalition.

However, this realization of the role of experts does not tell the complete story. Rancière (2004) emphasizes the importance of 'experts' and how they are designated through political processes, as well as the potentially critical role of the 'emancipated spectator'. There is far less consideration of

the imbrication of actors within everyday practices, and their heterogeneous motives and actions. By taking a practice-based Schatzkian perspective it is possible to examine the site-situated actor, treating them as a heterogeneous, non-rational and inconsistent social agent. For this we turn to the concept of 'practical intelligibility', which is viewed as governing 'practice understandings', and understands that actors make decisions and undertake actions which they perceive to be correct, or wish to undertake. One such example is that of a decision to fund the building of new office accommodation in the city center. This is based on the belief that the Council will 'pump-prime' private sector property investment into the city, validated by economic development experts through traditional notions of civic investment, and running contra to neoliberal agendas in economic development. This consequently reconfigures practices within the 'site', since there are various service requirements (e.g. practical understandings, 'rules' around council property interventions) in and beyond the Council in developing the new building, and ways that have not been for some time. What this represents is the actions of human agents running counter to prevailing non-interventionist forms of economic development policy, based on particular conceptions of what is required to be done, and which then reconfigures practices. Ultimately, what this highlights is the discontinuous contradictory nature of the 'expert', who is not firmly embedded within 'policing', and can through practice intelligibility resist, manipulate and distort the 'distribution of the sensible'.

The Emergence of Contestation

Building upon the latter, there is finally the critical issue of whether broader contestation has arisen and the form that it takes 'through' the organisation. Acts of resistance and contestation have not been extensive at the Council, following trends identified in other studies (see Fuller, 2017; Fuller & West, 2016). Resistance to austerity has been extinguished through reference to a new 'norm' of austerity. This 'norm' is made in reference to the abstract laws of the market (Boltanski, 2011): "Austerity is a terrible thing, but it's a case of us, the state, having to deal with the consequences of the world we live in. Capitalism is global, beyond our direct control, it impacts on all of us. We cannot expect not to take our part in adjusting to these conditions, like families adjusting their weekly food shopping, or number of holidays" (author's interview). Notions of equality form the basis of such viewpoints, namely that 'we are all in this together' (see p. 55), both as a recipient and causal agent. Such discursive

framing marginalizes dissenting organizational actors, situating them as the 'viewer' rather than 'acting' (Rancière, 2010). Further resistance was removed by the introduction of new senior managers/officers that are considered to 'fit' the austerity approach being adopted. What this involves is the bringing together of practical understandings with rules and teleoaffective structures.

This is not to say that there is no dissent or resistance, since resistance can be seen in other ways. Indeed, for Rancière (2010) the distribution of the sensible is commonplace as each individual follows a 'unique path' as they view, interpret and make connections, but that it is the myriad of individual intelligences which constitute a 'community' that is able to distort and resist. In the case of city council we can see this in everyday acts of circumvention and distortion of austerity, including 'go slow' work practices, widespread criticism of staff consultation exercises and, most importantly, working through alternative values and intentions, often motivated by morality and emotion. In the case of the latter, adult social workers work to particular bureaucratic 'rules', such as the devolved responsibility 'personalization' agenda, a policy which implies user control, empowerment and autonomising potential. However, for social workers it represents the infusion of market values into professional values, treating those at need as a 'consumer' rather than citizen. Their response has been to tacitly work to principles of "person-centered" care rather than 'personal budgets', requiring social workers to quietly allocate extra time to visit adults and cooperate with other professionals (e.g. mental health workers), but where extra resources are not significantly available (author's interview). Ultimately, this demonstrates the considerable heterogeneity of agency is what are contested urban governance landscapes, rather than completely post-political/democratic spaces.

More broadly, officers have not be able to legitimately pronounce equality in the face of changes to practices on an organisation-wide level. One widespread practice by senior management is to 'individualize' acts of contestation, as one manager notes: "People are generally on-board because they know there is no alternative, unless they want to be made redundant. Where someone is moaning, and I need to deal with one person soon, we take them off and re-explain the situation, make it clear to them that everyone is signed up to the approach because there is no alternative" (author's interview). In such efforts we see the re-designation of the distribution of the sensible, but from a teleological basis, involving the reinforcement of austerity-based teleoaffective structures.

Conclusion

Recent engagement with post-politics/democracy in urban geography has significantly advanced our understanding of contemporary political trends. In these accounts, and those more broadly in urban geography examining issues such as urban neoliberalism and policy mobilities, there has been a failure to conceptually and empirically examine the complexities of agency, namely the 'organisation.' This is in contrast to disciplines such as 'organizational analysis' which has significantly advanced our understanding of the multi-faceted, uneven, porous and contradictory organisation. Yet such issues are critical in urban society, politics and economies as these are spaces characterized by organizations, from the voluntary sector body to that of the city council or nation state agency. Only through such an analysis can we fully understand the sites of policing, mediation and resistance to various political practices. This is not to suggest however an onus on the 'internal,' by treating the organisation as a bounded and homogenous entity. Taking a practice-based perspective, such as Schatzki (2002, 2010), allows us to treat the organisation as a verb, recognizing that it is the practices of organising that is critical. Through such a perspective we can elucidate the uneven post-political/democracy processes occurring in urban sites, as well as how resistance comes about as equality statements are made.

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CHAPTER 6

Neoliberalizing Infrastructure and Its Discontents: The Bus Rapid Transit Project in Dar es Salaam

Matteo Rizzo

BRTs as a Public Transport Policy Fix for Neoliberalism[1]

BRTs (Bus Rapid Transit) have been increasingly promoted as the solution to chronic and rapidly escalating traffic congestion and to the low quality of public transport provision, widely shared traits of urban life in developing countries today. In 2007, forty cities across six continents had BRT systems (ITDP, 2007, p. 1). By March 2016, the figure had risen to 202,[2] and many more BRTs were currently at the planning phase and/or on the pipeline.

"Think rail, see bus" goes the BRT motto. Proponents of BRT systems stress how they combine the flexibility of bus transit with the benefits of a rail-based mass transport system (namely speed, reliability, and mass ridership), at a fraction of rail's costs.[3] However, while BRTs are to some extent context-specific, there are five common characteristics that help to explain what is at stake in their promotion. First, while cheaper than rail systems, BRT systems still require substantial investment. International finance led

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by the World Bank has played a pivotal role in providing the funds for their implementation. Second, a major characteristic of BRTs is that they entail the phasing out of privately owned minibuses from the main arteries of public transport systems, and their deployment on feeder routes. As BRT buses are new and less polluting than those which provide public transport in many developing countries, advocates of BRT outline the environmental and traffic reduction benefits of bus-switching. Third, BRT delivers faster trips thanks to off-board fare collection, platform-level boarding, and a fundamental shift in the rights to urban road use, as BRT buses are normally granted two dedicated lanes. Fourth, as a result of this, BRT systems require major upgrading of the urban road infrastructure, including the rebuilding and widening of main roads. Finally, although BRTs are publicly funded, a conditionality attached to World Bank lending is that private companies operate the buses. The public sector's role is to oversee the system and carry out quality controls on the service providers. Therefore, although PPPs are not necessarily the only possible institutional set-up for BRTs, PPPs are *de facto* the way in which most BRTs operate, as suggested by their promoters. BRTs are therefore to be understood as the urban transport expression of public–private partnerships, the rationale for, and benefits of which, are contested (Loxley, 2013).

This chapter charts the political economy of BRT in Dar es Salaam as in instance of the changing face of neoliberalism in public transport. In Dar es Salaam, DART (as BRT is called) signalled by a remarkable departure from 30 years of pervasive economic deregulation and limited government capacity. The gap between the magnitude of the city's transport problems and the state's capacity to deal with them appeared macroscopic. Donor-imposed fiscal austerity and the shrinking of the size of the public sector—the defining features of "roll back" neoliberalism (Brenner & Theodore, 2002)—were visible in the dearth of the human and financial resources available to public transport institutions in Dar es Salaam.

In 2016, a large-scale intervention, designed to radically change the transport system was the Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART), the Tanzanian version of Bus Rapid Transit systems (BRT). To facilitate it, a substantial and well-resourced unit was established within the Prime Minister's Office with funding from the World Bank. The capacity of the public sector on transport in the city has thus been significantly boosted, but to what end? Stepping out of Dar es Salaam for a moment, such a shift conforms to the broader transition from a first phase of "roll-back" neoliberalism, to a second in which state intervention is 'rolled out'

(Brenner & Theodore, 2002), as it is more actively deployed both to manage the tensions generated by the first phase of neoliberalism and further promote the interests of private capital. "To put it crudely, once you have done as much privatization as the system will bear under the neo-liberal rhetoric of withdrawal of state intervention, then the time has come to use the state to correct market imperfections and to improve its workings, as in Public–Private Partnerships (PPP)" (Van Waeyenberge, Fine, & Bayliss, 2011, p. 9). As BRTs are promoted through PPPs in urban transport, the above characterization of the changing face of neoliberalism pertains to the direction of policymaking in Dar es Salaam.

BRT came to Dar es Salaam via Latin America, as research suggesting that BRT successes in Latin America opened "a new era in low-cost, high-quality" transport is key to the argument for BRTs (IEA, 2002). Described as the "world reference point for bus rapid transit systems" (Quality Public Transport, 2012, p. 1), Bogotá's highly celebrated Transmilenio became the "first mass transit system in the world designated as a Clean Development Mechanism under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change" (ITF, 2010, p. 1). At the 2012 UN Sustainable Development Conference in Rio de Janeiro, international development banks pledged US$175 billion over ten years to support sustainable transport in developing countries (WRI, 2012), with BRTs playing "a key role in creating sustainable [urban] futures" (Cervero & Dai, 2014, p. 128). Furthermore, international development funding has been channelled into building links between Bogotá and prospective BRT systems, resulting in officials from more than twenty countries visiting Transmilenio to learn from its (alleged) success.[4] As transport systems that benefit the economy as well as the environment and the poor, BRTs are championed as the ultimate 'win–win' intervention to solve public transport problems.

Bringing the Urban Political Back into the Study of BRTs

The point of departure of this chapter is that much of the literature on BRTs displays two major, and related, shortcomings. First, is its apolitical technicism, manifest in its distinctive attention to the technical features of these systems, such as ridership numbers, speed of travel, distance between bus stops, and CO_2 emissions. Such a focus fails to pay attention to the politics and distributional impacts that the adoption of BRTs system, and the move away from the previous system of provision of public transport,

entails. The second shortcoming is the lack of independence of far too many studies on BRTs, as they are by and large funded by institutions with economic interests in their promotion.

Addressing these shortcomings necessitates bringing back the urban political into the study of BRTs at two levels, which this chapter sketches out briefly. First is the analysis of the political and economic players promoting the adoption of BRTs and what this reveals about the place of BRT in international political economy. It will be argued that BRT, far from being a 'win-win' policy fix, is best understood as the new face of neoliberalism in public transport. Second is a brief analysis of the implementation BRT in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, with a focus on the politics of and resistance to BRT. Through this case study, the analysis reveals the contradictions intrinsic to BRTs in one particular context and its national political economy: what different Tanzanian actors stood to lose from its implementation, and the way in which they were able to resist and influence the project.

The BRT Evangelical Society

A look at existing research on BRTs and the narrative that presents it as the 'win-win' solution to urban transport problems in developing countries, reveals that a small set of institutions lies behind. The World Bank is the key player, providing the loans to implement BRTs, and also funding for the vast majority of the research on them. Volvo, which—not coincidentally perhaps—supplies buses to many BRT systems, also supports "Across Latitudes and Cultures—Bus Rapid Transit," which is the BRT Center of Excellence. The latter's members include four academic institutions and EMBARQ.[5] EMBARQ, which is the World Resources Institute's Centre for Sustainable Cities, credits itself for having "played a major role in expanding the BRT concept to cities throughout the world" (WRI, 2012) and is one of the organizations behind 'Global BRT Data', the most up-to-date dataset on BRTs.[6]

The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), a Washington-based NGO, is unfailingly on the horizon wherever BRTs are implemented. ITDP's growth from a small advocacy NGO to an organization with over sixty staff members in offices in Africa, Asia, and Latin America has been associated with access to BRT funding. ITDP has played different roles in this capacity. It produced a BRT planning guide, carried out prefeasibility studies in various cities, signposted potential new sources

of funding for BRTs, and has been at the forefront of studies on BRT impacts (Matsumoto, 2006). In 2011, the ITDP Board of Directors, worthy of scrutiny as it provides some indication as to whom the NGO is accountable, included the managing director of the Goldman Sachs Urban Investment Group, a representative from the world giant investment firm Carlyle Group, and two representatives of the World Bank, including a retired former Vice President of the Bank (ITDP, 2011, p. 24). International finance obviously has huge stakes in the opening up of urban public transport markets—and more broadly of public utilities markets—in developing countries, and in the funding of the infrastructural work that they require.[7] These are examples of the vested interests of the institutions that present Bogotá's Transmilenio—and BRT more broadly—as a success.

By contrast, independent research and media coverage on Transmilenio present a more ambivalent picture, in which the positive impacts of BRT coexist alongside its negative consequences. Travel times and the quality of transport improved with Transmilenio, but claims that it is "providing reliable transport accessibility for the poor" (World Bank, 2009) are contradicted by increases in transport fares, a trend observed elsewhere (Hidalgo, Custodio, & Graftieaux, 2007; Muñoz, Batarce, & Hidalgo, 2013).[8] Increased fares have inevitably prevented the poor from accessing the service and have led to public protests demanding lower fares (BBC News, 2012). Such demands could not be met, as the bargaining power of the public regulatory body vis-à-vis the private tenders was low, as is often the case with public–private partnerships. Furthermore, the inclusion of previous public transport operators often proved problematic. In Bogotá, ownership of BRT buses increasingly became concentrated in the hands of a few private operators (ITF, 2010), while other contexts presented their own distinctive tensions with inclusion, at times violent (Paget-Seekins, Flores, & Muñoz, 2015; Walters & Cloete, 2008). Another major problem with Transmilenio is the contraction in employment opportunities that accompanied the higher productivity of labour. The proclaimed goal of replacing the exploitative informal employment relations of the pre-existing transport system with better, formal jobs ran into difficulties as workers faced new types of pressures from employers under the new system. Access to these jobs for those who worked on the previous system was not straightforward. "Only one in seven of the bus drivers in the old system were able to find work in the new one," partly because the harsh working conditions of the previous system prevented many from passing

the medical test for a job in the new system (Porter, 2010; Quality Public Transport, 2012). Although the World Bank has praised Transmilenio as a "financially self-sustaining bus rapid transit system," the system sustained itself on the basis of higher fares and funding from international loans which will effectively be repaid by national taxpayers. These loans were used to pay for the infrastructural work, thus acting as a hidden subsidy to the private companies operating BRT (Gilbert, 2008, pp. 439–467).

In sum, a cursory look at the record of BRT in Bogotá shows the tensions of this 'success story'. This is in line with most public–private partnerships, which are promoted as being self-evidently beneficial, but more often than not entail an uneasy relationship between the public sector (which provides the funding) and the private sector (which provides the services on long-term leases). As PPPs, BRTs are better understood as a solution to tackle the crisis in public urban transport in which international finance and the corporate sector have a powerful interest, as BRTs allow them to capture new markets and public funding (Paget-Seekins, 2015). Their implementation has complex and often contradictory impacts. While BRTs are capable of delivering improvements in the standards of public transport, they also generate a set of tensions that typically coalesce around the lack of affordable fares, the exclusion of the previous transport investors and workforce in the new system, and the contraction of employment opportunities. This chapter now proceeds to analyse the way in which these tensions characterised the implementation of BRT in Dar es Salaam.

The Political Economy of BRT in Dar es Salaam

First announced in 2002, Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART), as BRT is named in Tanzania, has been funded through a 150 million US$ loan (for phase one out of a total of six) from the World Bank to the government of Tanzania. In 2016, it was the most grandiose BRT to be launched in Africa, with the rebuilding and doubling in width of the main arteries in the city, for a total of 137 km of new road network, eighteen terminals, and 228 stations. BRT champion ITDP played a key role in Dar es Salaam BRT, as it suggested the project to the City Council in first place, and then it also sponsored an investigative trip by the City Council to Bogotá (Kanyama, Carlsson-Kanyama, Linden, & Lupala, 2004, p. 43). ITDP also facilitated a meeting at the World Bank, following which Dar es Salaam became the forerunner of BRT in Africa.

Before analysing the tensions associated with its implementation, it is important to critically assess the rationale of DART and, as a project which aimed to radically rethink the city's transport system, to determine whether it adequately addresses the poor state of existing services. To be sure, large-scale infrastructural work and the widening of key roads were a much-needed step to improve transport in the city. Dar es Salaam had grown rapidly since the late colonial period, while its road system had remained by and large unchanged since colonial times. In addition, the number of vehicles had increased exponentially (Briggs & Mwamfupe, 2000). Action was also needed to improve the poor conditions of public transport in the city, which were provided by primarily old, overloaded, and unsafe *daladalas*. However, it is important to ask whether there was no alternative to the phasing out of *daladalas* and to question the rationale for providing two exclusive lanes to BRT buses.[9]

The 2009 National Road Safety Policy put partial responsibility for the inefficiency of the transport system on "rapid increased car ownership" (United Republic of Tanzania, 2009, p. 36). Indeed, DART itself acknowledged this when it stated in 2014 that in Dar es Salaam there are "120,000 private vehicles that carry only six per cent of residents with 480,000 of their seats lacking passengers" (DART, 2014). DART's vision of a better transport system and its desire to avoid any clash with private cars owners, the rising affluent, was a political one—one which leaves the inefficient use of private vehicles, by far the largest cause of traffic congestion, unchallenged. At the same time, DART proposed that "the current state of affairs where Dar es Salaam has more than 6000 commuter buses that carry *only* (emphasis added) 43 per cent of city dwellers is not sustainable." Equally problematic is that *daladalas* were identified as the sole culprits of transport problems and were therefore not to be permitted on the two lanes exclusively set aside for public transport. It is worth reflecting on the fact that the types of buses to be operated by DART were taken as a given, and no thought went into supporting the improvement of the *daladala* fleet with, for example, effective regulation and a recapitalization programme to scale up the average size of buses and reduce their average age. Therefore, the rationale of DART and its prioritization of the solutions to public transport chaos in Dar es Salaam were questionable from the outset.

An outstanding feature of the BRT implementation in Dar es Salaam is the slow pace at which it has progressed, resulting in the loss of its status as BRT forerunner in Africa. Cape Town and Johannesburg, for example, embarked on BRTs well after Dar es Salaam but completed their projects

earlier—although not without similar tensions (Schakelamp & Beherens, 2010, 2013). While DART officers have exclusively attributed the slow implementation to the size of the project (interview with Schelling, 2014), there is arguably more to it, as urban politics were at the root of the slow implementation of the project. Two layers of explanation stood behind the delay. The first includes the practical barriers against which DART stumbled: that is, the concrete sites around which the tensions between project implementers and affected parties coalesced. But there is a second layer, that of the deeper roots of the delays in implementation, to be explored.

The Local Politics of BRT in Dar es Salaam

The practical barriers faced by DART implementers changed over the years, but two disputes stand out due to their prolonged nature. These were concentrated around two sites of key importance to the project. In both cases, resistance was collectively orchestrated. The first one was in Gerezani, in the Kariakoo area of the city centre, where DART planned to locate a terminal, its main office, and its control tower. Within this area there were fifty-three twin houses with a total of 106 owners. Twenty-nine owners accepted the proposed compensation for demolition, while the rest resisted the expropriation through a legal dispute that lasted over five years. The second main obstacle to implementation was over the use of Ubungo station for which Dar es Salaam Council and DART had conflicting agendas. Ubungo station is Tanzania's largest terminal to up-country destinations and, as such revenue from Ubungo was an important asset to the City's policymakers.[10] However, Ubungo station was also key to DART. Ubungo was planned as one of DART's five main terminals and one of its two bus depots, using 52 per cent of the existing terminal area. The fact that the City Council faced a loss of revenue, and the presence of traders/council tenants who stood to lose their business premises resulted in resistance to the proposed change of land use in Ubungo. This was orchestrared by leveraging a number of strategies, such as withholding or slowing down the public support that the project needed to make progress (including the carrying out of demolitions and the payment of compensation for land expropriation) and drawing on an opposition MP who championed the grievances of the citizens affected by the project.[11]

An aspect that stands out when scrutinizing the main hindrances to the implementation of DART is the mismatch between the relatively small

nature of the problems that caused the delay and the time that it took to overcome them. Seventy-seven house owners slowed the project by five years. No authority stepped in to solve the impasse which halted progress with works at Ubungo Station. Arguably, a lack of high-level commitment to the project by the Tanzanian government underpins such an impasse, the reasons for which are explored next.

DART advocates promoted the project as a solution to urban transport problems that was beneficial to society and the economy at large, but as implementation neared, some groups stood to be negatively affected. A document entitled "*Daladala* grievances plan," written in early 2010 by a consultant to the project (Kamukala, 2010), provides clues as to the tensions between the real politics of DART and its rosy portrayal, and to the often contradictory way in which these were handled. The document outlined how to manage "the grievance process with *daladala* bus owners and operators in order to bring about a *win–win* (emphasis added) situation for everyone involved" (Kamukala, 2010, p. 1). However, such optimism sat alongside awareness of how delicate the issue of incorporation of previous operators was: "DART has to clearly inform the *daladala* owners and operators how the introduction of the BRT is likely to affect their overall employment opportunities in the public transport sector, otherwise there might be strikes and violence due to lack of appreciation of the BRT system." Along the same lines, one reads that "it is important for DART to let stakeholders understand that introduction of the BRT system is an opportunity and not a threat to their existence." However, no evidence was given for why this might be the case.

There were several different reasons for resistance to the project by affected parties, other than the "lack of appreciation" of BRT. The unknown yet likely negative impact of DART on employment and on the estimated 20,000–30,000 workers in the sector was problematic for the Tanzanian leadership and one of the two key causes for its half-hearted support. At a dialogue on unemployment organized by Japan International Cooperation Agency in July 2013, the then Tanzanian president, Kikwete, expressed his concern about the gravity of the problem of under- and unemployment by identifying the decrease in the rate of unemployment amongst the youth in Africa as central to future political stability. As he put it, "The Arab springs were about government that overstayed but the unemployment spring is coming to Africa and will not spare democratic governments" (*Daily News*, 4 June 2013). The President also openly voiced his worry about the employment implications of DART. At a show

to publicize the project in Dar es Salaam in 2006, Kikwete stated that DART was going "to reduce employment" (interview with Sykes, 2011). Kleist Sykes, Mayor of Dar es Salaam from 2001 to 2005 and a major force in the project since 2002, protested that this fear of unemployment was misconstrued as DART would "create rather than reduce employment," thanks to training programmes for all affected parties, including workers, station attendants, and mechanics.

Yet, as I have shown, there was ground for scepticism about this smooth integration of pre-existing operators into DART predicted by its promoters. As "a single DART bus will displace about 10 minibuses," job destruction will inevitably be considerable (*All Africa*, 24 August 2012). Although there were funds earmarked to train some drivers to qualify for driving on BRT buses, DART operators could not be under any obligation to hire them (interview with Schelling, 2011). In sum, DART entails a shift from labour-intensive to capital-intensive urban bus transport, with a contraction in the quantity of jobs and, ideally, their replacement with more secure and better-quality jobs. The role of the sector as a source of employment for the urban poor was a goal of secondary importance to increasing the carrying capacity of buses. From this perspective, one can understand the dismissive tone with which the "grievance management planner" addressed workers: "Some of these drivers will be re-routed; absorbed in the BRT system; lose jobs etc. *They should categorically be informed what would be their fate* (emphasis added)" (Kamukala, 2010). The government, and first and foremost the President, seemed less enamoured with such a stance.

Difficulties in incorporating *daladala* owners in DART constituted the second main reason behind the lack of support by Tanzanian leaders for the project. As previously discussed, the involvement of pre-existing transport providers in BRT often proved to be a thorny issue. Dar es Salaam is no exception. Such difficulties stemmed from the place of *daladala* owners in DART being an afterthought to its planners. A study in 2009 found that, although there was a "strong will to involve current *daladala* operators," there was "no clear plan on how that will be accomplished" (Ahferom, 2009, p. 21). In May 2014, weeks away from the actual tendering process, lack of clarity persisted, as evidenced in the DART Project Information Memorandum, and in particular in its "*daladala* transition policy" (Rebel, 2014, p. 38). One of its pillars was the resettlement of *daladalas* to routes on the outskirts of the city. The Memorandum conceded that "some *daladala* owners may then decide to withdraw from the public transport business altogether and invest in other sectors" but concluded that "the fast

population growth and rapid spreading of suburban neighbourhoods will create sufficient need to absorb most of this freed capacity" (Kamukala, 2010). However, as DART aimed to capture more and more of the market share controlled by *daladalas*, thus pushing them out of their areas of operation, the expectation that supply would create its own demand and that their business could be sustained when displaced to feeder routes was implausible.

The real issue was how *daladala* owners could become part of DART proper. Their inclusion was complicated because the bidding document for tenders for the two companies that would operate DART buses required that bidders must have been successfully engaged in something similar (interview with Schelling, 2011). As there were no Tanzanians with experience of this kind, this ruled out domestic investors from fully owning DART and fuelled tensions between foreign and national ownership of BRT implementation in Dar es Salaam. Indicative of the deep-seated tensions that characterized Tanzanian leaders' thinking on urban transport, Tambo Mhina, former secretary of the Dar es Salaam Region Transport Licensing Authority (DRTLA), recalls how in 2003, when the City Council had already endorsed the BRT proposal, his office prepared a plan to consolidate ownership of (larger) buses in Dar into two or three companies. Such a plan did not convince high-level decision makers, who objected: "These people who own one or two buses, they are original Tanzanians. If you advertise a tender for large buses and large companies, investors of international calibre will come. They [Tanzanians] have already invested in the sector and will be sidelined. Where will they put their capital?" (interview with Mhina, 2010). Therefore, as late as 2003, the year in which the Council formally endorsed DART and its planning began, the Tanzanian leadership clearly prioritized the interests of indigenous investors over and above foreign investors and considerations on how to improve urban transport. With the attempt to roll out DART, ten years later, the problem had presented itself again, and more pressingly so. How then were the interests of Tanzanian investors being protected this time?

At the official inauguration of the construction of DART in 2010, the president Jakaya Kikwete urged *daladala* owners not to "just remain idle complaining about the arrival of foreign investors" (Stewart, 2014). By this, he intended that owners should ensure that they were able to meet the requirements to operate the smaller buses on BRT feeder routes, and should form collective enterprises to join the operations on BRT main

routes (as opposed to its feeder routes). Some owners had indeed been preparing for this, most notably the Dar es Salaam Commuter Buses Owners' Association (DARCOBOA), which registered a company to this end (Mutasingwa, n.d.).[12] However, a major barrier to joining BRT was the cost of buses and the lack of finance. Owners organized lobbying of various ministries, including the Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Finance, to facilitate support in the form of a loan guarantee and tax exemption, yielding promises but no tangible results. DARCOBOA responded by setting up a meeting with "the Member of Parliament for Dar es Salaam and Councillors who intend[ed] to be involved in the 2010 country election as candidates, to help them to sell the idea", as they felt the issue required "political will." The government offered public funds to promote *daladala* owners' incorporation into DART in September 2012, when it announced that it would purchase all old *daladalas* six months before DART was due to start operations (*Daily News*, 25 September 2012). Thus, similar to the cases of Johannesburg and Cape Town, political pressure resulted in public funds becoming available to owners for the purchase of 'free' shares of the new BRT (Schakelamp, 2011, pp. 10–11). However, the bus owners' association turned down the offer, as the compensation that could reasonably be offered for fairly old vehicles was expected to be low (interview with Mabrouk, 2014).[13] Furthermore, many bus owners doubted the possibility of making a profit on shares without being cheated. Instead, owners restated their request for government support in the form of its guarantee to access finance for purchasing new buses. But as the chairman of the bus owners' association explained, the failure to achieve any breakthrough had to do with reasons beyond government control: "In the words of the World Bank, there is no way we would give a loan guarantee to the private sector … I told people at the World Bank, that if we continue like this, it means that you want us [*daladala* owners] to get out. To us this is an elimination process" (interview with Mabrouk, 2014).

Arguably, the World Bank and DART were merely paying lip service to the importance of local ownership of the project, since, according to the DART Chief Technical Adviser, a retired World Bank Transport specialist, "whatever we do with *daladalas* has to be compatible with the market. We cannot sell the project unless this is the case" (interview with Schelling, 2014). The implication was, in terms of the policy priorities on DART in 2014, that the foreign companies that successfully bid to operate DART,

and from which *daladala* would have to subcontract their business, will have a key role in determining the terms and conditions of their service. What remained unexplained was the way in which Tanzanian bus owners were expected to compete in the market with much larger and wealthier foreign transport companies without any external support. In the words of DARCOBOA's chairman: "Even in boxing, Prince Nasseem [a feather-weight world champion], you cannot put him with Mike Tyson [heavy-weight former world champion]. He will kill him, you cannot do that. This should be the logic, people with the same weight compete" (interview with Mabrouk, 2014). Along the same lines, Engineering Professor Mfinanga, a researcher on urban transport and on the Board of Directors of DART, "cautioned that expecting [owners] to form companies and compete in an international bidding contest is 'insulting to them'" (Stewart, 2014). This is the way things stood, unsolved, as tendering became imminent. However, one would not remotely sense this from the Project Information Memorandum's rosier version of the situation: "[Bus owners] are generally supportive of the DART initiative … This industry restructuring and reorganization process is also meant to give *daladala* owners a chance to associate with local and international parties in bidding for the DART system and participate in the tender process" (Rebel, 2014).

While the inconclusive search for ways to incorporate previous bus owners unfolded, DART faced a new challenge in the rapid growth of *Shirika la Usafiri Dar es Salaam* (UDA), a Tanzanian company, which sought to claim a key role in the project. UDA was the state-owned company that provided public transport in Dar es Salaam under a monopoly regime from 1970 until 1983, when private operators were permitted into the sector to satisfy the demand for transport that UDA could not match. As the decrease of its fleet progressed over the years and buyers could not be found when it was initially offered for privatization, UDA laid moribund, operating an average of as few as seventeen buses a year from 2002 to 2008 (National Institute of Transport, 2010). However, the scenario for UDA has looked much brighter since the early 2010s. In February 2014, the company owned just under 400 buses and had ordered a further 1000 buses, which when delivered would make it the largest urban passenger transporter in Africa. Its ambitious plan was to field 3000 buses by the end of 2014 (*The Guardian*, 17 February 2014; *Daily News*, 11 February 2014).

Such dynamism was a result of UDA's privatization in 2011 at a price and through a process that generated controversy and a legal case (*The Guardian*, 29 January 2012).[14] UDA had been previously co-owned by the Dar es Salaam City Council (with 51 per cent of its shares) and by the Tanzanian government, holder of the remaining 49 per cent of the shares. By purchasing the City Council's shares, Simon Group became the largest shareholder of UDA, and Robert Kisena, the Executive Chairman of Simon Group, became its new CEO. Kisena was purportedly closely connected to the son of the then president of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete, who was believed to be the main man behind UDA's rise.[15] While there was no evidence to verify this claim, UDA's ambitious "future plan […] to be involved in DART" was clear (UDA leaflet, n.d.). Unlike those of DART, UDA's public statements seemed more attentive to the employment dimension of its operations. As Kisena explained when commenting on the introduction of 300 new UDA buses, "the company's move will also help in the fight against unemployment as the 300 buses, once operational, would provide 900 direct employments and about 2000 people will be employed indirectly" (*Daily News*, 8 October 2012).

Although UDA's rapid growth and self-promotion as a DART operator were well-received by public institutions, it caused bitterness amongst *daladala* operators and DART (*The Guardian*, 15 February 2014). For the latter, a particular concern surrounds UDA's procurement of thousands of vehicles without consultation with DART. As DART's Chief Technical Adviser explained, "UDA buses are not the buses we need. We cannot use them. Our stations are designed for specific buses, with bus stops and lanes designed to match them" (interview with Schelling, 2014). Therefore, the foundations for a new clash were laid between the technicalities of bus designs and project specifications and the 'made in Tanzania' version of BRT promoted by UDA. While the accusation of a connection between UDA's new owner and the son of the current Tanzanian president, Jakaya Kikwete, is unverifiable, one can see how UDA intended to seize a lucrative contract as one of the DART service providers by virtue of being the only large Tanzanian transport company that could supply buses to DART. As UDA directly addressed the anxieties of Tanzanian leaders over the impact of DART, most notably because it was owned by Tanzanians and aimed to employ a larger workforce, it continued to enjoy the support that the Tanzanian authorities had afforded it since its revival in the build and early stages of BRT implementation in Dar es Salaam.[16]

The International and Urban Political Economy of BRTs

This chapter has argued that the narrative of BRTs, as a 'win–win' intervention to solve the public transport crisis in developing countries, obscures the many tensions associated with their implementation. Such a narrative stems from research sponsored by international finance, its NGO brokers, and BRT vehicle manufacturers, and is functional to their interests in opening up public transport markets in developing countries. While public transport in most developing countries cities is experiencing a serious crisis, BRT is a solution that must be understood as one of the latest—and most rapidly expanding—fronts of the promotion of neoliberalism in Africa through PPPs in urban public transport. This chapter has debunked BRT rhetoric, and has briefly reviewed its implementation in Dar es Salaam, as a window into the real politics, the main tensions and contradictions associated with one instance of 'actually existing neoliberalism'. More specifically, the chapter highlights the lack of any serious attempts to include the current public transport workforce by DART, and documents the destruction of employment opportunities and tensions over the incorporation of previous owners, compensation, and the affordability of the new service.

I have argued that such tensions have been problematic for the Tanzanian government and thus go a long way to explaining its unwillingness to resolve the conflicts that DART generated. Above all, the slow progress of DART stems from the tepid commitment to the project by the Tanzanian government, which reflects its attempt to bring into harmony the conflicting interests of the World Bank and the demands of a number of local actors to whom it is electorally accountable. In sum, this chapter makes the case that understanding the emergence of BRTs as policy fix of urban public transport must rest on a grounded understanding of its place in international political economy and that making sense of their implementations in cities around the world must start from an analysis of the urban politics in which BRTs are rooted.

Notes

1. This chapter is an adapted version of 'The New Face of Neoliberalism: The Bus Rapid Transit Project in Tanzania (2002–16)', Chap. 7 of my recent book, *Taken for a ride: Grounding neoliberalism, precarious labour and public transport in an African metropolis*. Oxford: Oxford University

Press, Series on Critical Frontiers of Theory, Research, and Policy in International Development Studies.

2. On the current figure see 'Global BRT Data', http://brtdata.org/#/location.
3. ITDP estimates that BRTs are four to twenty times cheaper than tram or Light Rail Transit (LRT) and ten to 100 times cheaper than metro (ITDP, 2007, p. 1).
4. On learning about BRT from Bogotá, and more broadly from South American cities, with the aim of implementing it in South African cities, see Wood (2014, 2015).
5. See http://www.brt.cl/about-us/members/, accessed 31 January 2017.
6. See note n. 2.
7. See Hall (2014, pp. 5–44) for an excellent overview of corporate interests and networks in promoting PPPs.
8. The inflationary impact of BRTs on transport fares has been observed in many other cities, with costs as high as 1.05 US$ per trip (São Paolo, Brasil). Most systems with a fare below 0.40 US$ are reported to be under financial stress.
9. According to the DART plan, 150-seater buses will serve the main roads, while on feeder roads smaller buses, carrying approximately fifty passengers, will operate. This increased carrying capacity of buses, from the current scenario in which the majority of vehicles are thirty-five-seater buses, is aimed at easing traffic congestion.
10. The Ubungo station manager claimed that revenue from the station was worth 50 per cent of the council's direct revenue.
11. The practical barriers to the implementation of DART are discussed in more detail in Rizzo (2017, pp. 153–157).
12. The company is called Cordial Transportation Services (PLC).
13. The value of the buses became a hotly contested issue in other cities. On Bogotá, see Gilbert (2008).
14. Prominent CCM leader and businessman Iddi Simba, then chairman of UDA board of directors, was involved in the controversy as he was charged, and then declared innocent, with forgery and abuse of office for selling UDA shares at a far too low price and for cashing in the money from the transaction. See Faustine Kapama, 'State files fresh charges against Iddi Simba'. *Daily News*, 1 May 2013, http://allafrica.com/stories/201305010352.html, accessed 11 November 2014.
15. See discussions in *Jamii Forums*, http://www.jamiiforums.com/jukwaa-la-siasa/159840-uda-connetion-ya-robert-kisena-na-msharika-wake-ridhiwani-kikwete-4.html, accessed 12 November 2014. Three informants, whose identity cannot be revealed, concurred with this rumour. Robert Kisena was an MP candidate at the parliamentary elections for CCM in 2010,

when he lost to an opposition candidate. See Florian Kaijage, 'UDA scam: Simon's damning version', *The Guardian*, 29 January 2012.

16. See Rizzo (2017, pp.162–170) for a discussion of the way in the politics of DART continued to evolve in the early months of its life.

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CHAPTER 7

Infrastructure, 'Seeing Sanitation' and the Urban Political in an Era of Late Neoliberalism

Colin McFarlane and Jonathan Silver

Introduction

As the world urbanizes under conditions of late neoliberalism, global inequalities are deepening. Just as we are seeing a new intensification and spread of urbanization, so to are we witnessing the emergence of new configurations of the urban political. Vital here is the increasing inequality across urban infrastructure conditions.

Our contribution emerges through reflection on one case study in which questions about the urban political under late neoliberalism are posed for social justice. This is the remarkable politicization of sanitation in Cape Town. We argue that this politicization, a new moment in the longer histories of protest across the city (McDonald, 2012), entails not just the jostling of different political claims, but the reconfiguring of the urban political itself. In particular, we highlight the crucial role of three 'poolitical tactics' in forging this urban political: spectacle, auditing and sabotage.

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Our argument rests upon the societal nature of sanitation as a networked problem echoing Swanson's (1977) account of the emergence of apartheid in South Africa, that sanitation in Cape Town exists not so much as a specific service delivery problem (although it certainly is in part that), but as a sociopolitical syndrome. What Swanson's account of the 'sanitation syndrome' reveals is that the question of addressing excess human waste in Cape Town was inseparable from the question of race and social segregation. While these particular racialized geographies and logics of contamination took a certain course in Cape Town, this historical rationale of dividing colonial cities is not, of course, unique to the city (e.g. Anderson, 1995).

Sanitation in Cape Town, in other words, is always already more than sanitation. It is a deeply historical process of racialized segregation that can be traced back to forms of early settler colonialism across the continent (Fanon, 1967) through to new waves of neoliberal restructuring across the city. This historical experience has shaped the post-apartheid city in powerful ways, and here we connect Swanson's (1977) sanitation syndrome to Hart's (2014) characterization of South African politics as in a state of post-apartheid crisis. This crisis is made most visible through ongoing service delivery protests that connect to a broader rejection of neoliberal economics by huge parts of South African society, including around sanitation and that remain part of everyday life.

Despite significant state investment since the transition to democracy in the 1990s, (Parnell, Beall, & Crankshaw, 2005), it quickly became clear that municipalities could not take on the challenges on their own. By 2004, the realisation that municipalities would not be able to stop or meet the growth of informal urbanisation in cities such as Cape Town (with over 200 settlements, Mels et al., 2009) meant the state began to allocate resources to informal settlement upgrading, in many places for the first time. This new policy orientation brought forth a new stage of protest and contestation from social movements and community groups in informal settlements that challenged the state around services and related issues such as party political conflict, corruption and flawed tendering processes. This included the formation of national organisations such as Abahlali base Mjondolo (Huchzermeyer, 2011) and more localised groups such as the Mandela Park Backyarders (Desai & Pithouse, 2004). This post-apartheid crisis and the associated contestations of course link to longer struggles from the colonial era onwards concerning the urban political,

particularly land and housing that have reinforced spatial fragmentation and racial division in Cape Town (Cole, 1987; Lester, Menguele, Karurui-Sebina, & Kruger, 2009). But the post-apartheid crisis is also distinct in important ways.

This is a crisis in which seemingly specific concerns such as delivering adequate toilets or long promised housing to townships and informal settlements and the more generalised abilities of citizens to shape the service delivery agenda can be seen as symbolic of whether South Africa can realistically be called 'post'-apartheid and whether the African National Congress (ANC) genuinely has the will and capacity to undo historical socio-spatial injustice. This crisis has been at its most intense at a municipal level. As Hart (2014, p. 5) suggests, local government "has become the key site of contradictions" in the post-apartheid state, and constitutes "the impossible terrain of official efforts to manage poverty and deprivation in a racially inflected capitalist society marked by massive inequalities and increasingly precarious livelihoods for the large majority of the population."

Given that toilets and sanitation more generally are intimately tied to basic rights and questions of dignity bound up with the Constitution of South Africa (Pieterse & Parnell, 2014), sanitation goes to the heart of the wider post-apartheid urban crisis. Hardly surprising, then, that sanitation has become the lightning torch and latest focus for a broader politicization of contemporary Cape Town with an estimated 500,000 (from 3.5 million) residents across the city, mainly based in informal settlements, experiencing inadequate services (Mels et al., 2009; SJC, 2014). It is in this sense that we talk about a shift from the 'poolitical', which we take to be a politics ostensibly concerned primarily with sanitation delivery, to the 'political', a politics that is more squarely identified with Cape Town's political-economy, racial division, and sociospatial trajectories under late neoliberalism and post-apartheid conditions.

We take poolitics to be the making political of human waste. Given that human waste is always already political in Cape Town, what matters here is the particular ways in which it is politicized. Poolitics emerges from the way in which sanitation is seen, and specifically with how ways of seeing sanitation come into contestation with other ways of seeing sanitation. There is always more at stake here than just sanitation, vital though that in and of itself is, and the constant spillover of the poolitical into the wider political is at the heart of the three tactics we examine.

The 'poo' in poolitical emphasizes the politicization of human waste, and as we will see the materiality of human waste and the reception of that materiality is an important part of the making of the poolitical and its transgression into the wider urban political. The poolitical emerges from conflict over different ways of seeing distributions of the body, the infrastructural, and the sensorial, but in so doing becomes a question of dignity, race, gender, citizenship, history, and the prospects of urban social justice. Our focus is on the relationship between 'seeing' and the poolitical/political. Indeed, what often gets underplayed in those debates is precisely how conflict between different ways of seeing in the city serves to reshape the nature of the urban political.

There is a great deal of important scholarship on new urban political formations that we draw inspiration from in making our arguments and that we hope to speak back too. In recent years much of this work has been concerned with the politics of occupation from the 'Arab Spring', Occupy and the Indagnacio movements of 2011, to protests over democracy in Hong Kong in 2014. This work charts not just new political struggles, but new political questions and forms of deliberation (e.g. Merrifield, 2013, 2014), and there is of course a much wider literature on the politics of urban activism and social movements globally in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis (e.g. Featherstone, 2013; Iveson, 2014; MacLeod & McFarlane, 2014; Nicholls, 2011) and in South Africa, both before such global uprisings (Desai, 2002; Ngwane, 2003; Pithouse, 2008) and through emerging urban political formations such as RhodesMustFall and FeesMustFall (Mbembe, 2015). We are inspired by the attempt in these literatures to locate new trajectories for contestation and struggles for urban justice, new understandings of the urban condition, and new ways in which the political is being forged. And yet, the question of how the urban political is itself reconfigured through the coexistence of ways of seeing, and how they shape multiple political tactics, is often under-examined.

Seeing Sanitation

What do we mean by 'seeing sanitation'? While we use the visual term 'seeing' here, we have in mind an expansive understanding of seeing that refers to how sanitation is differently perceived. These perceptions include not just the visual register but, as we shall see, a strong role of the olfactory in particular. Seeing here is perceiving in a multi-sensorial way. We have in mind, then, a conception of 'seeing' sanitation that amounts to a wider

sense of 'sensing sanitation'. The reason we have opted to use 'seeing' over 'sensing', however, is because our emphasis is on how different actors understand the problem of sanitation.

While, in the broadest sense, we know what sanitation is—the safe disposal of human waste—in practice it is a radically pluralist notion. We see it surface variously as a problem of gender (Molotch & Norén, 2010), caste, race and ethnicity (Jewitt, 2011; Swanson, 1977), religion as a vital space for securing or generating livelihoods (Satterthwaite, MacGranahan, & Mitlin, 2005), as a technological challenge of meeting a global crisis (Mara, 2012), as a behavioral challenge in relation to cultures of hygiene (Fewtrell et al., 2005), and so forth. This openness is further complicated by questions about whether the key problem in these respective debates is one of sanitation, or resource distribution, or cultural politics around gender inequalities, or everyday habits, or political will and capacity, and so on—and this is before we get to the specificity of location. Sanitation is radically unstable, and understood as a multiplicity in which different issues and spaces are perceived as key by different actors—hence, 'seeing sanitation'.

By 'seeing', we are of course invoking Scott's (1998) well-heeled notion of 'seeing like a state'. We also have in mind Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava, and Véron's (2005) work on 'seeing the state' and Magnusson's (2011) elaboration of 'seeing like a city'. From this work we make four points about understanding 'seeing sanitation': legibility, simplification, multiplicity, and context. Scott's account of how the state makes society legible and simplified is important for our purposes for two reasons. First, and most straightforwardly, Scott shows how the power of the state is in large part caught up with how it sees society, i.e. with how it makes life legible, standardized, measurable, and amenable to intervention. As we shall see, the process of counting, mapping, budgeting, and delivering sanitation services is a process at the heart of the poolitical struggle around sanitation in Cape Town. For example the claim, often made by the City of Cape Town (CCT), that 97% of the city is covered by adequate sanitation, is a figure heavily disputed by residents and activists. As Pieterse and Parnell (2014, p. 153) put it, that "you need to be 'seen by the state' before benefitting from it". Second, one of the key challenges in relation to sanitation in Cape Town is precisely the lack of state simplification of what people should expect as state provision. An important question is that of 'progressive realization'. In South Africa socio-economic rights, including to housing, adequate standards of living and health, are subject to the notion of progressive realization in which, "access is not always

provided as universal from the outset" (Chenwi, 2013, p. 742). The South African Human Rights Commission (1996, pp. 184–183) has a clear mandate to assess progressive realization that focuses on, "the measures that they have taken towards the realization of the rights in the Bill of Rights, concerning housing, health care, food, water, social security, education and the environment".

However, the current guidance does not specify particular forms of technology or a minimum acceptable provision, but on the progression of infrastructure over time and in "the face of resource constraints" (Chenwi, 2013, p. 742). While municipalities that fail to demonstrate progressive realization can be held to account the ambiguity at work here as helped shape to a contested and often bitter poolitics in Cape Town. The lack of clarity here plays an important role in how sanitation is seen by different actors and, through the conflict of those different ways of seeing, pooliticized.

Third, seeing here is, however, about more than the presence (or absence) of state practices of simplifying and making legible. Magnusson (2011) links 'seeing' to how we might understand the political itself. To 'see like a city', Magnusson (2011, p. 12) argues, is to see a politics of different and often connected forms of governing that must inevitably be complex, provisional, and uncertain. To see like a city "is to accept a certain disorderliness, unpredictability, and multiplicity as inevitable, and to pose the problem of politics in relation to that complexity". Similarly, to see sanitation is to focus on how multiple actors perceive sanitation, and how those perceptions enter into the politics of both sanitation (poolitics) and the city itself. Rather than equating seeing to state simplification as Scott does, then, Magnusson positions seeing with recognizing and working through the range of relevant agendas in the city. This dual role of simplification (lack of clarity on provisions) and complexity (multiple actors and ways of seeing) is important for our account. To see sanitation in Cape Town is to see the expression of different poolitical tactics that enter into the reconfiguration of the urban political.

Fourth and finally, seeing, as Corbridge et al. (2005) argue in their ethnography of how the Indian state is seen, is shaped by context and history. Ways of seeing do not emerge from the ether. 'Sight'—ways of understanding entities like the state—is, "learned and based on past experiences", and that learning and experience is about both formal and informal relations and expectations of the state (Corbridge et al., 2005, p. 24). Sight then, is relational. And given that they are relational, they are formed not just

through the multiple authorities jostling for position in the city, a la Magnusson, but also "over the airwaves and on computer screens, as well as in paper copy, memory, speech and other direct interactions" (ibid., p. 45).

Seeing sanitation, in short, is about perceiving across the senses, and is a relation of legibility and simplification, complexity and multiple tactics, and the role of context and history. When it comes to sanitation in Cape Town, we will argue, seeing sanitation is always already political and more than just a service delivery problem. What we call poolitics emerges from ways of seeing as they come into contestation with other ways of seeing sanitation.

Poolitical Tactics

We examine three key tactics through which sanitation is pooliticized in Cape Town—or poolitics: spectacle, auditing and sabotage. These are not the only ways in which sanitation in Cape Town is seen and pooliticized beyond the state, but they have been the most important tactics for the city's residents and they have been important to the reconfiguration of the urban political.

In each case, the role of space and time is vital and in two broad ways. First, poolitical tactics emerge from and target particular urban places (from local sites to the city in general). Second, they reflect and produce particular imaginative geographies of the city. For example, some state officials emphasized that there are informal settlements where providing sanitation facilities is next to impossible, because local politics means that the facilities will be demolished. Whatever we might make of such claims, the point we're making here is ways of seeing and making poolitical tactics have a geography—material and imagined—that is vital to the form they take.

Swanson (1977) argued that the conflation of racial prejudice and an erroneous construction of the Black body as a contaminant in relation to the plague, lead to geographical segregation. This informed an aggressive strategy of displacement and separation. For example, many Blacks in Cape Town were forcibly removed under the Public Health Act to Uitvlugt, a sewage farm on the Cape Flats (ibid.). In our account, the geographical legacies of apartheid have not been dismantled, and continue to structure provisions, but the state is now forced to confront a democratic context in which it is expected to progressively address these geographical inequalities under the conditions of late neoliberalism. This

shift in the sanitation syndrome constitutes a distinct poolitical context from the pre-apartheid syndrome Swanson narrates.

But poolitical tactics are also temporal, because with changing events and concerns the nature of the tactic itself often varies, and it is partly for this reason that tactics are able to play a role in reconfiguring the political field. Temporality here, like spatiality, is more than just a passive medium for politics, but is instead constitutive of it, from moments of spectacle like the 'poo protests' we discuss next, or the slow structural violence of infrastructure inequalities of the post-apartheid urban condition that shape the emergence of tactics, to the shifting nature of poolitics in line with municipal and national electoral cycles, or the often slow space of provisions or incremental self-management or forms of audit activism. However, a caveat here. We are not arguing that particular processes necessarily have particular kinds of temporalities, as if in a deterministic relation.

Spectacle: Revolting Geographies?

> We said, 'no more should protest happen in the township, but in the CBD—it is that place that brought this legacy'. Ses'khona activist

We begin with Cape Town's infamous 'poo protests': the throwing of shit by residents of informal settlements into targeted sites of the city, including: the airport, a main arterial road, the Provincial Legislature, and the Mayor's car. In the poolitical realm, the tactic of spectacle is a tactic of the senses, utilizing a cultural poolitics of disgust and contamination, inverting the notion that shit belongs with poor urban peripheries and out of sight by casting that shit where it has absolutely no business being: the spaces of the elite and often hyper-sanitised city. Here is a tactic predicated on what Mary Douglas (2003) called "matter out of place". One that connects senses, body and city, a tactic not just of shock but of urban critique, a critique of the political-economic trajectory and racial political geographies of a city in one of the world's most unequal countries. As Steve Robins (2014a) notes on sanitation politics in Cape Town, here was a form of protest that depends on the fast and shocking potential of spectacle.

The poo protests gave rise to a poorly understood new social movement in Cape Town: Ses'khona (meaning "We're here") People's Rights Movement. The movement started with residents in informal settlements who were angry that the municipality in 2011, and in the lead up to the

municipal elections, provided communities in the poorer parts of the city with open air toilets, i.e. toilets with no walls. While the City of Cape Town claims to have conducted consultations with residents on how to spend the budget for sanitation, such an affront to dignity—a keyword in South African debates given its deep links to the racism of apartheid and longer settler colonial histories—infuriated many residents and gave rise to what was termed the 'toilet wars' (Schnitzler, 2013).

A focal point of this pooliticization was in Makhaza, an informal settlement in the township of Khayelitsha. In the run up to the 2011 elections ANC Youth League (ANCYL) activists accused the ruling party at the municipal and provincial level (still in power today), the Democratic Alliance (DA), of racism in the Western Cape High Court through the Human Rights Commission, using the open toilets as evidence. The DA is a relatively new political party dating from 2000 that emerged from a group of white-dominated parties broadly opposed to the National Party stretching back to the 1970s. Rule by the DA gives rise to a constant questioning about potential racial prejudice. The open toilets—which have been facetiously referred to as the "loo with the view" (Robins, 2014a, p. 493)—were 'improved' by the DA using walls of corrugated iron, which ANCYL activists tore down amidst claims of DA insults on the dignity of the predominantly black poor, demanding concrete forms instead (Robins, 2014b).

The ANC had been using the open toilets to considerable political advantage in the lead up to the 2011 elections, but that changed when it was reported that 1600 unenclosed toilets existed in Rammulotsi township near Viljoenskroom in the ANC-controlled Free-State Province, built in 2003 (Robins, 2014a, p. 490). For the Social Justice Coalition, the toilet protests were fast being turned into "political point scoring" between the ANC and the DA, given that many of the protests were led by ANC Councilor Andile Lilli (Robins, 2014a, p. 496). And yet, the open toilets symbolized more than mere politicking. "It would seem", Robins (2014c, p. 104) has written, "that the historical processes of racial capitalism were condensed and congealed into the spectacular image of the open porcelain toilet".

A key moment of recognition, and an important victory for sanitation based rights campaigners, came in 2011 when the Western Cape High Court intervened in the debate. In September 2010, Judge Erasmus of the High Court ordered CCT to enclose 1316 toilets in the Silvertown Project (which includes Makhaza) (Robins, 2014a, p. 488) as they had violated the constitutional rights of citizens.

Protests and campaigns led to the decision in 2011 by new Mayor Patricia de Lille to fund maintenance services (through nationally funded Expanded Public Works Program) for sanitation in informal settlements with an initial investment of R138 million (£6.5 million) per year, in the form of a janitorial service. However, this too was an underfunded provision. Janitors working in the Barcelona informal settlement were given restricted hours and therefore less pay than the previous contract. In protest janitors went on strike against the portable flush toilet provider, Sanicare, and some janitors dumped bags of faeces and garbage on the highway. After a month without the 'buckets' being collected, the conditions in Barcelona were terrible. A local street committee member (and later Ses'khona leader) described the situation: "There are maggots in the buckets after two days. It is very dangerous. When the toilets were not picked up, health professionals came as lots of children [were] going to hospital". The community decided to act and ANCYL activists known through their involvement in Makhaza—and who would later go on to form Ses'khona—were invited by community members to Barcelona to discuss what to do.

Residents in Barcelona and elsewhere became increasingly frustrated, both at the situation itself and the apparent refusal of the state to engage with them. In desperation, they decided to deal with the excess of shit by transforming it from a symbol of post-apartheid failure into a poolitical weapon. A Ses'khona activist describes how the idea for the 'poo protests' originated from the residents of Barcelona, "We are going to take these buckets to N2 [the main road leading to the airport] and dump them so rich people have to travel over them like our kids do".

The protest on the N2, he went on, was "chaotic" but "happy" until the police arrived, firing at and arresting people, and violence ensued. A CCT official in the Informal Settlements section described the aftermath in which the CCT "vehicle was burnt out, the trailers were vandalised and seven of our people were hospitalised". Following the protest activists and residents in Barcelona regrouped and discussed options. There was a feeling that the N2 had been the wrong geographical target because it wasn't focused on elites. Instead, the next protest was the State Legislature in the central city. The hope was to speak to the Premier and if there was no response to target the offices of politicians. The 11 activists who went couldn't get access, so they called the media and then emptied the buckets over the steps of the Legislature.

This act operated at multiple levels: first, at the level of the urban sensorium—so that the politicians could appreciate "how it smells in … Barcelona" and about "the way we live". Second, and through the media, to raise awareness about the sanitation struggle—"it made a lot of headlines, the impact we wanted". And third, to prompt the state into dialogue with the activists (the activists wrote to the Premier following the protest). CCT and Provincial politicians and officials responded by vilifying the protests and refusing to engage with the activists, who were dismissed as merely agitating for the ANC in what the DA called a campaign to make the city ungovernable.

The protests continued: the next target was the hyper-sanitised space of Cape Town International Airport. The airport is a site linked to elite Cape Town's image of itself as globally dynamic and the economic importance of the tourism sector (McDonald, 2012). The nine Sesk'hona protesters involved in that airport action were found guilty and given suspended sentences by the Bellville Magistrate's Court for contravening the Civil Aviation Act being used by the authorities to criminalize what was a powerful act of civil disobedience.

In addition to this punitive legal response, the state has responded in ways that reinforce the sensorial poolitics at play in the poo protests. For example, in what must be assumed to be an attempt to appear engaged with the problem, Mayor Patricia de Lille visited Barcelona in June 2013 to inspect sanitation conditions, but in an affront to residents and without seemingly any sense of irony, she wore a mask for the one hour that she was there. As a local leader and Ses'khona activist from Barcelona, suggested "if she can't stand five minutes then why do we have to stand it for three months [waiting for buckets to be collected]?"

For the poo protestors, sanitation is seen not just as a question of insufficient toilets and undignified provisions (poolitics), but as a problem of urban political economic and racial inequality (politics). Seeing sanitation in this way conflicts with how the state sees sanitation, and leads to the politicisaiton of sanitation through poo protests. But these activists also see sanitation in other ways. For example, a director of an eco-sanitation company in the city told us about how Ses'khona leaders met with him to discuss possible alternative sanitation delivery through various new technologies.

The pooliticising of the urban sensorium is not the domain of Ses'khona alone. Other voices take quite different approaches that seem to have been at least partly inspired by the actions of Ses'khona. For example, in 2014

a group of art based activists emptied buckets of shit from Khayeletisha onto a plush city centre gallery floor, to disrupt the sanitised space and force a confrontation with the sensorial power of shit.

Auditing: Speaking the State's Language

> Our objective is to make government accountable. Social Justice Coalition activist

We move now to auditing, a very different poolitical tactic. While this is a slower form of activism (Robins, 2014a), we would not want to set up a dichotomy of the main instigating groups of these tactics in which Ses'khona = fast and the Social Justice Coalition = slow. In practice both groups utilize different forms of temporality. Nonetheless, the process of auditing has become SJC's main form of political intervention in sanitation issues in the city, and has involved using the language of the state to hold it to account through a monitoring of toilet conditions in Khayelitsha. The SJC has a history in campaigning for human rights, and was formed in 2008 as a response to xenophobic violence mainly against Southern African migrant communities.

In the poolitical realm, the tactic of auditing entails seeing like the state (Scott, 1998) and to engage in what Robins (2014a, p. 107) describes as, "the more mundane technical and bureaucratic work of making the state responsive to the needs of the urban poor." Here, seeing sanitation means to engage with the municipality on the terrain of data, standards and measurement and to speak the language of the technical document, the city engineer and a statistical, mundane geography of maintenance, operation and repair. In speaking a language of the state, SJC maintains a distance from both political parties. One senior SJC activist explained: "We need to see beyond boundaries of politics … we want to talk about people, rights and life". If Ses'khnoa is a politicization of the city, SJC is a politics of citizenship.

The SJC is a mass member organisation working with Ndifuna Ukwazi (Dare to Know), a technical support NGO. The SJC rose to prominence in the sanitation debate through the auditing of toilets in the 2010 Safe and Clean Sanitation campaign. The campaign is predicated on the mapping and auditing of toilets in Khayelitsha and the publication of data through reports detailing the often unsanitary conditions and long delays

in repair and maintenance faced by residents (see SJC, 2014). For instance the 2014 audit undertaken in parts of Khayelitsha found that 49 per cent of toilets were 'dirty' or 'very dirty',

In early 2015 the auditing was further developed through the piloting of real time data monitoring and reporting by Ndifuna. This allows residents to instantly communicate faults to the municipality. This is an important advance on the current reporting system set up by CCT, which requires having phone credit or walking to the few public phones in Khayelitsha and often paying for an expensive call while kept on hold. The SJC real time system is about "bringing [the] city to the people's doorstep, [we] want them to have access to report issues without using their own money".

SJC/Ndifuna see sanitation as a rights based struggle for citizen provisions, meaning that there is always a shift from inadequate provision and maintenance (poolitics) to a larger questioning of urban inequality and the role of the state (politics). For example, one of the contested issues that the auditing has examined is the different actors involved in maintenance. This has consisted of two elements. First, provision of chemical toilets has been contracted out to a private company, Mshengu Services. This privatization of public services in a R140 million contact has become fraught, and one SJC activists accused the CCT of "running away from accountability". The SJC/Ndifuna auditing of Mshengu Services, particularly in relation to maintenance of the toilets, led to an investigation by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC).

Second, and following on, the auditing has raised questions about the level and flow of money. For example, the fact that janitors are funded through a national scheme—the Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP)—rather than the City itself, and on short term low wage contracts at that, has fed debate around CCT's commitment. SJC has been careful to lay blame for poor maintenance not at the feet of exploited janitors but at the CCT itself.

SJC/Ndifuna does not reject the poolitics of the spectacle mobilised most prominently by Ses'khona. Instead SJC/Ndifuna draw on moments of spectacle as a way to highlight and move forward the primary tactic focused on ensuring that the municipality delivers the socio-economic rights established in the Constitution. Reports detailing sanitation conditions or reactions to municipal budgets are launched through public mobilisations, including civil disobedience spectacles such as members

chaining themselves to railings in front of the Mayors office in 2013. The process of holding the municipality to account has been met with negative reactions from the local state and very public disagreements (especially across social media).

Despite the hostility between CCT and SJC/Ndifuna, the objective of the auditing work remains focused on improving maintenance through creating a working relationship. As an activist from Ndifuna reflects, after a visit to meet Indian organisations undertaking similar work: "We will get there. One of things I learnt in India is that government was once against social audit process, at some point they understood NGOs only doing this to work with government and make sure spending goes on what it should." This reveals a commitment to a slow politics of change.

Sabotage: Whose Infrastructural Violence?

We are preaching for flushable toilets, nothing else. Ses'khona activist

The third poolitical tactic we see in Cape Town is infrastructural disruption and damage through sabotage. Sabotage has a long history in the anti-apartheid struggle, particularly between 1961 and 1963 with the launching of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC and the initiation of a campaign against the apartheid regime through targeting various forms of infrastructure. Such political strategies have found new forms in contemporary Cape Town in which the sanitation infrastructure has been intentionally damaged. This poolitical tactic could be understood as another means in which the poolitics of the spectacle emerges, but in practice it is more than this. Sabotage in the Cape Town context is a way of materially articulating the grievances that some of the city's population feel in relation to sanitation issues in the absence of productive channels of communication with CCT.

In June 2014 over 100 toilets were broken by residents in the Kosovo informal settlement in Philippi as an explicit rejection of a particular form of sanitation technology delivered by CCT. These toilets were toppled over and then destroyed in front of watching residents, CCT officials and the media. The toilets were portable 100 litre containers surrounded by a concrete wrapping, but for some residents they represented little more than a different form of the hated apartheid-era bucket toilet system and a municipality unprepared to give them the dignified sanitation as per their

Constitutional right. The sabotage spread beyond toilets. Days after the incident in Kosovo the electricity substation for the area was destroyed, cutting electricity to 5200 households.

This poolitical tactic of sabotage elicits a strong response from CCT. The Kosovo incident was described by CCT as "unprecedented vandalism and destruction". A senior official at the Water and Sanitation Department asked "Why vandalise? … you tell me, something I can't explain, rationalize. It doesn't make sense". The point, of course, is that while vandalism describes the deliberate destruction of property (sabotage is a more precise term as it can be understood as an explicitly political statement that reflects in this case how residents see sanitation. The act was planned including inviting the media. "If you're going to bring toilets", a Ses'khona activist told us, "we only want flushable". Sabotage is a poolitics of refusal and a militant determination, even at the cost of incremental improvements within the community, to secure particular toilet technologies. It calls into questions the notion of progressive realization at the heart of the Constitution, and as such spills beyond poolitics to act as a wider political attack.

Issues of vandalism feature prominently in the public discourse of CCT officials in depictions of the challenges they face in maintenance and operation. As a senior official at the Water and Sanitation Department asserts: "Vandalism and theft is astronomical. They will fit system today and [it will be] gone tomorrow". Such claims are of course disputed, but we do not dispute that acts of vandalism do sometimes occur. However, according to opponents of CCT even technological faults are conflated with vandalism. An SJC activist argued to us that such accusations are a "dead argument: people do vandalize infrastructure but it is minimum … [CCT] say immediately that even [a] blocked toilet is vandalism". Activists offer a counter-argument to the language of vandalism and apportion of blame to local residents by the state. Instead, they point to the inadequate investment, delivery and maintenance by the state as itself a form state-led infrastructural vandalism.

Political Stakes and the Urban Future

Where do these different tactics leave Cape Town's contemporary sanitation syndrome? When you consider that, in 2015, the city allocated less than two per cent of its water and sanitation budget to informal settlements

while continuing to invest vast sums in maintaining services to wealthier neighbourhoods (Davis, 2015), there is a long way to go for infrastructural justice. The colonial segregation that was to precede the apartheid regime was the architecture of the sanitation syndrome Swanson examined in 1977, but while these previous eras of infrastructural governance have ended they have not been dismantled. Processes of segregation, of disproportionately protecting and servicing minority white neighbourhoods, services, infrastructure and opportunities, remain painfully visible in the city today.

There are other resonances with Swanson's account, including the associations made by some municipal and national officials between 'insanitary' spaces and practices in townships and informal settlements and race, where the implication is that the inadequacy of sanitation is the responsibility of residents and not the state. Health and disease outbreaks such as plague may no longer be explicitly invoked in connection to Black bodies, but the tendency to attribute blame to Black bodies does resonate with Swanson's account of the sanitation syndrome.

But the contemporary sanitation syndrome is different from the past. People now live in the constant shadow of failed promises so pronounced under late neoliberalism and two decades of post-apartheid governance. The architecture of the contemporary sanitation syndrome is one of failed service delivery promises and frustrations over democratic inertia. The poolitics of sabotage no longer subverts an apartheid state but a democratically elected one. The practice of auditing and demanding accountability cannot be ignored by the state and media, and the poolitics of spectacle is able to rapidly circulate through various media locally, nationally and globally.

Three sight-lines seem to us particularly important when considering the possibility of a more just urban future for sanitation. First, we may well see the visceral material politics of sabotage increasingly articulate growing anger across the poorer areas of the city, in ways that focus attention on the continuing forms of racialized oppression through infrastructure and which force increasingly punitive responses by the local state.

Second, and following on, we see most promise in the tactic of auditing for creating collaborative forms of infrastructure governance in the city in which wider publics become involved in operation and maintenance. The SJC auditing opens up the possibility to reclaim the state by speaking and seeing as the state does, but in a way that commits to radical redistribution.

Third, the nature of engagement between the state and activists will be important for future sanitaiton delivery and for the wider urban political condition in the city. There needs to be on the part of activists at least some recognition that the state—despite its faults, the enduring apartheid legacies and its neoliberal orientations—is multifaceted, that there are potential openings in which activists need to show understanding of the challenges the state faces and a willingness to build some form of working platform. There are lots of examples of this in Cape Town. For the CCT, the failure to engage constructively with activists, and especially with auditing, will mean losing a potential ally that could help materially transform sanitation conditions.

Conclusion

The tactics we discuss in this paper have implications for how we understand the urban political and infrastructure, under late neoliberalism, both in Cape Town and beyond, and in three key ways. First, analytically, our focus on 'seeing', by examining how different actors frame and politicize urban inequalities, is a useful move for understanding politics more widely. How is inequality understood as a problem, and by whom, and what solutions are being offered? Seeing, as a relation of simplification and complexity, shaped by context and history, is an analytically useful approach for understanding what's at stake and for whom in contemporary cities.

Second, in terms of content, the three tactics we highlight—spectacle, auditing, sabotage,—are at work in different ways across the world. Together, they powerfully illustrate the diversity of tactics being mobilized by various urban actors beyond the state and how they are opening up new political possibilities in often very different ways.

Third, the nature of the struggle in Cape Town, that constituted not just a service-delivery question but a larger process of remaking the urban political in the city, will become increasingly important in cities globally. While so much of what happens in Cape Town is context specific—a neoliberalising post-apartheid city with a developmental state (McDonald, 2012)—there are insights in this story for the constitution of urban struggle against neoliberalism and racial injustice more generally. Cities are becoming more and more unequal, and that is expressed materially in basic infrastructures. As sanitation becomes ever more commodified we will see

more movements around it which ask a bigger question: if the state cannot provide a basic form of urban provision, then what kind of city do we have? Linking these campaigns to wider calls for spatial justice and the democratization of cities becomes a crucial task in turning the tide against wider urban inequality.

We live in turbulent global times in which urbanization is increasingly central to the political. In a moment when citizens are able to mobilize, communicate and challenge in new data-driven networks of activism, city governments will be forced to create political space to learn from and react constructively to urban social movements like SJC and Ses'khona rather than marginalize and criminalize them. The consequences of failing to address these politics in an era of late neoliberalism are stark as material inequalities grow out across the infrastructures that mediate urban life.

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PART III

Governing the Urban Political

CHAPTER 8

The 'Cooperative' or 'Cop-Out' Council? Urban Politics at a Time of Austerity Localism in London

Joe Penny

Introduction

This chapter theorises 'the urban political under late neoliberalism' through an exploration of the linkages between 'austerity localism' and urban politics and democracy in local government in London. Since 2010, local authorities in London have been at the receiving end of a Conservative-led determination to transform a financial crisis into a crisis of the state (Clarke & Newman, 2012). This has occurred through a 'fiscal purge' on the budgets of the capital's boroughs, affecting most adversely those deprived authorities disproportionately reliant on central funds (Fitzgerald & Lupton, 2015). At the same time, reflecting a renewed push towards 'localism', policy rhetoric, backed by some legislative change at the national scale, abounds around the need to unleash local autonomy and better engage citizens in decisions that affect their lives at a local level. This chapter investigates how these two trends in local government have co-evolved since 2010, and with what implications for local democracy and politics in England's capital city.

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Running through this chapter are two presuppositions connecting the urban and the political/democratic. The first, following Bulkeley, Luque-Ayala, McFarlane, and MacLeod (2016), is that any understanding of the nature and scope of urban politics and democracy must be situated within some discussion of urban autonomy and the different forms this takes. Understanding the role that local government plays in relation to urban politics and democracy necessitates an appreciation of the complex and ambiguous ways in which it is itself an autonomous actor, enabled and constrained by its particular territorial and administrative limits and by its relations with and to other scales of governance and multiple, uneven flows of capital. The second presupposition is that real democracy, at whatever scale, is predicated on people's ability to shape and make meaningful decisions. The use of 'real' and 'meaningful' as qualifications here signals an intention to go beyond narrow, delimiting understandings of decision-making in terms of either individual choices, as embodied in the neoliberal subject of the *consumer citizen*, or 'sensible' choices, as expressed through "advanced liberal regimes and their technocratic and entrepreneurialist modes of urban policy-making" (Enright & Rossi forthcoming, this volume). Instead, this chapter's understanding of *real* and *meaningful* decision-making pushes towards what John Holloway (2010, p. 40) calls the "effective articulation of collective self-determination" achieved through agonistic means. In the context of local government at a time of austerity, this would involve convening multiple publics to make decisions over the proper role, quality and functions of local government and public services, as well as over common goals and alternative political futures (Brown, 2015). Accepting this opens up a host of thorny questions, including: who has the power and capacity to frame, shape and ultimately make the kinds of decisions that determine our collective livelihoods in the city; how, and under what conditions, are such decisions made; and to what extent can institutionalized government at the local scale be a site for the meaningful democratization of these decisions.

This chapter engages with such questions, and contributes to this book's broader debates around the post-democratic and post-political city, by drawing on qualitative empirical research (including policy analysis and interviews with local actors and activists) into the governance and politics of austerity in one London local authority, the London Borough of Lambeth (LBL). To make sense of urban autonomy, politics and democracy in the context of post-crisis neoliberal urban governance, this chapter proceeds in two main sections. The first outlines the shifting macro-structural, regulatory and

operational parameters shaping the 'rules of the game' in which local authorities in England must manoeuvre. These, it will be shown, constitute a coercive form of 'enclave' autonomy (Bulkeley et al., 2016), undermining local government as an effective strategic actor, delimiting the horizons of political possibility, and narrowing the channels of democratic citizenship afforded through this institution. This is not to say, however, that the role of local government is now meaningless. The second section thus works as a place-based investigation of "how power relations and regulatory ideologies, practices and institutions condition the evolution of urban regions" (Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2013, p. 1096), drawing attention to the active role local government seeks to play in rendering austerity governable and post-political through a critical analysis of LBL's 'Cooperative Council' (CC) agenda—an attempt to develop new relationships with citizens through a proliferation of participatory practices. The chapter concludes with reflections on the ambivalent role of local government in furthering progressive political change in London 'under late neoliberalism'.

The Rise of 'Austeria' and the Erosion of 'Fiscal Democracy' in English Local Government

Calls to deepen democracy and address perceived deficits in representative modes of local government are not new in England. The push for more participatory forms of decision making by government can be traced back at least to the *Committee on Public Participation in Planning* was chaired by Arthur Skeffington in 1968, and to varying degrees participation has been on the agenda ever since. The Coalition Government (2010–2015) largely picked up from the previous government's commitment to modernise local government by 'freeing-up' local councils to pursue their own growth agendas and by setting out a policy direction in favour of public service outsourcing to any willing provider, emphasising in particular the role that citizens and communities might play in this. Yet, whilst the Coalition's calls for a *Big Society* and *Open Public Services*, enacted through the *Localism Act*, continues and extends previous policy agendas in many respects, they have been framed by a more overtly anti-statist ideology and are being pushed in a far bleaker funding environment than before. In light of austerity, the extent to which the citizens of a borough such as Lambeth are able to shape the places in which they live, work, and play, as the localism rhetoric promises, is more pertinent than ever.

In many respects London enjoys stronger governmental structures than other cities in England. At the time of writing, amidst the unfolding of several devolution deals to city-regions across England, London is still "the only city in England in which a relatively powerful Mayor has control over key policy fields", whilst London's thirty-two boroughs also play an "important role in coordinating and shaping local welfare and sustainability strategies", such that "representative government in the city matters in a way that is perhaps not so true of other English cities where the powers and responsibilities of local government are less well developed" (Raco, 2014, p. 91). Yet, this apparent empowerment of government institutions in London is belied *inter alia* by the long-standing centralization of local government funding in England and the recent, and coercive, context of 'austerity localism'.

As is often noted in discussions of devolution and localism, the multi-tiered governance arrangements in England are some of the most centralised in all of the OECD. This is most notably so with regards to the fiscal autonomy of local government, and of regions such as the Greater London Authority (GLA). Indeed, putting London in a comparative context, the extent to which the city has been dependent on central government for its funding compared with other comparable cities is striking. Whereas Madrid, New York City, Berlin and Tokyo look to the state for thirty-seven, thirty-one, twenty-five and eight per cent of their funding respectively, in 2014 London received seventy-four per cent of its funds from central government (UK Parliament, 2014). This level of central control over finances is accompanied by a raft of several hundred centrally prescribed statutory responsibilities, a lack of local control over borrowing, and, since 2010, a two per cent cap on how much local authorities can increase council tax before triggering a local referendum on the issue. These constraints have profound implications for local democracy and politics at a time of austerity.

In the autumn of 2010, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, set out the first of many austerity budgets through which the national debt was to be 'paid down' almost exclusively through public spending cuts aimed disproportionately at local government. Between 2010 and 2015, it is estimated that local government across England lost 40 per cent of funding from central government through the *Revenue Support Grant* (RSG), the main way through which local government in England is funded (Beatty & Fothergill, 2014). The most deprived local authorities in London have been especially hard hit (Fitzgerald & Lupton, 2015).

To date, the reaction of local government leaders across England has been one of passive resignation, with calls for a return to the militant days of 1980s municipal socialism, when several local authorities, including Lambeth council, refused to set legal budgets, dismissed as unthinkably irresponsible. Local authorities in England, as Jack Thorne's recent play *Hope* at the Royal Court deftly articulates, are situated in relations of financial dependency and coercive domination: if they refuse to set a legal—read, 'austerian'—budget, central government can administer the bitter pill by force. Responses across London have therefore emphasised 'responsible' cut-back management (administered alongside assurances that front-line and vulnerable people's services are being protected) and renewed efforts to grow local tax-bases.

As central funding for local government dwindles, there is a concomitant policy expectation that local authorities will make up for the shortfall in their budgets through more entrepreneurial and pro-growth strategies. This has been championed by the government as a revolution in devolutionary politics, promising greater local autonomy. More critically, "coalition localism can also be interpreted as an expression of top-down governmental hierarchy which, in the context of austere cuts in public expenditure, forces the creation of enclaves where freedom to act is constrained" (Bulkeley et al., 2016, p. 13) by a lack of resources, a sink-or-swim funding model, and new service responsibilities.

In line with what might be described as a generalized shift from a 'needs-based' to an 'incentives-based' funding model, by 2020 local authorities in England will retain a much greater proportion, possibly up to 100 per cent, of business rates derived locally (Sandford, 2016). The aim, quite simply, is to put local political and bureaucratic leaders in control of their own economic and social fortunes, reducing the 'burden' of local government on the Treasury through endogenous business-led growth. In London it seems likely that this will be spearheaded through a now familiar policy portfolio of increasingly permissive real-estate-led development policies (Muldoon-Smith & Greenhalgh, 2015), geared towards "a globally focused growth agenda" (Imrie, Lees, & Raco, 2008, p. 3), and a continued, if not redoubled, effort to forge public-private partnerships in the city's social reproduction, including in the provision of key public infrastructure and collective consumption services.

Additionally, central government have also localised control over a number of important social welfare functions, without requisite funding to provide them at their former levels despite rising levels of need. As a

result, over the next five years, local authorities will increasingly assume the twinned risks of generating their own revenue and funding local services through such revenue in a crisis prone capitalist economy.

Already significant tensions are emerging out of this 'austerian' regime, the most important of which seems to be the funding for social care. In a recent report by London Councils, an advocacy group for local government in the city, the extent to which requirements to meet statutory responsibilities for social care, including support for vulnerable children, the elderly and disabled, are overwhelming local government budgets in the capital was made clear (London Councils, 2015). By 2019/20 it is estimated that social care alone will account for fifty-eight per cent of borough spending across London, up from thirty-nine per cent in 2010. When combined with waste management responsibilities, another statutory duty placed on local government, it is estimated that sixty-seven per cent of local government funding in London will be spent on meeting statutory responsibilities, up from forty-five per cent over the same period, leaving less to spend on discretionary services, such as parks, libraries, youth services, and the like. As London's population ages, and a growing number of people live longer with physical and mental disabilities, financing social care locally is fast becoming a mission impossible. London Councils estimates that a cumulative 'funding gap' of £2.4 billion over the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 is likely (London Councils, 2015).

This social care 'crisis' has direct implications for local politics and democracy. Referring to the "*tendency in democratic polities for mandatory spending over time to crowd out discretionary spending*", Streeck and Mertens (Streeck & Mertens, 2013, p. 28 *emphasis in original*) warn of a steady erosion of 'fiscal democracy' in advanced-welfare societies, whose instituted welfare commitments become immovable policy objects, limiting how much can be spent on discretionary activities and so constraining people's collective choices—be they reflected through representative or participatory governance. With so much of a shrinking pot going on proportionately few citizens and their acute needs, leading to severe underfunding for many discretionary and universal services, local government risks a legitimacy crisis in the eyes of council taxpayers.

After five years of annually accumulating austerity, it has become clear that the Conservative party's aim goes beyond that of simply addressing a perceived deficit crisis. Theirs is a more ambitious agenda, described by British sociologist Peter Taylor-Gooby (2012, p. 61) as "the most far-reaching and precipitate attempt to achieve fundamental restructuring in

an established welfare state […] in recent years." Whilst the June 2016 'Brexit' vote seems to have spelled an end to George Osborne's plan to achieve a budget surplus by 2020, there are no signs that the squeeze on public expenditure will end anytime soon. Austerity has morphed into a seemingly permanent regime (Chakraborty, 2015), the implications of which, for local government, public services, and welfare, are likely to be profound "with long run and potentially path changing consequences […]" (Peck, 2012, p. 647).

With regards to the implications of this coercive form of 'enclave' autonomy for local politics and democracy in London, two points can be made at this stage. The first is that we are witnessing the erosion of local government's institutional capacity, or as Imrie and Lees (2014, p. 18) put it, "a diminution of local states' capacity to intervene in, and shape, the changing socio-ecological, economic and environmental geographies of places like London" as strategies of 'privatism' (Barnekov, Boyle, & Rich, 1989) are repurposed and reemphasised. Secondly, the space for fiscal democracy in London is shrinking as an increasing amount of local government funds are spent on social care and waste management, and as the financial futures of local authorities are increasingly predicated on permissive and narrowly construed growth strategies. As a vehicle for providing services that meet local welfare needs, on the one hand, and for articulating and acting on the wishes of local people, on the other, local government is experiencing somewhat of an existential crisis in London.

Yet, there are conceptual and political risks of ending the story here, and in so doing either overdetermining this emergent austerian regime and presenting it as already completely realised, or obscuring the "multiscalar origins of urban policy" (Fairbanks, 2012, p. 550) and gainsaying the role that local government can, and is, playing in mediating central government austerity. The unfolding story of austerity cannot be properly grasped as unidirectional, nor should local authorities be conceived of as passive recipients, or victims, of central government policy: indeed, English local government has been praised as a remarkably resilient and adaptive institutional actor (Ward et al., 2015). Critical investigation is therefore required into the active role that local authorities are playing in rendering austerity governable and the implications of this for urban politics, both representative and participatory, institutionalized and activist. The next section of this chapter focuses on how the LBL is attempting to negotiate this coercive regime of permanent 'austeria'. It highlights the ambiguous and contradictory (post)-politics engendered as the council attempts to

enrol citizens and community groups in participatory governance whilst simultaneously normalising austerity, limiting people's real choices, and contractualizing/privatizing public services and infrastructure in a pro-growth and permissive development policy framework.

Governing Permanent Austeria: The Case of the 'Cooperative Council'

In this section, the London Borough of Lambeth (LBL) is presented as a pertinent and revelatory case study to excavate the urban politics of governing 'austerity localism' in London for two reasons. The first is that, like many other deprived Labour-led local authorities in London since 2010, the LBL has experienced significant reductions in its funding from Central government. By 2019 the borough's funding from central government will have been halved, amounting to over £200m worth of budget cuts. The second is that during this period of unprecedented fiscal retrenchment, the LBL has embarked on what it describes as a bold vision for how the authority will operate, becoming a self-styled 'Cooperative Council' (CC). In spite of the challenging funding environment, the CC promises to empower citizens, community groups, and voluntary and community sector (VCS) providers, opening up decision-making over how public services are designed and delivered, and over how strategic issues in the borough are addressed, through a proliferation of new participatory governance innovations. In what follows the CC, and its promises of political and democratic renewal, are examined in relation to 'austerity realism', the erosion of fiscal democracy, and privatized and contractualized modes of governance and development.

The Cooperative Council and 'Austerity Realism'

In May 2010, foreseeing uncertain financial times to come, the LBL set out its ambition to reshape the settlement between citizens and the state by becoming the CC. Reflecting a growing interest from public authorities in recruiting citizens in the business of governing, managing, and providing for themselves (Newman & Clarke, 2009), the Labour-led council proposed to develop 'equal relationships' with communities and VCS organizations: incentivizing "citizens to play a more active role in their local community…"; and encouraging a "wide range of service providers (be they social enterprises, cooperatives, public sector organisations, businesses,

faith organisations … [etc.]) to deliver tailored services in different areas" (Lambeth, 2011). Championed at the time of its launch by senior Labour and Cooperative Party figures, the 'Cooperative Council' was cast as a shining light for leftwing local government across the country, offering the hope of participatory and democratic renewal (Stratton, 2010).

The stated rationales for moving towards this cooperative approach were set out by the then leader of the council Steve Reed in *Sharing Power: A new settlement between citizens and state* (Lambeth, 2011). In step with the Coalition government's agenda for increased marketization and self-help in service provision, Reed made a series of connected claims in support of "fundamental change": First, that due to financial uncertainty, local government could not survive in its current form and that change was objectively necessary; second, that local government is too hierarchical, top-down, and managerial to effectively address complex and entrenched social issues; third, that local government is overly paternalistic and has reached too far into community matters, crowding out bottom-up civic action, self-reliance, and enterprise; and finally, that a democratic-deficit characterizes relationships between the council, citizens, and communities, preventing the full realization of people's needs and wants (Penny, 2016). Recognizing the political dangers of associating the CC too closely with the government's own rhetoric around the *Big Society* and *Open Public Services*, Reed and other senior figures in the council stressed it was "not [about] rolling back the state" for private sector gain (Reed, 2010). Nor was it, they maintained, a way of enrolling citizens and community groups to do the work of the council "on the cheap".

Within a context of a national economic recession, requirements to make efficiencies were recognized. However, the CCs relationship to austerity was initially ambiguous. At the outset, efficiencies and savings were articulated as being outcomes amongst others within a broader concept of 'public value'. They would, it was claimed, flow from community empowerment, as decisions made by citizens would reflect their true needs and so prevent waste in the system. Following a succession of austerity budgets from the Coalition and now Conservative governments, however, the need to make efficiencies and savings fast became an imperative to radically rethink what the council could afford to provide, who was best placed to provide it, and how alternative sources of revenue might be generated. A seemingly subtle but in fact significant shift has since occurred, with higher and more intrinsic goals of deepening democracy, empowering communities, and challenging professional service hierarchies increasingly subordinated to the imperative of making cuts because 'there is no alternative'.

This rationality has been termed 'austerity realism' (Davies & Thompson, 2016)—the disposition of compliance to, and diligent pursuit of, austerity, however reluctantly, for perceived lack of an alternative—and it encapsulates the tenor of discussion amongst Lambeth councillors and officers, whose political and policy horizons have become conditioned by an incapacity, and to some extent reluctance, to see beyond or challenge austerity as an operational framework through which all decisions are refracted. Demonstrating the point, one senior policy officer remarked:

> We get things thrown at us by people in Lambeth [saying] that this [the CC] is all a front for cuts basically, you know that we are dressing cuts up… They call us the cop-out council [and say] that Lambeth is abrogating its responsibility; it's trying to get people to do everything for it. But I kind of think, well what's the alternative?

Whilst the pace and scale of the cuts are denounced by councillors on an almost weekly basis on social media, to date the council have articulated no serious alternatives to austerity. In contrast to the days of socialist council leader Ted Knight, who in 1984 gained notoriety for refusing to set a legal budget (Travers, 2015), the local Labour party, which holds all but four seats on the council, is intellectually wedded to an 'austerity-lite' agenda and are committed to administering austerity in a 'competent' and 'compassionate' way. This has modulated the role and function of the CC, which looks less like a vehicle for articulating the needs and wants of people from the bottom-up than a governmental means of normalizing, depoliticizing, and operationalizing fiscal retrenchment from above (Penny, 2016). Accepting the disciplinarian logic of austerity has necessarily narrowed the frame of policy making in Lambeth to questions of *how* to govern austerity. As 'N.E', a Brixton Library user (2015) perceptively commented:

> …because the Labour council accept the logic of the austerity regime, and they have to stick to the exact letter of the law they are trapped in the logic of their own position. Ideologically they flounder around, 'regretfully' passing on cuts from central government.

Austerity has thus become the new 'normal' for local politics in Lambeth: a form of temporally and territorially delineated post-politics that is imbued with powerful appeals for people to reach a 'sensible' and 'realistic' consensus around budgetary exigencies, that prioritizes short-term

projects and policy-making questions over open-ended and long-term pursuits of social change and equality, and that encourages a narrow spatial imaginary confined to issues of collective consumption within the administrative boundaries of the local authority, obscuring the relational geographies of power that produce urban space in the borough (Uitermark & Nicholls, 2014).

The Erosion of Fiscal Democracy and the Limits of 'Active' Participation

As already noted, the scope for meaningful decision-making over the prioritization and provision of services across London is delimited by certain statutory duties. In a context of shrinking public budgets, this poses difficult, not-easily-avoided, decisions, as one commissioner explained:

> We estimate that our total budget in 2018 will be equivalent to what we are spending on adults and children's social care at the moment … Our adults and children's social care budgets are spent on about 10,000 people and we have a population of over 300,000 … people value parks, they want to have their bins emptied and all of those other things.

Tensions between the council's stated commitment to participatory governance and more conventional and hierarchic modes of 'command and control' governing have emerged in this context. Rather than engaging citizens and community groups in strategic discussions about the balance between statutory and discretionary spending in the borough, the 'financial envelope' of services has never been up for debate amongst the citizenry or within the council; neither has the prioritization of different financial envelopes between services such as adult social care and, for example, the array of 'cultural services' the borough provides, including parks, libraries, and leisure services. In a way that somewhat contradicts the cooperative ways of working the council hopes to develop, these decisions were made by political and managerial elites in the council, including cabinet members (a select group of high-level councillors) and senior directors, accountants, and procurement officers. As one mid-ranking commissioner in the council put it: "The power has shifted to the cabinet and the directors primarily. Decisions are made behind closed doors and nobody is made part of those decisions below the director level".

The foreclosure of any adversarial political stance by the logic of 'austerity realism', coupled with the exigencies of social care in Lambeth, has left discretionary cultural services, including parks, libraries, and leisure, on the frontline of budget cuts, with mandated savings requirements set at £4m. In keeping with their notional commitment to a cooperative approach, in 2015 the council initiated the *Cultural Services 2020* consultation, a 22 document-long blueprint for how the parks, library, and leisure services were to be reconfigured. Within the constraints of a non-negotiable financial envelope, the council proposed selling two of their libraries and transferring the management and fundraising responsibilities of three more, as well as several parks, to community groups.

These proposals were met with robust opposition from the council's library staff and many of the community groups the council hoped would 'step up' and take over these cultural assets, on the grounds that they were unsustainable and 'over responsibilized' communities. The consultation process also came under sustained scrutiny for not giving community groups sufficient time to formulate alternative ideas, and for failing to seriously consider those which were formulated in time, including one by the head of the libraries service. As one council officer, turned activist, reflected:

> It was real old-school Lambeth, to spend months and months, working things out behind the scenes in secret. They had eight months to work it out and the community then had two months to respond to a proposition that they were going to sell the library, and we had to come up with a business plan convincing enough that would stop them.

Eventually, several weeks after the formal consultation process ended, the council struck a 'behind the scenes' deal with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), a social business that runs leisure services across London, that was not part of the original consultation. GLL offered to take over the management of several of the libraries in the borough on the condition that they could operate private gyms out of the buildings, providing a much reduced public library service on the side. Presenting the decision to partner with GLL, the cabinet member for neighbourhoods and communities confirmed Streek and Merten's point about fiscal democracy in an age of austerity, writing that:

> This process has been prompted by the government cutting our funding, which has left us needing to make £200 million in savings … There's no way we can avoid this having an impact, we have to change the way we do things.

> In the case of cultural services that means spending £4 million less by 2018 on cultural services. I believe this [The GLL model] is a great deal for the borough … one that allows us to prioritise spending on social care services for the young, elderly, disabled and vulnerable. (Lambeth, 2015b)

Framed by the fiscal parameters set out by central government, and further limited by statutory imperatives and the executive decisions of local politico-managerial elites, the limits of participatory democracy at a time of austerity have been thrown into relief. Implicitly, the CC calls upon a particular kind of citizen, or 'public'. Through the CC the council is seeking to enrol citizens with a 'realistic' and 'can do' attitude, who are willing to accept limits and exigencies as defined from above. To the extent that Lambeth's residents are included in deliberations over the future of public services, "they participate as collaborators with or stakeholders of an already decided upon agenda deemed necessary and unquestionable" (Enright and Rossi, this volume). In other words, the CC calls upon active, not activist or agonistic, citizens (Inch, 2015; Newman & Clarke, 2009) and compliant, not counter, publics (Fraser, 1990).

Activist citizens and counter-publics concerned with contesting the council's 'austerity realism' must therefore assume insurgent-subjectivities by looking to disrupt, or move beyond, the terrain of the CC, as many increasingly are. Following public demonstrations outside local libraries, the sole Green councillor in the borough called the GLL decision in for review at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), where, after hearing the counter-narratives presented by activist residents, the OSC decided to send the model back to cabinet for further reflection. Unsatisfied with this response, however, local activists have continued to put pressure on the council, organising and staging various acts of resistance in public spaces, including by disrupting cabinet meetings, marching on the streets, driving in car cavalcades, occupying one of the libraries, and holding candle-lit vigils outside another.

Contractualization and Public-Private Entanglements

The decision to enlist GLL in managing Lambeth's libraries is indicative of further trends and tensions within the borough which complicate the political and democratic possibilities of the CC: namely, the use of contractualization to administer austerity and the reliance on private sector partners to 'get things done' and do 'more for less'. The move is consistent with a predisposition to outsourcing and contractualization in the

council, dating back to the mid-2000s, but more specifically it reflects a shift in 2012 to 'deliver' the CC increasingly through a 'post-political managerial framework' of contractualization and privatization, entailing a thorough reorientation of the council from planner and provider to commissioner and contract manager.

The move towards operationalizing the CC approach through processes of contractualization can be understood as a pragmatic attempt to administer austerity whilst maintaining subtle forms of governmental control at a distance. In public service and infrastructure provision, it has been noted that contracts operate as a form of utopian techno-managerial politics through which "social and economic processes are converted into discernable objects or 'things' that can be broken down, managed, accounted for, and contractualized" (Raco, 2014, p. 26). In this case, complex political tensions arising between growing social needs and shrinking government budgets are converted into, and managed through, discrete contracts that are put out to tender to 'any willing provider'. Starting as early as 2010, before discussions of more fundamental service reorganizations began in earnest, existing service contracts in Lambeth were used as a means of 'downloading' budget cuts onto the council's network of provider organizations in an approach commonly referred to in local government as 'salami slicing'. The benefit of this approach, at least from the council's perspective, is that the burden of the cuts is absorbed by organizations other than the local authority, whilst service provision is notionally maintained through exhortations that providers find new ways of 'doing more for less'.

Belying the CCs statements around privileging, and developing equal relationships with, VCS organizations, contractualization works through top-down and disciplinarian regulatory frameworks and technologies based on competition, performance/demand management and, increasingly, notions of 'social value', Payment by Results, and financialized Social Impact Bonds (Baines, Hardill, & Wilson, 2011; Lake, 2015; Milbourne, 2009; Milbourne & Cushman, 2013). The uneven relationships between contractors and VCS providers inhered within these contracts have been shown to lead to institutional isomorphism and compliancy among VCS organizations (Rees, 2014), undermining the critical voice of this element of civil society (Hodgson, 2004). By commissioning VCS organizations through a series of discrete contracts on a competitive basis, local authorities—wittingly or not—set local VCS organizations against one another in an existential bid for shrinking

resources (Buckingham, 2009). This dissuades VCS organizations from engaging critically with the council for fear of 'biting the hand that feeds them'. The local 'umbrella' organization for VCS organizations in Lambeth, for example, whose role was to provide capacity building and advocacy services for civil society across the borough, was recently decommissioned. It has been suggested that the contentious and adversarial nature of the organization played a part in this decision.

The decision to partner with GLL is also consistent with the council's growing entanglements with private sector providers, often at the expense of local VCS groups. Problematizing claims that the CC will empower communities and the local VCS, and is not intended as a means of privatizing service provision in the borough, in 2014 81 per cent of the £500m spent by the LBL on procured goods and services went to national and multinational organizations, including the likes of Veolia and Capita. A number of these contracts pre-date the 2010 austerity moment and the development of the CC, pointing to a longer history of marketization and contractualization in the borough. However, the pace of these processes seems to be quickening, their reach widening and deepening.

To give just one salutary example, in 2015 the council set about privatizing and financializing council housing in the borough. Unable to fund housing regeneration projects within the confines of the centrally imposed borrowing limits, the council has set up a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to deliver their estate regeneration and house building aspirations. This enables the council to work in a "truly commercial" manner as a private "property developer" (Lambeth, 2015a) that can attract private financing by 'assetizing' the revenue of captive rental streams and selling these to institutional investors. In future years, equity in the SPV, which is constituted as a private company, could be sold to a corporate entity, resulting in the partial or complete transfer of existing public housing stock to the private sector and acting as a gateway for 'global corporate landlordship' in the borough (Beswick et al., 2016).

The LBL is by no means unique in such entanglements. Across London, as council budgets shrink and their capacity is reduced, examples of local authorities increasingly turning to private-sector partners and capital markets to provide services abound. Whilst the London Borough of Barnet's decision to outsource the majority of its services to Capita, reducing its staff from 3200 to 332 since 2012, remains an extreme example, at the recently convened *London Communities Commission* testimonies from VCS groups across the capital highlighted the trend for local authorities to

increase the size of service contracts in the name of efficiency and for ease of contract management at a time of staff shortages. This privileges larger private providers, with superior bidding teams, greater delivery capacity, higher insurance and indemnity policies, and the ability to take on loss-leading contracts to gain a foothold in new markets (Rees, 2014).

The implications of these entanglements with large private and financial corporations for local democracy are manifold. In addition to drawing funds away from smaller, local civil society organizations, enervating the democratic vibrancy they develop (Fung, 2003), large contracts further reduce existing governmental capacity (Warner, 2010), fragment lines of accountability (Rees, 2014), and are fiendishly difficult to effectively regulate in practice (Crouch, 2004). Perhaps most significantly for the fate of local democratic decision-making, through public-private partnerships finance "becomes the goal of action and thus surpasses its role as a means" (Hillier & Van Wezemael, 2008, p. 176). Again, this tends to be inscribed in contracts, often tying local government into long-term legally binding agreements that are onerously expensive to modify or break (Loxley, 2012; Raco, 2013). Within these contracts the primacy of stable financial returns on investment is ensured over and above service needs and democratic choice and control; democracy is, in effect, 'cryopreserved' in time until a contract comes up for renewal. Far from empowering local people and communities then, the CC has become interlaced with a technical-managerial mode of governance, mobilizing contracts that mitigate "against local control and the implementation of more radical forms of intervention" (Raco, 2014, p. 33).

Discussion and Conclusion: The Ambivalent Politics of the Cooperative Council

This chapter has explored 'the urban political under late neoliberalism' through an investigation of the (post)-politics of 'austerity localism' in one local authority in London. By discussing the contemporary macro-structuring 'rules of the game' in which local authorities operate, and are being coercively constrained, in the first section, and presenting a case study of how austerity is mediated, normalized, and administered, in the second, it has argued that there are significant limitations being imposed on people's meaningful political participation by both levels of government and by the fraught relationship between them.

As an autonomous institutional vehicle for articulating and enacting the collective needs and wants of its citizens, local government in London faces an existential crisis. Fiscal retrenchment from the centre, enacted at a time of rising social needs, is leading to institutional incapacitation and the erosion of fiscal democracy, made worse by the decisions of local political and managerial elites who privatize and contractualize public assets and services, and promote the property-led capitalist reproduction of the city, legitimized in the name of growth at all costs and 'austerity realism'. As such, local government, whilst by no means an insignificant actor, risks becoming an increasingly meaningless political actor in the sense that it can offer its citizens real strategic choices within its own institutional and territorial limits and logic.

The CC initiative made bold promises to Lambeth's citizens around meaningful participatory democracy in unfavourable circumstances. At one level it is hard not to sympathize with local politicians who, to borrow Peck and Theodore's (2015) phrase, attempted to push participatory democracy into the 'headwinds' of austerity. In this chapter, however, a story more complex than can be captured by narratives of the "neutralizing forces of performed necessity" (Enright and Rossi, this volume) has been presented. The Cooperative Council agenda has produced a paradoxically depoliticizing politics in part due to the fiscal limitations placed on the council from above, but only in part. The other side of the story must emphasise first the council's readiness to accept the logic of 'austerity realism' and so reduce public decisions to economic exigencies, and secondly its uneven and oftentimes contradictory attempts to, on the one hand, enrol community groups in consensual forms of governmental rule that disavow agonistic modes of engagement in favour of self-help communitarian behaviours and subjectivities, and, on the other, dismantle collective structures through processes of contractualization that empower political and managerial elites, and the private sector.

This is not to say that we are already in the grips of a dystopian post-political present, in which no contestation is possible and everything has already been decided. Rather, the point this chapter is seeking to make is that it is becoming increasingly clear in the current conjuncture that unless the logic of 'austerity realism' is successfully challenged, local government will cease to be a germane institution through which progressive politics can be articulated or enacted. In this sense, local government can be said to be acting post-politically where post-politics is understood as an ultimately unrealisable process (of post-politicization), whose logic of reducing the

scope of decision-making, foreclosing contingency, and narrowing the "horizon in relation to which concrete struggles over the urban are waged" (Brenner & Schmid, 2015, p. 178), will always be challenged.

In Lambeth examples of challenges to local and central government have emerged and are growing in strength. Disenchanted citizens are seeking to influence decision-making outside of the CCs channels, including through protests, demonstrations, occupations, and via the judicialization of politics in the borough, including one successful legal challenge against the council's proposal to demolish and rebuild a council estate against the wishes of a majority of local residents (Penny, 2016). Rather than engaging with these expressions of citizen-led participation for what they are—potentially productive expressions of 'agonism' (Mouffe, 2005)—local councillors have more often than not derided and denounced these protests and campaigns, questioning their local authenticity, dismissing them as middle-class NIMBYs and/or regressive forms of 'militant particularism', and suggesting that they are 'doing the Tories work' by placing the blame for austerity at the local Labour government's, rather than the Conservative government's, doorstep. Indeed, as local residents have 'acted out' in ways that challenge the CC's preferred citizen-subjectivities, the council has resorted to increasingly coercive and hierarchic modes of governing (Penny, 2016).

Yet, in doing so the council fail to reflect on their role as agents of austerity who, in the name of compassionate competence, are also 'doing the Tories work' in their way; localizing, normalizing, and administering austerity by responsibilizing citizens and communities, privatizing profitable services and permitting/pursuing a contested growth-first agenda. They also fail to take seriously the complex motivations behind the gathering protests and campaigns in the borough and their ambivalent stance towards the local state. Many of those involved in the protests and campaigns are, or have been, staff members of Lambeth Council, and the animating impulse behind their actions is not to undermine the local authority as an institutional actor; indeed it is to reject being compelled to cooperate in its decline for lack of an alternative, and to reassert the value of universal public services and to work on transforming the role that the local authority, as a representative leader, can play in facilitating participatory democratic control over services and over urban development processes.

In November 2015 a diverse coalition of local organizations and activist groups came together to re-appropriate the 'Brixton Pop' (a self-styled 'community campus' made from shipping containers for startups, pop-ups,

and local entrepreneurs, and an otherwise maligned symbol of 'creative city' led gentrification in the area) to discuss the future of public service provision, estate regeneration, the loss of public housing, the use of public-private vehicles and other forms of state-led gentrification, and to explore more transformative possibilities that look beyond the prevailing market-based commonsense. Despite the constrained capacity of the local authority and the council's unwillingness to support this form of urban politics, these emergent movements have not given up on the local state as a vehicle for achieving their ends. They work 'within and against' the local state as 'insurgent participants' (Hilbrandt, 2017) towards a 'symbiotic transformation' (Wright, 2010) by continuing to meet with councillors and officers in search of common ways forward and by working through formal OSC processes to challenge the council, even as they take to the streets when these efforts are frustrated. They have also started looking beyond Lambeth to find ways of broadening their coalition and amplifying their visions, drawing in and upon like-minded struggles and movements across the capital, of which there are a growing number. If this can be achieved at a local and regional scale, within and across London's boroughs, at a time when nationally the Labour party is reconnecting with its grass-roots socialist principles under Jeremy Corbyn, the on-going processes of post-politicization described in this chapter may be reversed and the horizons of urban political possibility widened.

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CHAPTER 9

The Politics of Consultation in Urban Development and Its Encounters with Local Administration

Anne Vogelpohl

Introduction

The growing role of experts in policy making (Mitchell, 2002) along with the rise of fast modes of policy development (Peck & Theodore, 2015) indicate that urban policies are significantly influenced by globally operating experts. Particularly in neoliberal times, experts on market economies have also become politically powerful: private management consultancies are players in such expert-driven policies, including those on the urban scale. Consultancies like McKinsey & Company or Roland Berger Strategy Consultants frequently advise urban politicians. They also foster "proper" urban policies and thus contribute to an urban post-political consensus. This paper addresses the ongoing contestation of expert-driven urban policies within late neoliberalism and draws attention to an oft-neglected key actor: the local administration, and more specifically, local urban development authorities. Neoliberal programs designed by consultants or think tanks become effective through local authorities and it is at this level where they are obstructed or enabled. Taking this mechanism into account allows for a critical notion of urban politics that pays attention to possible

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breaks and ruptures within neoliberal urbanization without considering social movements or grassroots organizations to be the sole resistive agents.

The chapter begins with a general conceptualization of the role of experts in (post-)political urban development processes. By focusing on the German cities of Essen in the Ruhr Area (which cooperated with Roland Berger) and Berlin (for which McKinsey drafted an urban development strategy), I first examine the consultants' visions for urban futures and how these eventually shape urban policy programs. I then illustrate possible ways of reshaping neoliberal urban blueprints by discussing how local administration in these two cities dealt with this expert advice and modified the prescribed programs. Altogether, my analysis contributes to a contemporary notion of 'the political' in late neoliberalism by differentiating the debate on critique and resistance. It shows that even in times of a relative strong global hegemony of neoliberal logics, urban politics and contestation still matter. How current urban politics breaks with neoliberal logics becomes visible by differentiating between policy schemes and political practice.

The "Rule"/"Role" of Experts in Neoliberal Reason

In times of economic and ecologic crises, budget constraints, and global competitiveness, expert knowledge is increasingly sought after. As knowledge has become one of today's most important means of production (Resch, 2005), experts' advice and consulting have become indispensible both in politics and economics. The entrepreneurialization of urban governance (Harvey, 1989) and the corporatization of urban governments (David, 2012) have paved the way for the strong influence of management consultants on urban political decisions. Usually, these consultants present their recommendations as 'evidence-based' assessments, prognoses, surveys, or personal advice. An expert is generally conceived as neutral, rational, and pragmatic—characteristics that seem very important in times of complex and complicated (urban) crises. Thus, the expert appears as the only figure who is able to rise above ideological and partisan bickering and to discern between right and wrong. Yet, this is the very reason why expert knowledge contributes to post-political urban conditions—situations that seemingly demand a single specific policy because other paths could only fail (Dikeç, 2002; MacLeod, 2011). Many of today's policies are based on alleged *Sachzwänge*: necessities that appear as established fact and demand, for example, sustainable, competitive, and growth-oriented urban policies

that no longer seem subject to political decisions (Davidson & Iveson, 2015; MacLeod, 2011). So the "rule of experts"—to borrow Timothy Mitchell's (2002) phrase—is one explanation of an urban post-politicization.

In the context of the urban political, not only is it noteworthy that expert knowledge is used more and more frequently. It is also important to qualify the ideal-typical role experts fill. In contrast to managers, local officers, or politicians, who all have to combine the content of their work with social duties like communication and cooperation, experts seemingly only have to deliver know-how (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2006, p. 119). However idealized this notion of experts may be, the external and specialized position they hold fuels the construction of supposedly irrefutable problem descriptions and their respective solutions. Therefore, expert involvement is often accused of undermining democratic participation, establishing structures sometimes even labeled as being "expertocratic" (Jonas, 2014, p. 2134). Democratic participation is thus not constrained through a reduction of formal participatory mechanisms, but through the construction of rationally based, definitive 'facts' which facilitate a dominance of the apolitical without any conflicts (Volkmann, 2012). According to this logic, political decisions become essentially obsolete because no plurality of viable paths seems available.

The rise of the politics of expertise is closely linked to a general neoliberalization. The neoliberal path consists of the belief in global competition, individual responsibility, and particularly an economic logic in all aspects of life—also political life. The shift towards now common neoliberal urban practices such as event-driven planning, or privatization of social services, have required a corresponding new type of thinking—a neoliberal reasoning that was substantially established through a range of experts. Addressing this nexus, Mitchell (2009) reconstructs neoliberalism as a political project, but not as one which could be realized within the political realm itself. Instead, he states, neoliberal pioneers like Hayek tried to create a "climate of opinion" (ibid, p. 386) that renders a neoliberal transformation unavoidable. Thus, the novel, neoliberal climate of opinion was invented by experts. However, it has not prospered and is not constantly reproduced if renowned experts are the only figures who favor new modes of thinking and acting; neoliberalism also needs "second-tier thinkers" like journalists, teachers, or artists who support its new policies in order for them to spread. Mitchell construes that the making of the neoliberal world has been the transfer of neoliberal ideas constructed by think tanks into the practices of second-tier thinkers: "Doctrine was supported with evidence presented as 'research,'

and was translated into policy documents, teaching materials, news stories, and legislative agendas" (ibid, p. 387).

The significance of think tanks for the transformation of neoliberal ideas into a set of practical instruments is also shown by Jamie Peck (2010), particularly in his book *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*. By examining think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation and Atlas Foundation, Peck describes how these institutional experts not only express neoliberal urban visions, but also how they put these visions to work through a process of "permanent persuasion" (ibid, p. 176). First, the experts invent and disseminate a new vocabulary for describing urban problems. Subsequently, they are able to summon powers for new urban development projects. Peck shows, for example, how President George W. Bush, with the help of think tanks such as the Manhattan Institute, was able to frame Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans as solely a local problem. The expert's vocabulary enabled politicians to deal with New Orleans' practical problems as local problems in increasingly linear and self-confident ways. Peck (2010) finds that, in the case of Hurricane Katrina, a rhetoric of individual responsibility (instead of measures that take racist structures into account) promoted local austerity policies (instead of federal financial support).

The concept of a relatively linear process from expert advice to policy formulation or even political practice is problematic, however. Making neoliberal concepts plausible, which the relevant think tanks are certainly capable of achieving, does not necessarily translate into concrete local urban practices. Too often, a focus on neoliberal *thought* both obstructs what is happening on the ground and obfuscates existing alternative logics, as Katharyne Mitchell (2006) points out in discussing Peck's work on neoliberal reason. Policy papers, politicians' speeches, and glossy brochures may clearly differ from the policies implemented in urban neighborhoods by local officials or from the work of cooperative community organizations trying to realize their own political concepts. Wendy Larner (2014; Larner & Craig, 2005) has frequently focused on the ambivalence of community groups in neoliberal times and insisted on the existence of political debates, of disagreement, and of dissent. In the context of the recent rule of experts, her work particularly emphasizes the importance of taking the heterogeneity of urban actors into account and of confronting elitist policy programs with their actual effectiveness. Furthermore, Larner (2014, p. 204) notes, "it is no longer only social movements and activists who are trying to imagine and enact radically different futures 'in the here and now.'" In focusing on administration in the analysis below, I also found that possible breaks

and ruptures within neoliberal urbanization are not rooted in the simple hegemonic-counterhegemonic thinking which can sometimes show through if social movements or grassroots organizations are considered the only agents capable of a resistive posture.

For the following analysis of administrative tactics to unsettle expert visions on urban futures, I do not assume the post-political urban condition as actual fact but as a tendency that remains fragmented and contested—in my case between consultants and administration. Whereas management consultants' core business is strategic advice for companies, the entrepreneurialization of (local) governments and cities opened up a new market for management consultancies: consultancies first identified the public realm as a business opportunity in the 1960s and their dealings in the public realm underwent stark growth in the 1980s (Saint-Martin, 2012). Due to growth attempts and fiscal crises (both topics the consultants are trained to deal with in large enterprises), consultancies increasingly offer their services to urban politicians as well. And their services are welcome because politicians have to deal with more and more uncertainties in the face of urban crises, all while hoping to regain some level of control and stability (Gellner, 1994; Kipping & Wright, 2012). And although administrative officers, as employees for a specific public department, are experts in their own right, they are technically defined as non-political. Formally, the administration is bound by the government's instruction and has to implement official policies. Daily administrative tasks and responsibilities cannot be directly derived from political goals and be controlled in all detail, however. Hence, officers do in fact have room to maneuver in regard to the shaping of policies (see also Volkmann, 2012).

Management Consultancies in German Cities

Compared to the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, management consultants gained access to the German market relatively late. It was not until the 1970s that larger consulting projects could be realized in Germany, and this can be explained by a tradition of complicated decision processes that require the inclusion of a range of different stakeholders (Kipping & Wright, 2012). The urban scale was detected for consulting activities even later, near the end of the 1990s, due to a relatively late entrepreneurialization of German cities. Since then, two firms in particular, McKinsey & Company and the Germany-based Roland Berger

Strategy Consultants, both globally operating, occasionally advise urban politicians in the field of urban development strategies. As public-sector projects are less profitable than those involving transnational companies, urban projects usually serve a marketing and branding purpose for the consultancies. This is why consultancies sometimes advise cities pro bono, meaning without being commissioned by local organizations, but also without pay. Otherwise, German cities finance consultants' services through public funding, either by the respective federal state (*Bundesland*) or the city itself, or through private funding, when major enterprises or local entrepreneurial organizations pay for the consultants. Here, I want to focus on the cities of Essen (where a local entrepreneurial interest group paid for Roland Berger consultants and took part in the project commissioning) and Berlin (where McKinsey carried out two pro bono studies).

Generally, consultants are asked for advice in times of crises—be it fiscal, economic, social or political crises. If urban governments face mounting problems and thus increasingly suffer from legitimacy deficits, expert advice seems to promise relief. The hard-to-break circle of deindustrialization, unemployment, and shrinkage has, in particular, been a reason for urban politicians in Germany to call for consulting, as my research on six German cities indicates (Vogelpohl, 2017a, b). But the pro bono cases also show that the consultants themselves can be proactive in framing urban problems and calling for their urgent resolutions. This is why consultants not only help to solve pre-defined problems, but influence all stages of the policy cycle (Prince, 2012). These stages include (1) agenda setting, when the public debate is directed towards specific themes and problems, and when consultants then broach topics like globalization or digitalization through publications in magazines or talks at semi-public events; (2) policy formulation, when different pathways are suggested by consultants; (3) policy selection and decision making, which may rely on the information and strategies provided by consultants; (4) implementation, which is dependent on networks which may be put together by the consultants; and finally (5) evaluation, which consultants sometimes carry out in order to institute a renewed agenda-setting. Although all these roles can be observed in urban governance, the most frequent role which consultants play is to shape agenda setting and policy formulation. This is mainly due to the relatively short period of three to a maximum of sixteen months that consultants spend on urban policy projects (Vogelpohl, 2017b).

Strikingly, most of the programs that resulted from the advisory processes are labeled 'Hamburg Vision 2020,' 'Berlin 2020,' 'Essen.2030,' and the like. As Peck (2010) argues, experts as those in think tanks proceed by creating a promising vision which then translates into concrete projects. The same is true for management consultants' techniques. In my research I identified four techniques that I would like to briefly introduce here and elucidate in more detail with the examples of Essen and Berlin below. The first technique consists of *international comparisons* with other cities. With the help of parameters such as growth rates or gross value added, the respective city and its socioeconomic performance are presented as problematic and visually presented as such in charts or edited photos. These comparisons are a means to create a need—a need for change and thus also a need to receive help for this change, for example, by advice from consultants. The second technique is to *envision a thriving future city* against this picture, mostly based on various calculation methods. These calculations sometimes lead to very surprising numbers (for example with regard to possible new jobs) that aim at gaining the attention of policy makers, but also of the media. The third technique is a *simplification of vision*. The promises made—a large number of new jobs, for instance—are turned into a very simple strategy: strengthening four or five clusters for which the city is already known and listing four or five concrete, simple measures to implement these clusters. The fourth and final technique is eventually a *call for determination*, addressing local decision makers who shall be held responsible for putting the suggested future strategy into practice.

The recent debate on urban policy mobilities frequently emphasizes "the role of private consultants … in shaping flows of knowledge about urban policy and in transferring policies themselves" (McCann, 2011, p. 108). Though here Eugene McCann states that these "increasingly important aspects of the production of cities … have not been adequately studied or theorized," many studies have traced global circuits of urban policy knowledge since then. Quite often, however, the analyses focus on the production of knowledge and its way into policy papers but do not trace the role of policy papers in urban (political) practices (for example McNeill, 2015). This is why I divide the following analysis into two steps: first, a reconstruction of urban policy knowledge as shaped by management consultants; and second, a following of this knowledge into the administrative agencies where this policy knowledge are supposed to be put into practice.

The Consultants' Visions for Urban Futures in Essen and Berlin

Around 2010, in Essen as well as in Berlin, a deep urban crisis was perceived. Whereas German cities had suffered from budget constraints since the 1980s and economic parameters regularly oscillate, it was at that time when the crisis was framed as urgent and a need for a more systematic solution was constructed. Essen had formerly been a center of Germany's heavy industry. It is located in the Ruhr area, renowned for its heavy-industry past, as large coal deposits enabled a strong mining sector with corresponding steel factories and iron industries. But with the rise of oil and cheap coal imports, Essen lost many jobs and inhabitants. Essen shrank by 20 percent since the mid 1960s and lost around 90 percent of its jobs in the manufacturing industries. Now, it is the city with the highest local debt in Germany[1] and the municipality is only just able to manage its basic political tasks such as land-use planning, public transport or waste management. That is why an interest group of local entrepreneurs (*Interessengemeinschaft Essener Wirtschaft*) initiated a broader debate on Essen's future and, in consultation with the city council, finally commissioned Roland Berger Strategy Consultants to orchestrate a future urban strategy for Essen. In close coordination with the local government and municipal departments, the consultants primarily evaluated existing policy papers and organized the process of strategy building. The ideas and topics for the strategy, eventually entitled 'Essen.2030,' however, were generated by a diverse group of participants—from local political and economic leaders to Essen's citizens.

In Berlin, by contrast, McKinsey & Company was not commissioned to manage an urban strategy but published a pro bono strategy in 2010 called 'Berlin 2020' (McKinsey, 2010). Motivating this work was the belief of the McKinsey consultants that more growth was possible in the city. The report was published the year before the local 2011 elections because the consultants considered the then-Governing Mayor, Klaus Wowereit, as too indecisive regarding the city's low growth rates. Berlin too has relatively large debts and is very dependent on federal subsidies. McKinsey presented this situation as a deep crisis, one that required innovative ideas for a prosperous future. Though politicians and public officers were interviewed for their study, the strategy was designed by McKinsey. Only a follow-up pro bono project on the potential of local start-ups named 'Berlin Founds' (McKinsey Berlin, 2013) was developed in close

coordination with Berlin's Senate Chancellery, the executive department for policies of both the senate and the mayor's office. In order to draw attention to their original analyses, the company organized dinner events with some of the leading figures of Berlin and located a media partner, the local newspaper *Berliner Morgenpost*, that regularly launched articles about the study's main goals.

The different contexts of the consultants' activities in the two cases of Essen and Berlin point to a variability of the above-mentioned consulting techniques in influencing urban policies. The pro bono study for Berlin needed public attention in order to gain influence. Consequently, McKinsey made huge efforts to compare Berlin internationally with other cities in order to present the allegedly severe crisis of Berlin that "economically lags far behind" (McKinsey, 2010, p. 9). Particularly with the help of colored bar charts, socioeconomic structures and growth rates in important sectors are compared with other cities such as Hamburg, Amsterdam, and Warsaw—and in all comparisons Berlin's performance is presented as very weak. This is emphasized by a dark blue color of the bars that represent Berlin in contrast to the light blue bars of the other cities (McKinsey, 2010). In Essen, where its problems were sharpened primarily by local entrepreneurs in advance, and where the Roland Berger consultants were instructed to *manage* the strategy process in the first place, direct international comparisons were not important. Yet, with its two main goals, "future viability" and "competitiveness" (Stadt Essen, 2013, p. 9), the city's urban strategy is inherently characterized by a comparative competitiveness approach. One of Essen.2030s key terms, "city identity," qualifies this in that it both aims at a strong relationship bonding Essen's citizens to their city and at a stronger, recognizable image of Essen (inter)nationally.

The thriving future that the McKinsey consultants envision for Berlin casts the city as economically prosperous through its pioneering role in the industrial production of new technologies. According to their analysis, Berlin is underperforming, hence the city's senate is urged to activate an accelerated growth by following a "discontinuous approach"[2] (McKinsey, 2010, p. 13), an approach that explicitly does not emphasize globally hyped sectors but aims at a model city in three economic clusters: e-mobility, information technologies, and the health economy. Combined with an intensified growth of the tourism sector (which is technologically not important but promises a significant increase of job opportunities), McKinsey claims a possible job growth of 500,000 new jobs by 2020. The combination of these two visions—growth through an expanding industrial

sector as well as the sheer number of 500,000 additional jobs—is supposed to arouse the city and put pressure on the political decision makers to act. In the public perception, Berlin's urban policy is primarily focused on a cultural and creative hype, a policy famously coined as "poor but sexy" by its then-mayor Wowereit in 2003.

By contrast, the Roland Berger consultants shifted focus from a strict growth of economic sectors towards a focus on 'the people' in Essen. The company is well known in Germany for creative city indexes of German cities, and this approach shows through here as well. As its work in other cities had, Roland Berger helped to draw attention towards individuals, following a creative-class strategy which starts from the premise that growth is, first and foremost, induced by people, not by jobs. A year-long process of involving local stakeholders as well as residents was to guarantee transparency and continuous communication for the city's future strategy. The thriving future thus envisioned is characterized as a city with a high quality of life and a true citizenship, with opportunities for young talents, a manageable budgetary situation, and a strong international competiveness (Stadt Essen, 2013, p. 9).

So the Essen.2030 strategy is much broader and more differentiated than the straightforward Berlin 2020 strategy. The latter could easily be simplified in order to increase pressure on the local government. McKinsey recommends concentrating on the four clusters it identifies and promoting networks, sales markets, infrastructure, education, and start-ups in each of them. With its prescriptions translated into such a catchy roadmap, McKinsey can urgently call for determination, and in addressing governing politicians, states: "To reach these goals a coordinated approach is needed … Berlin has to solve its problems on its own and locally" (McKinsey, 2010, p. 16). Essen.2030, however, is characterized by five keywords and fields of action of wide scope: an "urban, successful, talented, diverse, and active Essen" (Stadt Essen, 2013, p. 18). Thus the language of simplification is more sophisticated: "In a relatively short time and with limited resources we have developed a consistent, prioritizing, and competiveness-securing strategy for Essen" (ibid., p. 8). Their priorities (labeled "rough strategy") are the five key topics so that the limited public financial and personal resources subsequently focus on these for the concrete projects (called "fine strategy"). Consequently, the comprehensive tone of Essen's strategy does not require the activity of one specific actor. Instead, an eventual call for determination softly integrates a mixture of a "top-down and a bottom-up approach … since an urban strategy can neither be centrally enacted by the government

or the administration alone nor be implemented in a decentralized manner by the citizens alone" (ibid., p. 30).

Despite the differences between the consulting processes in Essen and Berlin, both examples can be read as (two different forms of) neoliberal political processes. Essen.2030 was initiated by leading local entrepreneurs; the mayor later adopted the plans and the Roland Berger consultants were commissioned to develop a vision for Essen's future. This seems to be a perfect growth coalition aiming to neoliberalize the city. And in Berlin, McKinsey was able to gain broad attention with their ideas on the city's future, and some of its consultants even became frequent panelists at urban development events. At first glance, the strategy of these two consultancies to make their ideas heard and to influence future urban practices seems successful. But both these interpretations would ignore the complexity of the subsequent policy process in which the initially distinct neoliberal nature of the respective urban strategies was increasingly blurred. The critical role of local administration within this process will be explained in the following section.

How Local Administration May Modify Consultants' Advice for Urban Strategies

Formally, administration is required to implement the policy goals of governments. In practice, however, it has a considerable power to influence policies through its very role of translating goals into projects and detailed decisions. The relevant agencies in the two case cities were the StadtAgentur Essen.2030 (which was formerly part of Essen's Urban Planning Office and founded only in order to implement the Roland Berger strategy) and, in Berlin, the Senate Departments of Urban Development and Economy, as well as the central Senate Chancellery. As the StadtAgentur was already involved in the process of defining the urban strategy, whereas Berlin's administration was involved in one case (the Berlin Founds strategy) but was confronted with a completed strategy for the general urban future (Berlin 2020) in the other case, the strategies are characterized by two different overarching purposes. Essen.2030 and, to a lesser extent, Berlin Founds, already include administrative influence and consequently aim for broad societal acceptance. The interviewees of the public agencies thus described their role and the consultants' role as being equally important. By contrast, Berlin 2020 primarily aims to shake up the urban public.

Nevertheless, the administration's actions expose several similarities across all three strategy processes. The similarities are rooted in the moment when the consultants' concise strategies meet the daily urban political routines, when the complexity of urban practices clashes with the coherent urban vision of the consultants. Sarah Whatmore (2009, p. 588) also traces "knowledge controversies" back to the moment when expert knowledge does not correspond to local experiences and lay knowledge. Correspondingly, one interviewee of Berlin's Senate Chancellery states: "There is a gap between the doctrine and its implementation" (B08_admin). When the administration was involved in the consultant-led strategy development, the gap could have partly been closed. In the Berlin 2020 case, this gap remained. Based on interviews with city officers, I found four aspects which helped to diminish the gap between external expert advice and common local political routines.

A first step to curtail the consultants' ideas is *contextualization* of the strategy at hand within former and other urban development plans. Nearly all interviewees refer to other plans, and by doing so, the innovativeness and urgency that the consultants produce with their vocabulary is deeply questioned. Particularly the Berlin 2020 strategy was commented on as "just another piece of the urban jigsaw" because, so the officer of Berlin's Department of Urban Development supposes, "the bigger the city, the smaller the influence of such approaches since such things frequently appear …. Maybe it is the arrogance of a big city" (B04_admin). So contextualization reveals that the very ideas that the consultants develop for cities are mostly new "only in the details" (B08_admin) and not genuinely innovative. This, however, does not reduce the influence of the consultants, in their ability to put a renewed pressure on the relevant topics and "to get things going" (B1_admin).

A second influence that the administration is able to exert is the *strengthening of a public debate*. Whereas participation might appear as natural in the urban development processes of today, or is even considered as excluding in its own way, a public debate or more explicit participation was alien to the consultants. In Essen, it was the urban development officers who really pushed forward the public debate: "We influenced the process. Participation was supposed to be part of the process and we know a lot more about this than Roland Berger. […] We did quite a bit of persuading in this respect" (E22b_admin). Not only does this refer to an involvement of citizens, but also to the design of planned new agencies that should implement the strategy's goals. An example is the "delivery unit" for local

start-ups in Berlin, the idea for which the consultants wanted to copy from London, where it is run by a private agency; but local officers insisted on public involvement, so that today's Berlin Startup Unit is part of the semi-public business development corporation Berlin Partner. What the consultants did, however, was to open the debate on urban development to a specific kind of public, namely local entrepreneurs. This sort of opening was not criticized by the administration but rather welcomed, since "they bring in things without which discussions would probably be conceived entirely differently, in other circles, and lead to stereotypical thinking very quickly" (B04_admin).

Third, and maybe most important with regard to general urban political processes, the administration aimed at *reformulating the role of residents*. This was particularly obvious in the Essen case, where the officers in today's StadtAgentur were very keen on giving the people a pivotal part within urban strategy and on encouraging citizens to bring up the topics they find important for the city. Several tools, many with very low entry barriers, were developed to involve as many people as possible (i.e., a bus as location for discussion ideas or special tools for young people). With the intensified involvement of the city's residents, the officers deliberately wanted to transform the character that the participation was supposed to have: "This is an old debate: it is labeled participation and in the end it is all about marketing or activation: how can I make people do something? I am not down on marketing—but you have to distinguish it from participation" (E22a_admin). This quote shows that participation was not primarily used as a means for better acceptance of the strategy or for weakening critique (McCann, 2005). Instead, with the variety of participation tools, the administration explicitly aimed at avoiding pseudo-participatory techniques.

The fourth and final significant change that the administrative reworking of the consultants' strategies induced was *slowing the policy process* on a more abstract level. Whereas experts, such as consultants, may contribute to an ever-accelerating and thus top-down and often neoliberal urban policy (Vogelpohl, 2017b), the cases of Essen and Berlin show that public administration may contribute to a slower and more complex urban policy on two levels: (1) The design of the urban strategy itself took more time due to the attempts for a stronger public debate as well as higher levels of participation: "When we start to plan the participation process, they [the consultants] began to sweat—not because of the topics, but because they saw their schedule in danger. They are not interested in the topics; they

wanted to finish it all up" (E22a_admin); and (2) The proposed goals and visions for urban development that the strategy is supposed to achieve were given more time. In all cases, the consultants suggested too-short time horizons for some goals because they often envisaged an overly hierarchical and thus unrealistic political-decision-making process. Eventually, however, the consultants still caused faster policy processes than usual due to their standardized methods and project management. Thus, one interviewee summarized McKinsey's role as "catalyst, merger—and accelerator, for sure" (B08_admin).

These four ways of critiquing and transforming the urban future visions of consultants apparently only refer to the design of an urban future strategy. They characterize the politics of policy making. Whether this political influence will eventually change the effects of the policies themselves and affect local urban projects or daily practices is still an open question today. Recent research on the interplay between expert knowledge and political programs demonstrates that both sides do refer to each other when problems with policies become obvious: experts claim that governments only partly followed their advice, and politicians justify their policies by pointing to the experts (Resch, 2005; Volkmann, 2012).

Conclusion

Urban policy is still not actually a post-political issue, even in late neoliberal times. These brief insights into cases in Essen and Berlin show that the potential range of critical urban actors who question top-down and elitist urban strategies is very complex. Second-tier thinkers, such as the local public administration, do not necessarily follow neoliberal trends but can also criticize and resist them. So a return to or preservation of urban politics is not only the concern of collective mobilizations or the domain of urban social movements, but is internal even to the formal institutionalized realms of policy-making. Local officers may raise their voices and produce moments of equality in a Rancièrian sense (cf. Davidson & Iveson, 2015). This type of resistance, however, may be limited. In the cases of Essen and Berlin, it is best characterized in terms of obstruction rather than of providing real alternatives: the administration resisted (neoliberal) reorganizations of urban policies and searched for ways to retain their own standards of public debate and participation. But given that collective mobilization and activism may also be non-emancipatory, as recent developments of right-wing movements in Germany, Greece, the United States, and elsewhere show (Fekete, 2015;

Vradis, 2012), the ideology-obstructing role of administration can be an important political issue in and of itself.

In times of crisis, so the Essen- and Berlin-cases show, external consulting promising comprehensive solutions is considered as option for future policies due to a mixture of missing internal capacities and a successful publicity work by the consultants themselves. Yet, in late-neoliberal times that may restore a relatively stable neoliberal logic, consultants seem to outreach into social and economic spheres that might be advised irrespectively of crises. A cursory glance at recent publications and research from management consultancies indicate that they will play an important part in the rise of smart and digital urbanisms, green neighborhoods, and most significantly, a marketization of urban life in the Global South. But further and more international comparative analyses will be needed to thoroughly assess such emerging and expanding relations between expertise and politics in shaping the urban.

Notes

1. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Finanzen-Steuern/OeffentlicheHaushalte/Schulden/SchuldenOeffentlicherHaushalte.html, accessed 18 December 2015.
2. All quotes from the consulting documents and from the interviews are translated by Anne Vogelpohl.

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CHAPTER 10

Precarity, Surplus, and the Urban Political: Shack Life in South Africa

Yousuf Al-Bulushi

In South Africa, to think politically is to think racially.
Grant Farred, "Shooting the White Girl First," p. 240.

A Tale of Two Deaths

In August 2012, the world witnessed the South African police force massacre 34 striking platinum miners in the town of Marikana. Accounts indicated that the majority of the demonstrators were shot in the back (Alexander, 2013). The massacre immediately drew comparison with the Sharpeville attacks of 1960, when apartheid police had opened fire on a crowd of demonstrators, killing 69 people and helping to mobilize a global anti-apartheid struggle. In the wake of Marikana, a wave of anti-African National Congress (ANC) sentiment dealt a blow to the government's tripartite alliance between the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU). Shortly after Nelson Mandela's death on December 5, 2013, the largest union in the country, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), announced

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its decision to formally withdraw support from the ANC and the SACP, calling for an independent worker's movement.[1] This split within and against the ruling government is indicative of a broader shift to a 'second transition' of struggle underway in the country, one seeking to build upon and extend the gains of formal political equality for all South Africans that had been won after a first transition from apartheid to an electoral democracy in 1994. In this second transition, new lines of antagonism have been drawn between ordinary South Africans and their 'liberation' government, as the focus has shifted to securing unrealized economic rights and a broader social justice agenda. And yet, as the 2012 massacre suggests, the one consistency throughout South African history, whether it was the colonial period, the apartheid era, or the first and second transitions beyond apartheid, appears to be the disposability of poor black lives. This chapter argues that urban shack settlements have become a paradigmatic site of anti-black necropolitics in contemporary South Africa.

Months after the Marikana massacre, a coalition of shack dwellers in the Cato Crest area of Durban took over unoccupied and still half constructed rental houses as a protest against their own lack of housing. Like many other shack communities, Cato Crest's proximity to the city center enables greater economic opportunities, especially for those without jobs who are forced to eke out a living in the informal economy. After being displaced, the group squatted on nearby land and erected their own shacks. Police were sent in, but refused to take direct action against the community and instead called for Durban Mayor James Nxumalo to intervene as a political mediator between force and occupation. In the wake of the Marikana massacre, the police were likely hesitant to insert themselves into such tense disputes for fear that their involvement could lead to yet another moment of violent state repression, bolstering the salience of anti-government sentiment. Mayor Nxumalo therefore arrived to engage the shack dwellers directly, and in March began relying upon the mediation of a long-time local community leader named Thembinkosi Qumbelo. Qumbelo had been active over the years with a variety of different political parties and NGOs, including the ANC, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the SACP, and the National Democratic Convention (NADECO) (Pithouse, 2013b). His political promiscuity is perhaps illustrative of the fact that traditional political organs in South Africa and elsewhere still struggle with the task of relating to the existential conditions of shack life, where formal work is not

always available and the purported rights of citizenship are always in question. But the political as seen from the vantage point of urban shack dwellers—who have migrated from the countryside and are then repeatedly displaced from their new metropolitan homes—is a condition that is perhaps more paradigmatic than we might otherwise imagine. As Paolo Virno argues, the age of neoliberalism has been characterized by a condition of "uprooting—the more intense and uninterrupted, the more lacking in authentic 'roots'—[which] constitutes the substance of our contingency and precariousness" (31). Neoliberal precarity forms a "degree zero" according to Virno, where work no longer constitutes the center of social life for disposable subjects whose life is presented simultaneously as unvalued, wasteful, and available to be moved.

In an attempt to confront this existential precarity, community members in Cato Crest decided to occupy the local ward councilor's office, and soon thereafter chased him out of his own residence and the area as a whole. In the wake of these actions, Qumbelo was shot dead while watching soccer at a local bar in the area. It was unclear whether his death represented a feeling of betrayal from the shack dwellers occupying land, or an impatience with his mediation coming from the ANC itself. But his death made clear what is already known in both the upper echelons of the ANC—where violent in-fighting is rampant—and among the almost half a million shack dwellers in the city of Durban fighting for a better life: politics and death often work in tandem in South Africa's cities to form a necropolitical symbiosis (Mbembe, 2003). In the months following his assassination, the Cato Crest shack community re-organized and soon emerged with a new grassroots leader in Nkululeko Gwala. Gwala had been a life-long member of the ANC, once vowing that the only way he would leave the Party would be if he died. But his commitment to the poor led him to denounce the pervasive corruption he witnessed throughout the organization, especially at the local level. This did not sit well with his superiors, and soon he was formally kicked out of his own ANC chapter. In response, he approached Abahlali baseMjondolo, one of the most prominent movements in the country, formed in 2005 as an extra-parliamentary organization of shack dwellers seeking to address the specificities of urban precarity and the failures of ANC rule after apartheid.[2] Having been kicked out of the ANC for denouncing its corruption, Gwala and others

requested Abahlali's assistance in mobilizing shack dwellers around the right to land and housing in Cato Crest.

On June 9, a traditional round of songs inaugurated an open air community meeting between approximately one hundred Cato Crest shack dwellers and Abahlali's central leadership. Gwala opened the meeting, introducing the theme of the day—how Abahlali baseMjondolo might help in their struggle for houses—and welcoming the visitors who comprised Abahlali's own leadership. Long-time Abahlali leader S'bu. Zikode spoke next, introducing the organization by explaining that it was not an NGO or a political party, but an independent social movement run by and for shack dwellers. TJ Ngongoma followed by speaking about the meaning of South African citizenship and the new constitution that was approved during the first transition. Ngongoma emphasized that much of what Cato Crest shackdwellers were fighting for was actually enshrined as rights in the constitution, but remained unrealized in practice. He then explained the procedure for forming a branch of Abahlali, and the inaugural event of hosting a branch launch in a newly affiliated community. Mnikelo Ndabankulu then addressed the crowd on the theme of Abahlali's 'living politics,' a key organizational concept that distinguishes the group from any other political entity. Living politics, he said, entailed being engaged directly in the struggle rather than waiting for intermediaries to solve problems on your behalf, be they politicians, academics or development 'experts'. As such, Abahlali's idea of "living politics" can be conceived as a synthesis of what Antonio Negri (1999) might call "constituent power" and what Jacques Rancière terms "dissensus" (2014), as it disrupts, destabilizes and questions the representative capacity of the constituted power of the (police) state that thrives under conditions of a post-political consensus.

Ndabankulu went on to explain that Freedom Day, a national holiday intended to celebrate the end of apartheid, which Abahlali annually recognized as "Unfreedom Day" by organizing a counter-rally with thousands of its own members from throughout the city. He emphasized the importance of what Ngongoma had said about the constitution, claiming that the ward councilor representing the ANC probably did not even know the material in the constitution. He spoke of a similar gathering at another nearby shack community when Lindela Figlan, a former president of Abahlali, had challenged the local councilor on the constitution's contents, revealing the politician's total ignorance of the document and

provoking laughter from the assembled crowd. Abahlali often uses the South African constitution to explain to shack communities how many of the rights they fought for in the anti-apartheid struggle have in theory been won, but are largely unrealized or ignored by the ANC in practice. In this way, Abahlali insists upon a dynamic self-enactment of rights rather than their passive delivery from on high, while also establishing a continuity in struggle from anti-apartheid to post-apartheid movements. Rather than simply saying that the anti-apartheid movement amounted to nothing—which might lead to despair or depoliticization—the group emphasizes the economic, social and political rights that they *did* win, enshrined in the constitution. This tends to give people hope that those rights might still be realized in practice by working with Abahlali to pressure the government to uphold them while simultaneously mobilizing the community members to organize themselves autonomously from the dominant organs of political power.

After additional speeches by Abahlali's General Secretary and President, the floor was opened for community members to speak their mind and ask any questions. After three people made statements affirming much of the Abahlali speeches, and expressing strong enthusiasm about joining the organization, Nkululeko Gwala took the floor. He spoke about how shack dwellers did not respect themselves. Too often, people wanted to keep multiple political options open, and therefore would remain members of multiple political parties at the same time. Alternatively, they would join a protest against the ANC in the street, and the next day, attend a rally in favor of the ANC in an upcoming election. He demonstrated this equivocation by standing with his feet spread far apart, with one foot metaphorically planted in the camp of the ruling ANC, and another foot placed within the space of an oppositional movement or political party. As he continued to emphasize the irreconcilable nature of these two positions, his stance became wider and wider, until he was essentially paralyzed in a quasi-splits position, unable to go lower, but unable to stand up properly without assistance. This was supposed to represent the immobility that results from the inadequacy of a community alliance that refuses to take the unequivocal stance of an openly antagonistic opposition. As such, Gwala's embodied expression represents a broader condition of ambivalence with regards to the post-political moment, where the old politics are dying and the new has not yet been born (Enright & Rossi, 2017). "Neither limbo nor latency, the 'possible world' does not stand waiting in the wings, aspiring to 'realization'. Rather, it is a real configuration of experience whose reality

resides in always keeping in full view, like the scarlet letter, a sign of its own virtuality and contingency" (Virno, p. 28). Abandoning, or more appropriately, sidestepping the traditional electoral politics of the ANC in favor of the virtual promise of Abahlali's principles of self-organization and dignity required taking a decision grounded in antagonism toward the ruling party, and a complete openness to alternative political experimentation.

Gwala warned attendees that fighting against the ruling party wasn't easy, and that despite their united enthusiasm in the meeting, they should each make the decision carefully. Once taken, no equivocation would be tolerated. They would have to be willing to oppose the ANC unambiguously until they won the right to housing and a dignified life. More than anything else, what he had taken away from his numerous exchanges with Abahlali organizers was that the group stood for the idea that the poor needed to reclaim their dignity. Dignity was a concept that went beyond the delivery of material goods, although these too were clearly needed. Dignity entailed recognizing and acting upon the ability of the poor to think for themselves, to determine their own destiny, and to engage in a process of grassroots urban planning (De Souza, 2006). Abahlali's central leadership would therefore not take initiative on the community's behalf. Their role would be merely advisory. The organizational principle of community autonomy meant that each specific local struggle had to take initiative over the precise course of action appropriate to their circumstances. Only then could they claim to have begun the journey of reclaiming their dignity. As a closing thought, Gwala reminded people that no one would be forced to join the new branch of Abahlali. Rather, he insisted, this choice should be made with the utmost level of autonomy and commitment to the struggle, something no one should take lightly.

The community members present then voted unanimously to join Abahlali, and insisted upon setting a date to launch their branch. They proclaimed that in the meantime they would again occupy vacant land as a sign of how seriously they took their struggle, with or without the support of a recognized group like Abahlali. Two weeks later, Gwala led the group in a protest against the corrupt allocation of public housing. The group accused the local ward councilor, Zanele Ndzoyiya, of having won office through illegitimate means according to the ANC's own internal appointment process rather than the community voice. The group's protest along with these two accusations were widely reported in the local press, prompting Mayor Nxumalo and the regional head of the ANC,

Sibongiseni Dhlomo, to call a community meeting at Cato Crest to counter the now mediated narrative. At a meeting on June 26, "Nxumalo's main message was that ward 101 shack residents should have lower expectations. Because "land does not expand", they would never be able to satisfy everyone. Even after buying nearby plots, there would not be enough housing for everyone" (ka-Manzi, 2013). Over two thousand community members attended the meeting, and the mayor led the crowd in songs that denounced Nkululeko Gwala as a traitor, calling for his removal from the area. Dhlomo, the regional head of the ANC, is reported to have "told the 2,000-strong meeting that Gwala was not wanted in the area and that he 'either leaves the area or the community leaves. He must go. He is not wanted here.' In a heated 25 minute speech, which was recorded by a community activist and handed to the local *Tribune* newspaper, Dhlomo said that Gwala should be banished and he should 'scrub his heels because he is leaving today'" (Moore, 2013). Dhlomo was reported to have addressed the mayor, who hailed from the same hometown as Gwala, Inchanga, about an hour outside Durban, telling him to take Gwala back home as soon as possible. Within five hours of these officials' public denunciation of Gwala, his body was littered with twelve bullets. Journalist Faith ka-Manzi summarized the symbolism of yet another Cato Crest assassination as follows: "In recent days, as Nelson Mandela continued to struggle for his life and as Zuma entertained Obama, a microcosm of the ANC's degeneration played out here" (ka-Manzi, 2013). However, from another angle, this 'degeneration' of a liberation movement seemed to represent just another example of a constant feature of blackness as a condition of existential precarity that is always open to violent disposability.

While the shack dwellers of Cato Crest would continue their struggle, occupying land multiple times throughout the remainder of 2013—and significantly naming their new squatter settlements 'Marikana' in an effort to link national struggles—Gwala's murder, like Qumbelo's before him and the death of a 17-year old girl named Nqobile Nzuzua who was shot by the police in an Abahlali-led Cato Crest protest on September 30 2013, would go largely unheeded in the national media and political scene. These deaths therefore leave us with a number of serious questions. What is the relationship between forms of political struggle, on the one hand, and a population's disposability? At what moment are shack dwellers rendered superfluous or eliminable? Was Gwala sacrificed in an effort to save another portion of the South African population (Mitchell, 2009), or was

he part of a broader process whereby populations racialized as black are too commonly subject to an extra-economic violence (Sexton, 2010)? How to understand the political subjects active in shack settlements in South Africa with respect to the theoretical framing of surplus, on the one hand, and precarity on the other? An initial conceptualization of this problem is provided by Achille Mbembe when he states: "If there is anything the history of the metropolitan form in Africa brings to the critique of modern urbanism, it is that the metropolis is neither a finite nor a static form. In fact, it is almost always a site of *excess*, of hysteria, and *exclusions*" (2008, p. 64, my emphasis). And at the center of these urban exclusions, Mbmebe reminds us, lies anti-black racism. "For blacks, especially, making oneself at home in the city takes on a peculiar urgency, if only because it has been the dominant site of their exclusion from modernity" (ibid, pp. 53–54).

A Precarious Liberation

> As is the case with the also hitherto discardable environment, its ongoing pollution, and ozone layer depletion, the reality of the throwaway lives, both at the global socio-human level, of the vast majority of peoples who inhabit the '*favela*/shanty town' of the globe and their jobless archipelagos, as well, at the national level, of Baldwin's 'captive population' in the urban inner cities, (and on the Indian Reservations of the United States), have not been hitherto easily perceivable within the classificatory logic of our 'inner eyes'.
>
> Sylvia Wynter, "No Humans Involved," p. 60

The dramatic increase in South Africa's urban shack dwelling population (Harber, 2011; Hindson & McCarthy, 1994), coupled with consistently high rates of unemployment, would seem to indicate that a large section of the working class has been permanently excluded from the realm of formal production and occupies a precarious position in relation to not only the workplace but also to living conditions and life as a whole. It is important to note that debates about surplus populations in South Africa are not new. In the apartheid era the Surplus People Project took the issue as central to their study of the forced relocations of primarily African communities throughout the country, particularly once the economy entered a period of decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Writing in 1983, the authors of a collaborative report on forced relocations and surplus people in the province of Natal (current day KwaZulu-Natal, where the city of Durban is located) proclaim:

> As a result of increased capitalization of industry, agriculture and mining relatively fewer unskilled workers are demanded by the economy. The changing nature of capitalist development in South Africa has resulted in an increased demand for skilled workers, hence an attempt on the part of the ruling class to consolidate an urban Black population with a stake in the system, and the determination to rid white South Africa of the unproductive, unemployed, disabled and youth. From surveys and field work it has become clear that there are thousands of people who will never gain access to employment in urban areas and unless they are prepared to work for R1,00 per day on white owned farms, where there may still be some work, they have been made redundant permanently. These surplus people will never enter the wage labor market under the present economic system. (Surplus People Project, 1983, p. xv)

Indeed, the official unemployment rate has increased steadily in the decades since that report was issued, peaking at around 30% in 2002 before leveling off in the mid-2000s in the years since. Given this historical precedent and the constantly high rate of the past two decades, such numbers do indeed seem to confirm the surplus people's project contention that these groups are no longer best thought of simply as comprising a reserve army of labor (Marx, 1976). Such a labor reserve is traditionally conceived as capable of being rapidly mobilized—either against striking workers or when economic booms take place and additional labor power is needed to meet output goals. Instead, as surplus population theorists tell us (Denning, 2010), these numbers point to a permanent de-industrializing trend whereby a large percentage of the population has been permanently excluded from capital's circuits, forced to rely upon their own ingenuity or the welfare state in order to survive in an informal economy.

In this context, we might use the term precarity (Arnold & Bongiovi, 2013; Arnold & Pickles, 2011) to define the overarching condition of a supposedly liberated society in contemporary South Africa. While engaging in a re-theorization of precarity in the post-apartheid moment, Franco Barchiesi is careful not to sweep away the differences that define the particularities of flexible accumulation in an African context. "African post-Fordism is more about 'out of luck' than 'just-in-time' as the future uncertainties of informal entrepreneurship are grounded in present assets that depend on social networks, chiefly the family, undermined by the same global dynamics that make waged work redundant in the first place" (2011, p. 204).

Behind this analysis lies Barchiesi's central attack on the 'wage-citizenship nexus'. This term frames the broader condition of 'liberated'

South Africa, and it contains a number of different components that are useful in our own attempt to grapple with the political stakes of precarity. "First, the work-citizenship nexus is *a technique of rule* to produce governable social subjects by normatively categorizing the attitudes, behaviors, and proclivities individuals have toward employment" (Barchiesi, 2011, p. 24, my emphasis). The contemporary South African state, following the emphasis of the liberation movement before it, aligns its conception of the *citizen*—someone who is entitled to rights and services—with the normative idea of the *worker*. This gave birth to "a postapartheid official imagination that centered citizenship around productive economic activity" (ibid, p. 60).

Those who lie beyond the realm of formal work—most of the shack residents in Durban and other major cities in South Africa—are therefore not treated as complete citizens. Reciprocally, supposedly only by entering into the pact of wage labor can an individual fully realize his or her potential as a citizen in a liberated society. Labor union politics and worker imaginations are both therefore constrained by the work-citizenship nexus and the idea that a job will provide fulfillment of the most central human needs and desires. Radical intellectuals are often equally complicit in limiting their studies of work to the spatial bounds of the factory. "Analyses centered on production dynamics are always at risk of essentializing and naturalizing the workplace as the obviously primary social locale where workers express and enact desire" (Barchiesi, 2011, p. 199). In his critique of this over-emphasis upon life within the factory walls, Barchiesi is clearly influenced by the Italian 'Autonomist Marxist' (the current of thought referred to in Italy as "*Operaismo*") conception of the social factory, where the productive capacities of workers are seen to be operable far beyond the factory walls in the urban space of everyday life. Such a formulation presents the paradigmatic condition of production and survival today as *metropolitan*, necessarily demanding a politics attuned to the precarious challenges of a "metropolis intertwining itself in sequences of fleeting opportunities" where "urban training" is intended to instill in us a biopolitical "habituation to uninterrupted and nonteleological change" (Virno, 1996, pp. 14–15). As such, "the political problem arises here when the poor, the precarious, and the exploited want to reappropriate the time and space of the metropolis" (Hardt and Negri, 2009, p. 246). The re-positioning of producers beyond the bounds of the factory, in the social factory of metropolitan/urban space more broadly, therefore captures the extent to which the centrality of the work-citizenship nexus must be deconstructed.

In South Africa, while the potentially oppositional force of a strong labor movement has certainly not disappeared—witness the importance of the recent Marikana massacre in setting the anti-ANC agenda—it is certainly true that since 1999 a new oppositional force has emerged from beyond the bounds of the factory in the form of 'new social movements'. Abahlali baseMjondolo is one of the most active of these new movements, and it developed within the community setting of shack settlements, rather than from the traditional realm of workplace organization. The dynamics of precarity in the community setting of the shack settlement pose a new set of questions that move beyond workplace dynamics and towards the question of urban space and surplus populations. It is at this juncture between precarious inclusion, permanent exclusion and revolutionary possibility that a renewed debate about the relevance of anti-colonial theorist Frantz Fanon is taking place in South Africa.

The writings of Fanon and those of Black Consciousness theorist Steve Biko are remarkably appropriate for post-apartheid movements operating within the zones of non-being typified in shack settlements. Abahlali has drawn upon the legacy of Biko's expanded, de-nationalized notion of blackness in their own attempts to forge solidarity and alliances across historical African-Indian divisions in Durban, and in their effort to support the struggles of non-South African migrant workers who have come under repeated attack in periodic pogroms (Naicker, 2016). In addition, their position is one that straddles the urban and the rural, as many shack dwellers are recent migrants to the city from rural areas (S'bu. Zikode, 2013, 2 August; Siya James, 2013, 27 June). While they attempt to penetrate the heart of the forbidden post-apartheid city—Cato Crest comes closest to the central business district—they are most often still relegated to the urban peripheries that Fanon identifies in his analysis as the home of the lumpen classes under colonialism (Al-Bulushi, 2012). Finally, Abahlali has adhered to Fanon's stinging critique of intellectuals and political parties as vanguards, instead affirming their autonomous capacity to think and act democratically. They demand recognition for their own "University of Abahlali baseMjondolo," even as they claim that the only classrooms of this "university" are comprised of the spaces found in the everyday life of shack settlements themselves. They insist upon their own ability to articulate profound ideas, relevant to contemporary struggles for social justice, and upon grounding those ideas not exclusively in written texts but also in the living politics of their own everyday struggles for survival in shack communities.

And yet, in all of this, they do not seek to withdraw from society in order to form an exclusive shack-dwelling commune (Courtheyn, 2016, p. 11). Like Fanon, they recognize the importance of an encounter with "professional" intellectuals and militants, in addition to groups struggling in other areas and in other contexts. But for Abahlali the encounter with such individuals and organizations must take place on an equal ground whereby the autonomy of their organization is respected as a vehicle for moving from non-being to the new. While this movement towards the new certainly appears to start in a place overdetermined by the logic of superfluous exclusion, on the one hand, and precarious inclusion on the other, it clearly does not end up in either place.

From Precarity to Anti-blackness

> The question asked by Fanon and Biko (and most modern revolutionaries, but especially so by African ones and their Diaspora) is the role of politics in the context of political formation. In other words, what should one do when the place of discursive opposition has been barred to some people? What should those who live in the city but are structurally outside of it do if they do not accept their place of being insiders who have been pushed outside?
>
> Lewis Gordon, "Biko's Black Consciousness," p. 87.

The dynamics of precarity and surplus in South Africa have a specifically racialized dimension that has been inadequately addressed by traditions of struggle rooted in the labor movement and a traditional Marxist analysis.[3] The 'official"' Marxists—whether they are of the SACP or Trotskyist variants—continue to emphasize a non-racial conception of class as the unifying discourse most capable of tackling a post-apartheid situation that is best defined, they argue, by neoliberalism and 'class apartheid'. Gillian Hart is one of the few South African Marxist theorists who continues to claim that such an analysis is inadequate to the contemporary moment, both because neoliberalism on its own cannot explain the developmental initiatives and social grants that the ANC has unfurled over at least the past decade, and because of the ongoing racialized dimensions of dispossession in the country (Hart, 2014).

A number of commentators argue that traditional Marxist analysis cannot account for the prevalence of extra-economic violence directed at surplus populations. These groups cannot be characterized as merely 'unemployed', but should rather be understood as racialized and subject

to the force of anti-blackness. As the epigraph to this chapter by Grant Farred indicates, the political and the racial are inextricably bound up with each other, especially in the South African context; you cannot think one without the other. Farred's critique identifies the fallacy of a dominant trend in the country whereby the post-apartheid moment is equated with a post/non-racial world (226–229, 237, 239). A similar skepticism towards non-racialism is also deployed by key members in the new Economic Freedom Fighters Party, led by the ex-ANC youth league leader Julius Malema. The organization was formally launched in June 2013, the same month that Cato Crest was on fire with the protests that preceded Gwala's assassination, and the party has gone on to win 8% of the upper and lower houses of parliament. Despite gestures to being based on the popular will of the people, and affirmations of grassroots community based struggles, at its core it is clearly operating on the traditional, hierarchical Leninist model of a vanguard party. The uniqueness of the group, however, lies in part in their naming Fanon as a direct inspiration for their political platform. This resulted from an early alliance (now somewhat fractured) between Malema and black nationalists inspired by the thought of Steve Biko and Frantz Fanon. This wing of the EFF has made it abundantly clear that they hope to fill a vacuum in analysis and political practice in South Africa where race is concerned. Explicitly attacking the tradition of non-racialism that has long been dominant in the country, these members of the EFF are focused on the continued dominance that 'white capital' has over the country. In their view, white capital gave up its *political power* to a black political class in 1994 for the same reasons the bourgeoisie conceded direct control over the state to the monarch Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte after 1848: in order to preserve their *economic power*.

Most interestingly, many of these activists are directly inspired by the work of Frank Wilderson and the 'Afro-Pessimist' current he spearheads. Wilderson spent significant time in South Africa from the late 1980s until the mid 1990s, when he joined the armed wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe. "When I first arrived in South Africa in 1989, I was a Marxist," Wilderson tells us. "Toward the end of 1996, two and half years after Nelson Mandela came to power, I left not knowing what I was" (Wilderson, 2008, p. 95). Spending time in the country during the first transition proved fundamental to his elaboration of the primacy of anti-blackness in the modern world. "In the last days of apartheid, we failed to imagine the fundamental difference between the worker and the Black. How we understand suffering and whether we locate its essence in

economic exploitation or in anti-Blackness has a direct impact on how we imagine freedom and how we foment revolution" (Wilderson, 2008, p. 97). Borrowing from thinkers like Lewis Gordon, Saidiya Hartman, Orlando Patterson and Hortense Spillers, Wilderson theorizes anti-blackness as predicated on the failure of the white dominated world to recognize the subject position of the black subject—a structural relation consecrated in the context of New World slavery.

Steve Biko's thought likewise proves useful for extending this line of thinking to South African struggles. Biko's Black Consciousness accomplishes this by explicitly targeting the non-racialism that was and still is predominant within the anti-apartheid and post-apartheid movements. Biko put forward the necessity for grasping an autonomous black experience, one that would be developed on the basis of an affirmative identity that did not need to come into synthesis with existing white society. "Does this mean that I am against integration?" asked Biko, after disagreeing with the call from white liberals to celebrate the few places under apartheid where a limited form of integration had been accomplished in non-racial spaces and organizations. "If by integration you understand a breakthrough into white society by Blacks, an assimilation and acceptance of Blacks into an already established set of norms and code of behavior set up by and maintained by whites, then YES I am against it" (Biko, 1978, p. 28).

But Wilderson—despite his admiration for Biko and the Black Consciousness movement that has been largely erased from the anti-apartheid narrative by a hegemonic story in which the ANC is lionized—goes further in an attempt to push beyond Biko, going back to Fanon for a theory of anti-blackness. For Wilderson the assent of the ANC was inextricably linked with the *descent* of Biko's Black Consciousness movement. But oddly enough, to the extent that Wilderson's theoretical framework points to a corresponding political practice, it lies in a destruction of the existing world, rather than in the possibility of creating an autonomous black space within the existing one, as Biko proposed through a combination of Freirean consciousness-raising and community programs. This is because Wilderson conceives of modernity, and its celebrated terrain of civil society[4] where much of social movement theory places its faith, as a space-time predicated upon anti-blackness. That is, only through dehumanizing and violently excluding the black subject is contemporary civil society allowed to function (Wilderson, 2003). This demonizing dehumanization is representative of an extra-economic force,

a "gratuitous violence" (Wilderson, 2008, p. 105) that has its roots in slavery, and persists in the "afterlife of slavery" today (Hartman, 2007; Sexton, 2010). Therefore, Marx's emphasis upon exploitation cannot provide us with a complete picture of the violent structure underlying "the lived experience of the black." Only Fanon seems to provide such an account for Wilderson, eclipsing the optimism of the will that Black Consciousness expressed, in favor of the pessimism of the intellect.

For Biko's Black Consciousness movement to have achieved a resolution between the fissure Wilderson identifies between a class analysis focused on exploitation, on the one hand, and the political ontology of non-being that defines blackness in the modern world, on the other hand, would have required a different reading of Fanon.

> For this to happen, Black Consciousness would have also had to undergo adjustments in its assumptive logic. Adjustments that would have moved it away from its pragmatic interpretation of Fanon's dream of disalienation; adjustments that would have allowed it to comprehend those moments in Fanon's work when Fanon could not make the dispossession of the colonial subject jibe with the dispossession of the Black object or slave: Fanon's revelations (albeit often more symptomatic than declarative) that Black colony is an oxymoron, for Blacks are not, *essentially*, dispossessed of land or labor power, but dispossessed of being … Steve Biko and Black Consciousness were compelled to read *Black Skin*, *White Masks* pragmatically rather than theoretically; thus denying their analysis the most disturbing aspects of *Black Skin, White Masks* which lay in Fanon's capacity to explain Blackness as an antirelation; that is, as the impossible subjectivity of a sentient being who can have 'no recognition in the eyes of' the Other. (Wilderson, 2008, p. 103)

The persistence of the slave relation in the present thus confines what is thought to be an antagonistic relationship between capital and labor in a certain Marxist framework to a mere conflict. An irreducible, unsynthesizable antagonism is rather said to lie in the relationship between the slave and the human.

But all this *does not* mean that a recuperation of the political in the form of a struggle against anti-blackness is somehow celebrated by the likes of Wilderson. To the contrary, it demonstrates how struggle within the existing conditions defined by the afterlife of slavery reveal themselves to be a bottleneck out of which there is no apparent exit.

> No matter what Blacks do (fight in the realm of preconscious interest or heal disalienation in the realm of unconscious desire), Blackness cannot attain relationality. Whereas Humans are positioned on the plane of *being* and, thus, are present, alive, through struggles of/for/through/over recognition, Blacks can neither attain nor contest the plane of recognition. That is to say 'Black Human' remains an oxymoron regardless of political victories in the social order or the psychic health of the mind; not because of the intransigence of White racism, or the hobble of the talking cure in the face of hallucinatory whitening, but because were there to be a place and time for Blacks, cartography and temporality would be impossible. (Wilderson, 2008, p. 111)

Unlike other followers of Biko's Black Consciousness movement, therefore, Wilderson does not display nostalgia by relying upon the belief that if only Biko had escaped his assassins and lived to see the demise of the apartheid government, the post-apartheid context would be somehow dramatically different. But Wilderson does hold on to Biko's critique of non-racialism and his engagement with Fanon as a positive influence in South African struggles that could have ultimately led to a conceptual privileging of anti-blackness that Wilderson believes is required for an accurate description of the objective conditions struggle is forced to confront. "I believe that had Biko lived, and had the Black Consciousness Movement survived as a credible alternative to the ANC and the UDF, the ethical imperatives of class analysis, that were hegemonic and unchallenged within the Charterist Movement [as spelled out in the liberation movement's Freedom Charter from 1955, outlining what a just post-apartheid society should look like], might have experienced a distended calculus through which the grammar of suffering could be debated rather than assumed"(ibid, p. 112). In order to better grapple with the challenges facing political movements of the urban poor in South Africa, then, we should foreground the analytical lens of anti-blackness as a constitutive feature of the conditions of post-apartheid shack life.

Gwala's Legacy

This chapter has presented the death of Nkululeko Gwala, a shack dweller organizing with Abahlali, as a window into debates on the urban political under the conditions of precarity and surplus in the contemporary globalized world. Examining these questions from the specific spatialized

context of the paradigmatically black shack settlement forces us to shift the geography of reason in the work of Giorgio Agamben and others who have hitherto emphasized the refugee detention camp or Guantanamo Bay as paradigmatic contemporary spaces of exception (Mbembe, 2003; Sexton, 2010). In contrast, postulating the post-apartheid shack settlement as a zone of non-being allows us to understand how something new—the properly inventive terrain of the political—might emerge from this space of nothingness. Racializing and spatializing the critique of precarity necessarily broadens our framework for grasping the conditions of possibility which give rise to the power to make die or let live that now articulates with and infuses contemporary biopolitical imperatives to make live or let die.

Too few people have either aligned themselves with the political stance of Abahlali and its partner movements of the poor throughout the country as an alternative to the electorally focused impasse that defines the purportedly post-political condition. And even fewer willingly deploy an alternative analysis around anti-black racism that could provide us with an account of the ongoing forms of both racialized dispossession and gratuitous violence that populations confined to shacks are arguably most often exposed to. Could this be because these zones of abandonment are rarely ventured into by outsiders, who prefer to remain confined in the settler quarters of the city identified with contemporary civil society and its corresponding state-protected privileges? Regardless, the struggles of the poor in these spaces are not disappearing; indeed they continue to grow year by year. As Richard Pithouse argues, while the shack settlement does not hold a monopoly on the geography of precarious life, it has indisputably become a central flashpoint for social struggles.

> Of course, neither social exclusion, nor the myriad of ways in which it is resisted, can be reduced to the shack settlement. But it is here—rather than in, say, the countryside, the school, the prison or the migrant detention centre—where the refusal to accept the idea that the human should be rendered as 'waste' has produced the most intense and sustained conflict between the state and its citizens over the last eight years. (Pithouse, 2013a, p. 100)

For this reason, any attempt to grapple with the conditions of the urban political in contemporary South Africa will have to begin with the lived experience of shack dwellers like Nkululeko Gwala.

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Notes

1. The 2016 local elections continued this trend towards the fracture of the ruling alliance, with the ANC bringing in just over half of the country's votes nationwide, its lowest results since electoral democracy was first established in 1994.
2. Abahlali's willingness to openly criticize and denounce the ANC—not out of blind anti-government ideology but only after many years of trying to work *with* their local government—has provoked ire in the ruling party. ANC officials from the local to the municipal and national levels have consistently maligned and slandered the organization simply for being a thorn in their side. The nature of this tense relationship, as we will see, has frequently resulted in violent state repression of the urban poor.
3. The impasse between race and class is obviously something that exceeds the confines of South Africa. Cedric Robinson argues that global capitalism must always be understood as *racial* capitalism. But it is Stuart Hall's attention to the specificities of conjunctural analysis, and his reluctance to generalize about capitalism in sweeping, universal theorizations, that has provided much of the framework for debates around race in South Africa. Space does not yet permit me the opportunity to elaborate on the difference between these two understandings of the relationship between race and class here.
4. Here much more could be said about the parallels between Wilderson's conception of civil society and the way it relates to proximate deployments of the concept in the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Mahmood Mamdani, and Partha Chatterjee.

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PART IV

Re-politicizing the Urban Political

CHAPTER 11

Voice or Noise? Spaces of Appearance and Political Subjectivity in the London Riots 2011

Iris Dzudzek

What Happened?

August 2011—London's burning. Over a period of four days, spreading from various districts of London to other cities, Britain is struck by the largest uprising and looting in post-war-history. What had happened? On the evening of August 4th 2011 a special force police officer shot 29-year-old Marc Duggan inside a taxi in London's Tottenham district. Marc Duggan was British and black. Initial reports, claiming Duggan had fired at the police, later prove to be false. On August 6th 200 local residents joined a spontaneous demonstration led by Duggan's family, which ended in front of the local police station. They demanded a police statement. After several hours of futile waiting the situation escalated. Vacant police cars were set on fire, later shops were looted. During this night the insurrection was limited to Tottenham. On August 7th protests spread throughout the northern districts of London. By August 8th 22 of London's thirty-two districts as well as other cities such as Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol and Nottingham were affected by 'the riots'. While

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the severity of the insurrections in London decreased by the 9th of August, it then reached its peak in the other British cities. The police troops were reinforced from six thousand to sixteen thousand and armored vehicles and rubber bullets were deployed. On August 10th the insurrections and lootings slowly calmed down in all cities. In the end, five people lost their lives, 2500 shops got looted, and the estimated costs for material damages came to half a billion pounds. Those taking part in the riots expressed no collective statement: neither political demands nor motivations.

Reactions and Interpretations

Already several hours after the riots had started, media and politicians delivered explanations which David Cameron summarized in his much quoted speech concerning "the fightback following the riots and looting" (2011b) as follows:

> But what we know for sure is that in large parts of the country this was just pure criminality. So as we begin the necessary processes of inquiry, investigation, listening and learning: let's be clear. These riots were not about race: the perpetrators and the victims were white, black and Asian. These riots were not about government cuts: they were directed at high street stores, not Parliament. And these riots were not about poverty: that insults the millions of people who, whatever the hardship, would never dream of making others suffer like this […].
> No, this was about behavior…
> …people showing indifference to right and wrong…
> …people with a twisted moral code…
> …people with a complete absence of self-restraint. (Cameron, 2011b)

He defines "moral decline" as the cause of the riots and England as a "broken society" (Cameron, 2011a). The media reproduced this narrative in different versions variously blaming: a "sick society" (top headline of The Telegraph, 2011), "nihilistic and feral teenagers, seemingly devoid of any semblance of morality" (Daily Mail, 2011a), the "bloody and perverse world of Britain's gang culture […], a culture that has spread through Britain like a virus over the past 20 years" (The Independent, 2011a), a "mentally disturbed underclass" (The Independent, 2011b), and "essentially wild beasts […] left off learning how to become human beings" (Daily Mail, 2011b). How hegemonic this reading of the riots was, might be seen best in the riot-clean-up-campaign in which thousands of people engaged to literally "wipe the scum out of the streets" (The Guardian, 2011).

In contrast, left intellectuals, media and unions saw the riots as a violent answer to growing social inequality, exclusion and racist discrimination which should be fought with the well-known "mantra about social programmes and integration initiatives" (Žižek, 2011, p. 2). But in contrast to the 1981 riots in Brixton, they spoke *about* the protestors not on their *behalf* and most of them refused to speak of a political event.[1] Alain Badiou adds to this that the "rioters" failed to turn the riots into a "historic uprising" because they did not manage to "occupy the city center or other central public places" (Badiou, 2013, p. 34).

Who is a Political Subject? Problematizing Žižek's Position

In this chapter I want to first elaborate why a diagnosis of the riots as 'not political' is highly problematic. Second, I will revisit the question whether political subjects were articulated in the riots. I analyzed—together with my colleague Michael Müller—political speeches, media representations, reports, scientific investigations and academic papers—and due to the lack of collective expressions of the protesters—counterhegemonic representations such as Hip-Hop- and Grime-videos, camera phone-documentations, a flubbed TV-interview, censored material, discussions in community centers and the documentation of activist work (see also Dzudzek & Müller, 2013). I would like to note that I will neither try to represent the protesters who—for whatever reason—refused to articulate collective claims, nor will I try to find out what they 'originally' wanted to say. Instead, I want to contrast the hegemonic reading of the riots as not political with a poststructuralist one that draws on "a different social ontology" (Butler, 2011, p. 11). To do this, first, it will be necessary to clarify different meanings of the term 'political' in late neoliberalism.

To develop my argument I want to draw upon a definition of politics which derives from post-foundational political thought (Badiou, 2013; Butler, Laclau, & Žižek, 2000; Laclau, 1990; Marchart, 2007, 2010; Rancière, 2004). "The political act (intervention) proper is not simply something that works well within the framework" says Žižek (2000, p. 199) and being political does not mean to simply embody and reify the framework which society already recognizes and which I will call 'subject position'. Subject positions may be that of a political party leader, a community activist, a unionist etc. Instead, being political means to disrupt the current social order:

> [T]he only place one finds the unaccounted for is in the emergence of a political articulation, at a particular time and space […] [T]he democratic theme precisely is not the inclusion of the excluded; it is the posture of the redefinition of the whole through the disruption of the police order by the institution of politics." (Dikeç, 2005, p. 177)

In order for the "unaccounted" to subjectify, they have to break with the framework which excludes them from the realm of the political and denies them their citizenship. So far, so good. But Slavoj Žižek goes one step further.

> [T]he UK rioters had no message to deliver. […] This is why it is difficult to conceive of the UK rioters in Marxist terms, as an instance of the emergence of the revolutionary subject; they fit much better the Hegelian notion of the 'rabble', those outside organised social space, who can express their discontent only through 'irrational' outbursts of destructive violence—what Hegel called 'abstract negativity'. (Žižek, 2011, p. 1)

And in the following:

> And this is the fatal weakness of recent protests: they express an authentic rage which is not able to transform itself into a positive programme of socio-political change. They express a spirit of revolt without revolution. (Žižek, 2011, p. 3)

Žižek recognizes subjects as political if and only if they succeed to be heard as a voice and to "change […] the very framework that determines how things work" (Žižek, 2000, p. 199).

What does this imply about the riots? Although there was an articulation of noise, a temporary disruption of the current social order and even the emergence of political voice, the draconian "fightback following the riots and looting"—as David Cameron (2011b) called it—prevented the "framework" from being "changed". Thus if we draw on Žižek's account of the riots, they were not political because the "rioters" failed to articulate and act as political subjects in order to induce social change.

By explaining the riots as an "outside organized social space" (2011, p. 1) Žižek—maybe unintentionally—comes to the same conclusion as Cameron: both perceive the riots as unpolitical and unreflecting emotional outbursts, and both conceive of the "rioters" as failed political subjects. Thereby,

Žižek joins the mainstream position of criminalizing the rioters, and in consequence, denies them their fundamental rights. By lamenting that the protestors were not able to "transform their rage into a positive programme of sociopolitical change", that means to transform their noise into a political voice that is heard, Žižek assumes that it would have been possible for them to politicize and to enter the public space of debate. I will show this was not the case.

Disarticulated Subject Positions in Late Neoliberalism

Why were the protestors excluded from the public arena of debate? Why did they not engage in conventional political subject positions such as community organizations, unions or anti-racism campaigns? Why did they not use these positions for political claim-making. Which power relations foreclosed this possibility?

> To be outside established and legitimate political structures is still to be saturated in power relations, and this saturation is the point of departure for a theory of the political that includes dominant and subjugated forms, modes of inclusion and legitimation as well as modes of delegitimation and effacement. (Butler, 2011, p. 4)

I want to carve out the "saturation" which prevented most of the protesters from articulating their grievances from already established collective subject positions.

Community Worker?

Why did the protestors not actively engage in community organizing groups or articulate in a collective anti-racism campaign? The massive expansion of the stop-and-search-regime was enabled by section 60 of the "Criminal Justice and Public Order Act" (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 1994). Stop-and-searches under section 60 do not require a reasonable suspicion in order to be legal. In 2000/2001 alone 18,900 stop-and-searches were executed due to section 60, in 2009/2010 the number skyrocketed to 118,000. In 2011 the probability to be stopped-and-searched without concrete suspicion was 30 times higher for a black British citizen than for a white British citizen (Povey et al., 2011; Strickland & Berman, 2012).

Section 60 is an exceptional power that suspends the fundamental right not to be searched unless there is reasonable suspicion (Metropolitan Police London, 2012; Parliament of the United Kingdom, 1994; Strickland & Berman, 2012). Obviously, section 60 allows for racial profiling (Dodd, 2013; Townsend, 2012) and "establishes a normalized state of exception for certain social groups by de facto suspending their fundamental rights" (Altenried, 2012, p. 8). In 1999 the MacPherson-Report (MacPherson, 1999), commissioned after the murder of the black British citizen Stephen Lawrence, stated that the British police suffers from "institutionalized racism". The follow-up report from 2009 shows that this has not changed since 1999 (Home Affairs Committee, 2009).

On the second day of the London riots, a BBC live-interview with the black civil rights activist, writer and television reporter Darcus Howe was hastily ended as Howe refused to denote the events a riot and instead talked about an "insurrection" and a "historic moment" against racism and the quotidian harassments of the stop-and-search-regime (BBC News, 2011; Hersh, 2011). Even to the BBC, the riots could not be understood as political protest against racial profiling and racism, although, in the large study "Reading the riots" conducted by The Guardian and the London School of Economics people involved in the riots named policing as its main cause (Lewis, Newburn et al., 2011).

One reason for this is that racism has become more and more disarticulated in the public arena and "blackness" is discussed in the first place as a cultural category and not anymore as a political or equal rights issue. One among countless examples is the statement of David Starkey—a well-known historian—in a discussion about the riots on BBC-Newsnight on the 12th of August 2011:

> The whites have become black. A particular sort of violent destructive, nihilistic gangster culture has become the fashion and black and white boys and girls operate in this language together. This language which is wholly false, which is this Jamaican patois that has been intruded in England and that is why so many of us have this sense of literally a foreign country. (Starkey quoted in Quinn, 2011)

The fact that racism isn't discussed as a political issue but a cultural category marks a central discursive shift since the 1980s. The positive fact that open racist discrimination is no longer socially acceptable in the media seems to have a negative flipside: Racism reappears in the guise of culture.

Whereas open offences against equal rights would be unthinkable in the BBC, the problematization of "bad" black gang culture as a matter of wrong lifestyle-choice seems to be presentable. This is what the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1982) calls "new racism" in diversity-mainstreamed Britain. That is a racism in which "social and cultural differences are being coded according to the rules of a biological discourse" (Gilroy, 2000, p. 34). This has the effect that "black" as a political subject position in the fight for equal rights and opportunities has been more and more weakened and disarticulated. In this sense, the riots of 2011 differ substantially from the riots in Brixton in 1981, where demands to end racist discrimination were among the most central political claims of the protestors.

The fact that 'blackness' is discussed as a cultural phenomenon and not as an equal rights issue and that the criminalization of the riots prevented them from being interpreted as a cry against racism and discrimination shows that the anti-discrimination movement has become more and more disarticulated.

Sujets de Droit?

Not only did the stop and search activities before the riots draw on exceptional police powers, but the prosecution of the 'rioters' also enacts a legal state of exception. The dehumanization of the protestors—Kenneth Clarke, minister for justice, for example described the protestors as "feral underclass, cut off from the mainstream in everything but its materialism" (Lewis, Taylor et al., 2011)—legitimized the imposition of the state of exception and popularized the call for brutal repression (Odone, 2011).

The opinion research institute, YouGov, interviewed 2700 British citizens on the third day of the riots with unusual results. Of the interviewed subjects, 90 percent voiced their support for the deployment of water cannons, 80 percent declared themselves in favor of the deployment of the army and 33 percent in favor of the deployment of live ammunition (YouGov, 2011a, 2011b). An online petition claiming to cut all social benefits for the protestors gained more than 200,000 signatures over the course of just a few days (Mains, 2011).

During the riots 1200 people were arrested and 300 were sentenced in summary trials. The length of custodial sentences for offences was on average two to three times longer than for comparable offenses before or after these four days of exception (Ministry of Justice, 2012; Travis, 2012).

The police in Manchester twittered: "Mum-of-two, not involved in disorder, jailed for FIVE months for accepting shorts looted from shop. There are no excuses!" (Batty, 2011). The 23-year old Nicolas Robinson went to jail for six months for looting water bottles (Ford Rojas, 2011). Two young men were sentenced to four years in jail. They were blamed for using Facebook to incite a riot in their neighborhood which in fact never took place (Bowcott, Carter, & Clifton, 2011; Rawlinson, 2011). The massive criminalization of the rioters, which even draws on exceptional powers, led to the silencing of many of the protestors who did not dare to speak on their behalf in public because they feared prosecution. Summary trials curtail fundamental rights. This makes it impossible for the insurgents to act as ordinary legal subjects and to defend themselves with conventional legal measures.

Consumers?

Why did the protestors not identify as happy consumer or even as consumption-critics? Why did they loot shops? A lot of lootings during the riots were not chaotic or violent. Rather they were like cheerful shopping trips in warehouses without sellers. A rumor says some teenager even started to fry their own burgers in a looted Burger King. The looted products ranged from branded clothing and expensive electronic devices such as flat screen-TVs or smart phones, to basic goods such as water bottles or napkins.

Zygmunt Bauman argues that personal identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one consumes. For him the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism is also marked by a shift from a producer- to consumer-oriented regime. The current society interpellates its citizens first and foremost as consumers (Bauman, 2013, p. 51) and treats consuming as "universal human right and universal human duty that knows of no exception" (Bauman, 2013, p. 55). This is why the poor are pushed to spend the little money they have for consumer instead for basic goods in order to protect themselves from social degradation. Great Britain is the European country where the divide between rich and poor widened most dramatically during the last 40 years. In 1970 1.2 percent of the national income were owned by 0.1 percent of the population, in 2005 it was 5 percent. That means the wealth of the richest 0.1 percent of the population had increased by 700 percent (Dorling, 2012, p. 6). This was a redistribution of wealth to the disadvantage of the poorer population.

Bauman notes that those who are excluded from consumerism come to be seen as "invalids" or "flawed consumers" (2013, p. 56). "Social invalidity" is interpreted as "the outcome of individual faults" (2013, p. 56). "[B]ecause of the transfer of the issue of 'social fitness' to the responsibility and care of individuals, exclusionist practices in the society of consumers are much stricter, harsher and more unyielding than in the society of producers" (Bauman, 2013, p. 56) . The riots are in this reading "an ironic response to consumerist ideology: 'You call on us to consume while simultaneously depriving us of the means to do it properly—so here we are doing it the only way we can!'" (Žižek, 2011, p. 3).

But the people engaged in the riots were not only excluded from any form of consumption they were excluded from a very identity-related form of consumption. Only a few days before the riots started a TV-commercial was released which was banned on the 11th of August 2011 (Neate, 2011). It shows a teenager in a stylish casual outfit and Levi's jeans during the uprising of the first of May in Berlin. A voice from off stage recites a poem by Charles Bukowski, an icon of US-American counterculture. The ad ends as the insurgent runs against a row of police officers with a close-up of the Levi's jeans from behind and the campaign slogan "Go forth!" (Neate, 2011).

The riots seem to have turned the TV-commercial into reality. The most looted chain store during the riots was JD sports which is known to satisfy dissident consumer demands. 'Gangster chic' and 'dangerwear' are their core business and top seller. JDs and the Levi's TV-commercial show that cultural signs which once meant resistance against the system have become incorporated into the capitalist system and a motor of its renewal (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2003). Turning identity marker and signs of rebellion into trademarks dispossesses the people who invented them from their political symbols because they cannot afford to buy them anymore. The growing significance of consumerism thus led to a double exclusion: in socio-economic as well as in symbolic terms. The consumerist society, which defines freedom as choice among different products, turns those who cannot consume to 'flawed consumers'.

Community Activists or Unions Members?

Why did the protestors not engage in community organizations or unions? In 2010 the British social welfare budget was reduced by 18 billion pounds (AFP and dpa, 2010; Bumke, 2012; Gentleman, 2011; Stratton, Elliott,

& Ramesh, 2010). That means that the riots were preceded by the largest austerity measures in recent British history. In November and December 2010 massive protests articulated against the closure of community centers, cuts in the education sector, the increase of tuition fees and the abolition of the so-called 'Education Maintenance Allowance'. On the 26th of March 500,000 people joined the 'March for the Alternative' initiated by the Trades Union Congress in London City.

But the latest austerity measures only crowned the demolition of the welfare state, which had been going on for the last thirty years. The massive neoliberalization of the social sector had transformed community workers into social entrepreneurs and citizens into clients whose political rights are conditioned upon their willingness to be available to the labor market. The feminist scholar Angela McRobbie calculates that the compulsory labor market integration measures in order to acquire the title for social benefits comprise thirty working hours a week for a single mother (McRobbie, 2012).

This neoliberalization has also led to the erosion of solidarity and the individualization of collective problems which McRobbie denotes as "politics of disarticulation" (2010, p. 47) and Žižek calls post-politicization (for a recent debate about the concept see Beveridge & Koch, 2017a, 2017b; Derickson, 2017; Dikeç, 2017; Swyngedouw, 2017):

> What post-politics tends to prevent is precisely this metaphoric universalization of particular demands: post-politics mobilizes the vast apparatus of experts, social workers, and so on, to reduce the overall demand (complaint) of a particular group to just this demand, with its particular content—no wonder this suffocating closure gives birth to 'irrational' outbursts of violence as the only way to give expression to the dimension beyond particularity. (Žižek, 2000, p. 204)

An iconic example in this respect is the TV-show 'Jamie Oliver's Dream School' where twenty teenagers without school-leaving qualification are taught by a group of VIPs. The ideological interpellation of the show: Everybody can be successful, if you only try hard enough. But the upward mobility in the UK has dramatically decreased due to neoliberal reforms (McRobbie, 2012). The "superfluous populations" (Bauman, 2004)—that is, the number of people who are excluded from the labor market, from social provision, and from consumption—have skyrocketed. It is no surprise, then, that many protestors had the impression that a better life was not possible and thus refused to engage in this fantasy.

Discussion and Conclusion: The Question of Political Subjectivity Revisited

In the previous section I have shown how political subject positions were disarticulated in late neoliberal Great Britain. The probability of achieving emancipation or social change through political engagement has dramatically decreased due to the systematic dissolution of traditional subject positions in the recent process of neoliberalization. So one might draw a conclusion which is similar to those of politics and media—and also to those of Slavoj Žižek: The riots were not political because the protesters in Britain, in spite of their desperate situation, did not engage in these subject positions. This conclusion seems compelling but it is oversimplified and false. In the last part of this paper I elaborate why and revisit the question of whether political subjects articulated in the riots.

In doing so, I will draw on Judith Butler's critique of Hannah Arendt's notion of public space and on the "different social ontology" (Butler, 2011, p. 11) she develops from that. For Arendt political voice can emerge in public space and enter democratic debate. In Butler's view Arendt overlooks the fact that public space is already divided and coded according to the hegemonic political order that prevents the political subject to emerge (Butler, 2011).

"We cannot let the political body that produces such exclusions furnish the conception of politics itself, setting the parameters for what counts as political" because otherwise "those outside" the established order are always "considered as unreal or unrealized and, hence, outside the political as such" (Butler, 2011, p. 3). They would be without a right to have a political voice.

This would be a contradiction in terms. This view puts current forms of social exclusion in line with the prevailing law and equates the status quo (they cannot exercise political rights) with what is legitimate (they do not have the right to have rights). Put differently, "if we claim that the destitute are outside of the sphere of politics—reduced to depoliticized forms of being—then we implicitly accept that the dominant ways of establishing the political are right" (Butler, 2011, p. 3). Equating politics with the available political subject positions would leave the power to define what is political to the institutions in charge and disregard that

> the right to have rights predates and precedes any political institution that might codify or seek to guarantee that right. (Butler, 2011, p. 4)

Instead, Butler starts "from the presumption that there is a shared condition of precarity that situates our political lives" (Butler, 2011, p. 11) and brings a rearticulated version of Hannah Arendt's (1958) "space of appearance" into play where the established order is contested. It is the place where precarious, unarticulated political subjects can unfold and articulate as political voices. In order to occur and articulate "all political action requires the 'space of appearance'" (Butler, 2011, p. 1), "that displaces the power that claims legitimacy precisely by taking over the field of its effects" (Butler, 2011, p. 5). It is brought into being through "performative exercise" (Butler, 2011, p. 3) and cannot "be separated from the plural action that brings it about" (Butler, 2011, p. 3).

The space of appearance which Butler saw opening up during the uprisings and occupations in Cairo, Madrid, Athens, New York and Tel Aviv in 2011 (Butler, 2016) also unfolded during the riots in London. The riots made visible those whose demands have been systematically disarticulated during the last 30 years. The appearance of their bodies acting in concert on the street revealed, in other words, that the current democracy is not as all-encompassing as it may seem. It brings the massive social contradictions and their disarticulated political subjects into the field of vision and public debate. These are:

1. The contradiction between the claim to be an antiracist country through race equality acts and diversity management and actual racism in a cultural guise. Saying the riots were "not about race" (Cameron, 2011b) further mutes the fight for citizenship.
2. The contradiction between the guarantees of high security standards and equal treatment under the law and dehumanizing citizens and denying them the status of proper legal subjects through the application of exceptional powers. Saying the riots were "just pure criminality" (Cameron, 2011b) legitimizes the further dehumanization and criminalization of the protesters with the help of exceptional powers.
3. A state which provides social welfare and justice, but only to those who get ready for the job market. Saying the riots were "not about government cuts" (Cameron, 2011b) further disarticulates the voice of those who remain excluded from the labor market as well as from social care.
4. A consumer-driven economy that criminalizes and excludes those who cannot consume as superfluous. Saying the riots were "not about poverty" (Cameron, 2011b) further marginalizes those who cannot afford to consume.

The subjects who emerged in the riots have to be called *political* subjects due to the principle of equality which grants every human being the right to have rights prior to any juridical judgement. Only if we recognize the political agency and rights of the people engaged in the riots, it becomes possible to read its legacy, which goes beyond "just pure criminality" (Cameron, 2011b) and prevents us to conceive of them as flawed consumers, scum, black gangs or just pure criminals.

Instead, this different social ontology allows acknowledging the agency of the radically excluded and dehumanized. In the future we need to further understand the disarticulation of conventional subject positions and the silencing mechanisms of political voices in late neoliberalism and its seemingly all-encompassing democracy. In order to overcome the "ambivalence and the injustices […] in a context of neoliberal dominance" (Rossi, 2017, p. 181) we need to empirically study the emergence of political voices as well as the unfolding of new 'spaces of appearance' in order to translate them into an emancipatory perspective.

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Note

1. Only a few pop-cultural expressions such as Lowkey's Hip Hop Song "Dear England" or Plan B's "Ill Manors" invented statements which could be interpreted as those of the insurgents (therefore see Dzudzek & Müller, 2013).

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CHAPTER 12

The Southern Urban Political in Transcalar Perspective: A View from the Squatter Movements of Belo Horizonte

Felipe N.C. Magalhães

Introduction

Brazilian right to the city movements have gone through an important renewal in the last decade, bringing about a new cycle of struggles around access to housing and land and involving new political dynamics in cities that are directly interwoven with processes in larger scales. This chapter approaches these new movements in the city of Belo Horizonte (BH) as a point of departure for a broader consideration of the southern urban question. From the perspective of these right to the movements, the chapter focuses on scalar relations between social movements, the hegemonic production of space in the metropolis, and the domain of the macroeconomic. The first section presents the empirical details of these recent developments. The second adds a trans-scalar perspective to the events, emphasizing connections between the metropolis and the macroeconomic. A final section explores current discussions in urban studies concerning southern cities from a postcolonial perspective, proposing a point of view informed by contemporary Latin American urbanization. This involves a pluralist

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approach that recognizes the force of neoliberalism in shaping contemporary urban policy and transformations, while also understanding contingent right to the city movements and struggles in terms of their bottom-up potentialities in the production of other southern urban spaces and trajectories.

Struggles for the City in 2010s Belo Horizonte: New Urban Social Movements and *ocupações*

In the last decade, Brazilian cities have witnessed the emergence of a new wave of social movements acting on the struggles around the *right to the city*.[1] The 1970s witnessed the beginning of a long cycle of urban movements, which culminated in the so-called urban reform agenda and the struggles for redemocratization in the 1980s. This agenda involved guaranteeing progressive elements in the basic legal framework defined in the re-democratization process, such as the *social function of property*, a constitutional principle defining that private property must fulfill its "social function" (i.e., not remain empty and without any direct usage). The urban reform culminated in the federal city statute of 2001, which provides a basic charter for urban policy in the whole country (Fernandes, 2005, 2007a, 2007b) and the creation of the Ministry of Cities in 2003, which conservative forces in the federal government's coalition of parties led by the PT would later capture. After this long cycle of urban movements (that involved a blending of social movements with political parties), newer organizations began arising outside the influence of such groups. The first one of these new movements to gain political grounds and visibility was the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto* (Homeless Workers' Movement—MTST), which started in São Paulo as an urban branch of the Landless Peasants' Movement (MST) in 1997. Other emerging organizations include the *Brigadas Populares* (People's Brigades—active mostly in Belo Horizonte), and *Movimento de Luta nos Bairros, Vilas e Favelas* (MLB: Movement of Struggle in Neighborhoods, Communities and Favelas, active in several cities). The common trait among these groups is their use of direct action in occupying either plots of land held empty by real estate speculators, as is more common in Belo Horizonte, or large unused (mostly public) buildings in the city centers, more frequent in the São Paulo context. Although it is not involved in housing, the *Movimento Passe Livre* (MPL—Free Pass Movement), an activist organization focused on public transit with sections across the country, is also part of this new wave of urban social movements.

The city of Belo Horizonte (BH) has been an active laboratory for several of these new movements and their *ocupações*.[2] Starting in the mid-2000s, several new squats claim a strategy against neoliberal urbanism combining the direct production of the *common* (Dardot & Laval, 2014; Hardt & Negri, 2009; Tonucci, 2015) with access to housing as a social right guaranteed by the federal constitution but not adequately delivered by the government. Dandara, the first in a new series of organized squats in BH (after a few were evicted shortly after their beginning), was started by *Brigadas Populares* in 2009. The owners of the land had been speculating with empty tracts since the 1970s, while zoning laws for the region prevented them from pursuing a more profitable form of building. Meanwhile, the property valorized strongly, but its owners still hoped for a favorable change in land use laws, therefore letting the land remain vacant. Located north of Pampulha, the upper class neighborhood where the BH World Cup venue is situated, and whose planning in the 1940s was a prototype for the modernist design of Brasília, Dandara began with around 150 families, and in 2016 it is home for more than a thousand, according to community leaders.

Since Dandara, new occupations have sprung up across greater BH. As of 2016 there are twenty-four new occupations in the Metropolitan Region of BH, housing around fourteen thousand families, or fifty-five thousand people (Bittencourt et al., 2016). While there is no precise information available on the evolution of this trend since 2009, it is safe to assume that the June 2013 series of protests that hit Brazilian streets represent an important upward inflexion in its growth curve. That wave of protests, ignited by MPL street demonstrations against the bus fare hike in São Paulo (whose brutal police repression resulted in protests spreading quickly across the country), voiced a loud, clear and renewed cry coming from right to the city struggles in the major metropolitan centers of Brazil. Even though they were extremely heterogeneous, also comprising parts of the conservative opposition to the federal government of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores—PT), their progressive and radical wings were made up largely of these newer, urban-focused social movements. June 2013 did not inaugurate the new wave of urban social movements, but represented a political eruption of their underlying political meanings, projects, and anxieties. Similarly, while the 2014 World Cup played an important role in gathering forces against the evictions and dispossessions it created in its preparations, it was just another source of fuel for political vectors that had been brewing since the mid-2000s.[3]

A place where the 2013 protests did fuel the new squats is the Izidora region, in the northern border of BH, the same area where a new Oscar Niemeyer designed state government center was inaugurated in 2010. Izidora is the last non-developed region within the BH municipality. The city's current plans for the area comprise a set of *operações urbanas* (urban operations) –planning instruments used for the (re)development of large areas usually aimed at higher income markets– whose implementation have been delayed partly due to current unfavorable market conditions, but also because of a strengthening of these new urban social movements in the city.

Those who began the squats in Izidora already lived in the neighboring areas as renters. Suffering eviction pressures from a booming real estate market and without many reasonable locational alternatives, they started building wooden and plastic shacks in the area in the middle of the events of June 2013. Although in the beginning, they occupied Izidora without any support from activist organizations, as their numbers grew movements began offering support for the three main occupations: Rosa Leão, Vitória and Esperança. According to activists, eight thousand families live in the area, as of 2016. Since its first few days, the occupations have been dealing with constant pressures for their evictions, from daily police harassment to formal eviction notices and judicial struggles in courts. They have also received active support from important political actors in the city, from collectives of 'popular lawyers', to research groups in universities and progressive judges in the state's judicial branches.

An important recent development in this context has been the emergence of organized groups of activist lawyers who act in defense of the vulnerable groups in cases of squat evictions and other human rights issues. The active engagement with the judicial apparatus of the state has been an essential aspect of right to the city politics in Brazil since the 1970s. More recently, new urban movements have been working upon the basic set of legislation conquered through the older urban reform movements within courts, bringing up the constitutional right to housing along with the social function of property as an important weapon in specific cases of conflict, mainly against landowners in eviction cases. However, it is also important to note that the new movements organizing occupations also face opposition from older organized movements for social housing in the city, who were actively involved in the local version of the urban reform turn of the early 1990s in policy with the election of progressive mayors in

several cities, including BH. These older movements claim that the new squats disobey an order of priorities in social housing delivery established by the city's policies—while activists in the emerging organizations respond that this queue is simply an instrument for silencing and coopting bottom-up political forces.

These conflicts are indications of deeper differences related to the trajectories and political stance of each group of movements and activists. One side speaks from a longer experience of direct involvement with the state, political parties and lawmaking—which starts in a context of struggles for democracy, against the military regime, and manages to conquer important terrain in the (public/state) domain of rights and institutional structuring. The other departs from a diagnosis of the failure, insufficiency or cooptation of those older struggles, defending a more radical conception of direct action and struggle—beginning to involve in political parties and electoral disputes in the municipal elections of 2016, but not without continuing organized action outside the domains of the state and public policy. Nonetheless, it is visible that this newer strategy is reliant upon the conquests of the older movements, *the social function of property* and the *City Statute* being fundamental instruments for their struggles against evictions in courts and their questioning of the legal status of the properties they occupy—which are carefully and previously selected, aiming those that can be subsequently disputed in courts.[4]

Most of the post-Dandara occupations have a fundamental difference from areas that have witnessed similar processes of irregular urbanization and favela formation in the past: purposeful planning and design, in most experiences with the active support from organized groups of professional and academic urbanists, architects, planners and geographers. This design thinking is a constantly evolving learning-by-doing process directed to preserving environmentally sensitive areas, defining building standards, street widths and an urbanization pattern (in an informal context) aiming at making usual favela urbanization (i.e. land tenure regularization with infrastructure provision) easier and cheaper for public funds. As shown by Amin (2014), they also involve thinking and developing infrastructural solutions with the active participation of dwellers, combining the technical knowledge of formally trained university architects with the popular knowledge acquired through direct practice by settlers. The new *ocupações* in BH constitute a form of housing policy organized through direct action from groups acting outside the state, and, considering the ever-present threat of evictions, many times acting against it.

While these occupations are rich examples of the open, undefined, and multifaceted character of such bottom-up socio-spatial processes, they can also end up hosting violent and authoritarian non-progressive forces, such as the drug trafficking business. The latter take advantage of an urban fabric that promotes isolation from the city and the absence of state control in order to dominate them for their own anti-democratic purposes—establishing their own territorial command and repressing any attempt at community organizing. In 2015, two activists—one of them also a resident of the occupations—were killed in Izidora in a dispute around the selling of plots by dwellers in one case, and in a conflict with drug traffickers in the other. Some activists report a deliberate absence of the police as a state tactic to weaken the legitimacy of the occupations in the city, with a concomitant strengthening of the drug trade in the communities as a result.

Tracing Scalar Connectors

The Lefebvrean notion of the urban as an intermediation between near and distant orders (Lefebvre, 1968, 2003) is useful as a conceptual point of departure for the focus on scalar connections needed to approach the events above in richer textural manners. Focusing on such linkages, the socio-spatial dynamics that result from struggles around the production of space in the city insert themselves in dense interactive webs of relations between agents, institutions, organizations and their respective actions. The reasons behind the return to direct action in the urban social movements in BH and other Brazilian cities relate to a complex and multifaceted assemblage composed of different interconnected genealogies and associations that operate in different scales. I propose to examine a select few of them, handpicking those that best reveal the trans-scalar character of the relations between social movements, urban change and spatial politics in BH. A focus on these relations also illustrates how it can be more helpful to approach these assemblages of interrelated lineages through the "both/and" lens of engaged methodological pluralism (Barnes & Sheppard, 2010) instead of monochromatic perspectives.

- The first and most evident connection lies in the rupture between the new social movements and the groups of urban reform organizations that have been active since the 1970s and 1980s. In the former's point of view, considering this specific recent experience in

BH, the latter have been coopted and instrumentalized through their direct insertion in policy making in different spheres of government and planning.

- A second connection is a clear neoliberal turn in urban policy conducted by the city in the late 2000s after a long experience of progressive planning associated with the urban reform agenda. This was one of many policy changes geared at promoting general land rent gains, and that were in line with a city marketing/strategic planning model for urban growth and development. When the city shuts down the municipal secretary for social housing in 2009, it sends a clear turning signal to movements acting around the issue in the region. The new social movements' return to the old tactic of direct action in squatting empty plots of land and buildings is therefore related to the rupture with the older movements discussed above. In this process, the new movements start their militant actions already in direct conflict with the city's new administration, while many of the older organizations stay within the fringes of negotiation and cooperation with the state (sometimes with members working directly as city hall staff).
- A third connection was the strong surge in real estate prices that took place in the whole country along with the 2004–2010 economic boom, fueled by growth in both income and credit availability for the majority of the population. This valorization was intensified by urban policy geared towards growth in many cities, including BH, after 2009.
- A fourth connection is the program *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (MCMV—"My House My Life"), a large social housing package that also works as a form of anti-crisis stimulus through the delivery of long-term credit subsidies to lower income groups traditionally excluded from formal housing markets. Announced by the federal government in the aftermath of the international financial crisis of 2008, the program aims to provide access to housing for the poor while at the same time creating an incentive for investment and economic growth. However, the implementation of the program came with little usage of public land or any regulations on land price variations in the areas receiving new housing units. This created an additional stimulus to the—already heated—real estate market in metropolitan peripheries that pushed poor populations that could

not afford the long-term mortgages that the program offered to areas even farther from the core and with less urban infrastructure, creating an eviction dynamic that corresponds to the third factor fueling the post-2009 occupations. MCMV takes inspiration from the Chilean experiences of favela clearance and social housing provision in the 1970s under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. It works as a market-failure correction program, with government subsidies and guarantees provided for the long-term mortgages of lower income groups considered as too risky by the financiers. Hence, it is a government-led process of direct financialization of the urban poor, which feeds into the cycle of raising land rent, affecting the peripheral populations who were not included in the program (some of which would also look for the new *ocupações* as an alternative form of access to housing).

The third item above relates to Brazil's direct connection to the Chinese boom. This was also a result of a neoliberal free trade shift in the 1990s that promoted a dialectical return to the country's pre-1930 economic structure, which was driven by an export base of commodities, raw materials and agricultural products. This took place through an economic restructuring tuned to the authoritarian imperative of the competitiveness-seeking focus on comparative advantage sectors, as the supposedly exclusive path to surviving in a free trade environment. The other three dynamics connect to some political events that took place at the federal government after the election of the PT for the presidency in 2002. They include the political alliances with centrist parties for the formation of a majority government, and the PT's earlier shift to accepting campaign donations from big corporations (many of which would be construction and real estate oligopolies, as well as important players in finance). These have been decisive actors in the pro-growth political pact between the PT, labor unions, an important fraction of the social movements and large business conglomerates, which characterized the cycle of distributive growth. It is now clear that the latter hinged on the commodity boom of the 2000s, which allowed for the experience of combining economic growth with a decline in inequality—exceptional both in Brazil's history of economic expansion based upon exclusion and concentration and in the history of neoliberalism in general.

The Southern Urban and Theoretical-Political Ambivalences

Peck (2015) analyzes a series of influential theoretical and methodological interventions concerning global south urbanization in northern academic dialogues.[5] This is a move that opens up myriad opportunities for research and renewed understandings of the urban, and through the *ontological turn*[6] it proposes, these are not exclusively *in*, or *for* the south itself.

As in Roy's (2011) nuanced epistemes of subaltern urbanism, the stance taken in this group of theoretical interventions in favor of southern singularities also provides important material for responding to the very partial understandings of informal urbanization by influential critics (see, for example, Mike Davis, 2006). Informality and favelas constitute rich empirical material for such discussions, but one can easily miss their ambivalent character. In many such sites, negative factors ranging from material precariousness, to everyday police abuse, to harsh living conditions act in conjunction with a wide set of bottom-up potentialities (often diminished and repressed through their heteronomic relations) that hold not only emancipatory political potentials but much explaining capacity, if examined closely and in their own terms. Such perspectives could depart from questioning (and looking for the diverse associations that connect to) the simple fact that most favela inhabitants, in most places, would change very little in their own communities. The ambivalence of the urban political in these contexts pertains to a number of key features. On the one hand, these include the accumulated democratic deficit crystallized in cityscapes, the militarized recuperation of territory, the cinematized/televised spectacle of gentrification, and the pervasive exclusions-as-otherings. On the other hand, there are the political possibilities situated in both/and terrains of radical democratic inclusion in the public sphere, which will tend to significantly alter its conditions, and in constructions of urban political alterity-(as-)autonomy.

Although they portray themselves as planned spaces and attempt to keep a certain distance from the image of the traditional favela, the *ocupações* above have many similarities to historical constitutions of such areas—representing not only a kind of DIY housing policy, but also self-constructed outsider spaces constantly seeking forms of autonomy and lines of flight (therefore in constant repression[7]). Thus, because of a historical ethnographic deficit in urban studies well captured and criticized by several recent postcolonial interventions, a great deal of southern

urban epistemologies remain in the unknowns of urban theory, and they constitute not simply different experiences, but also other urban imaginaries. The trajectory of the favela in the making of urban normativities and the ways they appear not only in policy but also in the practices of social movements in Brazil since the 1960s is an important factor in the new round of occupations. The acceptance of the favela in the 1960s and 1970s, as territories and forms of city building that progressive urbanists should defend and not decry, mutates in a first moment into an international policy standard (promoted by the World Bank) (Davis, 2006, pp. 70–94), resulting in several experiences of 'upgrading' and basic infrastructure provision. The current process with the occupations is a new round in this lineage, in which organized movements build planned irregular areas from scratch, aiming at their future integration into the 'formal city' with zero impact in terms of evicted families.

Concerning the recent discussions in postcolonial urbanisms, a first critical remark from a Brazilian and Latin American standpoint is that sometimes, while privileging the Asian and African contexts, they tend to obfuscate our own experiences of urbanization, whose histories show some interesting, underrated and maybe revealing parallels to the ultra-accelerated contemporary dynamics in Asia and Africa. Of course, this does not invalidate the relevance of the bulk of the theoretical developments brought forward by the current trends in postcolonial urbanism for understanding Latin American urbanization—but the empirical inputs could give further space to the region, something that would involve important consequences, mainly in the theoretical approach to neoliberalism. If historical trajectories continue the current trend of inserting parts of Southeast Asia into the main stages of global wealth production and management,[8] cementing the idea of the twenty-first century as the Asian Century (both economically and theoretically), Latin America and Africa will be restructured along this process as peripheries no longer exclusively for Euro North American centers, but increasingly for Asian centralities of power, knowledge and wealth as well. And if recent trends of postcolonial urbanism are largely connected to Asian and African perspectives of postcolonial theory, its Latin American versions– comprising mainly the Modernity-Coloniality group (e.g. Mignolo, 2007a, 2007b)—have only begun to overflow into the terrain of urban studies (Vainer, 2014).[9]

The dialogue between these two trends of postcolonialism in their intersection with urban studies is still a blank page that could eventually provide rich material for both. A Brazilian version would certainly involve

the critique of the twentieth century cultural cauldron as a form of nation building through the erasing of differences and the silencing of the subaltern, but at the same time the idea of anthropophagy, as in Oswald de Andrade's manifesto, in which the European is not "delinked" (as in Mignolo) but cannibalized. Meanwhile, some Latin American perspectives would also tend to bring along parts of the continent's social sciences tradition in understanding the specificities of the region's several different social, economic, spatial and historical formations, a history of ideas that has important inputs from sociologists and political economists. The latter's interpretation of a persistent colonial condition in the peripheral character of the region's economies departs from André Gunder Frank, Raúl Prebisch and Celso Furtado's analysis of the consequences of extractivism as the economic inheritance of colonialism. This is a reading that regains pertinence with the post-1990 neoliberal drive towards comparative advantages, whose effects for the (manufacturing) metropolitan areas should not be underestimated. It is important to note that in the Brazilian experience of a progressive center-left national government from 2003 to the 2016 coup, this structural economic shift back to the pre-1930 period of predominance of commodity exports has not only continued, but gained strength. This happened as the Chinese demand for such sectors grew exponentially and provided the growth dynamic (regardless of local labor costs) that the distributive model of policy needed to work. The current moment's political vulnerability of these governments in South America are not only related to a conservative recrudescence and organized reaction (also clearly inserted in international chains), but also to the commodity market bust of the last few years that brought the cycle of inclusive growth to a halt.

It is not necessary to agree with the developmentalist modernizing drive that traditionally derives as a set of policy prognosis from those historical analyses to recognize their validity in explaining the persistence of our peripheral economic condition, whose genealogies connect to colonialism in its ever-evolving formats. Today, they can blend with more politicized proposals of the idea of development that attempt to open its meanings towards many possible democratic constructions—in terms that replace the twentieth century's projects of promoting modernization with attempts to open up radically democratic trajectories for social spaces of difference. The new urban social movements' demands for deeper democratization, which tackle the recent entrepreneurialist urban policy-making environment of the neoliberal turn in BH, are in tune with an interpretation

of neoliberalism as departing from the (police) state. Many of the struggles that they engage in—against social housing as a form of financialization of the poor, or public transit as a concession of guaranteed profits to private capital operating the systems (as in the initial sparks of the June 2013 events)—also implicate the neoliberal city as a state phenomenon. On another level, the coup against President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 opens doors to a radical austerity fix in the regulatory apparatus at the national scale that undermine major democratic achievements from the re-democratization period of the 1980s, freezing budgets for public services for twenty years, proposing drastic changes in the public pension system and in labor legislations and rights. In this new authoritarian wave, *democracy against the state* (Abensour, 2010) involves struggles from the former against the clearly neoliberal constitution of the latter.[10]

In terms of the movements behind the occupations, their struggles are tuned to *the city against the state* (Velloso, 2015), and operate in concrete grounds that involve courts, negotiations with landowners and construction companies mediated by the state, street protests with a large deal of police violence, frequently mobilized resistance to eviction threats, violence perpetrated by drug traffickers attempting to take over the occupations and/or occupiers that engage in selling land and houses in the squats etc. These conflicts crosscut assemblages of agents and institutions operating in domains that connect near and distant orders, cross-scalar processes related to local histories of land tenure concentration through corruption and, simultaneously, to housing policies designed by macroeconomists at the federal government as a pseudo-Keynesian policy package to counter the effects of the 2008 financial crisis. Hence, political responses also need to operate on these multiscalar terms, as the urban movements addressed here know well.

Robinson and Parnell (2011) emphasize the political possibilities one can find in southern cities—of overcoming, escaping or leaving behind the close encounters between neoliberalism and planning. They propose an open regard to new and diverse directions that new trajectories could point to and thereby highlight important openings in the southern contingencies of different pathways of counter-hegemony and bottom-up attempts at social change. Obviously, this does not exclude current hegemonies from their everyday production of space, whose consequences feed the continued struggles in which these politicized agents engage. In this sense, the squats and the new urban social movements represent, *at the same time*, both a *puissance* of the southern city in its creative potential

that emanates from an everyday life of struggle and resistance, and a result of larger economic-political forces that are able to operate in the (re)production of new forms of rent and value extraction. The occupations constitute a very small but frontal attack to a key historical pillar in the constitutions of power and hegemony in Brazil, i.e. access to land, revealing the insufficiency of the post-dictatorship experience of democratization in addressing the extreme and persistent inequality in (both urban and rural) land tenure, even amidst active urban social movements and their direct insertion in the state in many spheres and cities.

Conclusion

The struggles examined in this chapter are unfolding processes that I have only started to portray in the inherent partiality of unfinished socio-spatial dynamics. The struggles of occupiers continue, facing eviction threats, the entrance of the drug business and the pressure coming from a beginning informal real estate market in the occupations etc. These stories are part of a historical lineage, which, in a certain postcolonial perspective, go back to the struggles of runaway slaves in attempting to build and organize their own communities (still ongoing in the *quilombola* communities that managed to survive)[11]. In the domain of contemporary urban policy, politics and the political, they represent a new round of movements emerged after the exhaustion of the cycle that started in early 1960s in the roots of the urban reform movements and melded into the progressive mayors of the PT in the 1990s and the federal government in the early Lula period (Holston, 2008). The chapter has attempted to tell a story of an experience that are simultaneously inserted both in a web of urban neoliberalism operating in transscalar fashions, and in an assemblage of localized/contingent political singularities that attempt to produce space differentially in their own emancipatory terms. As such, and in ways that I could only point towards in this chapter, a plural theoretical and methodological stance, inserted in both a critical strand of urban studies informed by political economy and thicker empirical mappings of webs of agents, events and relations informed by postcolonialism and/or poststructuralism, can be a potent form of approaching the urban political today, and not only in southern contexts.

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Notes

1. A story yet to be told, which escapes our scope in this intervention, is Henri Lefebvre's direct influence in Brazil's urban social movements in the late 1960s and early 70s. *Le Droit à la Ville*'s 1969 translation (Lefebvre, 1968) published in Portugal circulated quickly within the Brazilian community of activist urbanists (according to some accounts, the military government's censors did not capture Lefebvre's connection to Marxism), and while there is a great amount of debate concerning the subsequent diminishing/distortion of the term (rather ironically) by those involved in organized action to the simple access to "means of collective consumption", Lefebvre's influence is recognized by many.
2. There is a foundational political dispute around the terms *occupation* versus *invasion*, in which the movements use the first, while the media aligned with conservative mayors use the second to condemn their actions. The idea of occupying in this context refers to a sociopolitical attempt to frame the movements' own actions in terms of promoting justice and serving the collective interests of diminishing the stock of empty homes and urbanized plots of land while many people remain without access to homes or land.
3. In Magalhães (2017), I approach the events of 2013 and the subsequent reactions that culminated in the 2016 coup against Dilma Rousseff.
4. e.g., large urbanized plots donated by the state to private investors, conditioned upon industrial investments that end up not taking place; areas owned by corporations that owe large amounts of property tax to the city, and that remain empty in the middle of urbanized neighborhoods, waiting for a favorable change in the city's zoning ordinance for higher density building etc.
5. I do not have the scope in this chapter to present a careful reading, in relation to the context above described and the stories in which they insert, of each of these trends in contemporary southern/postcolonial urbanism—such as Peck (2015), with his own perspective on this literature. For a recent panoramic on important parts of this literature, see Parnell and Oldfield (2014).
6. On a more deeply theoretical note, fertile grounds could hide behind eventual interfaces in urban studies and human geography—and not exclusively within this lineage of southern urbanisms—with the ongoing debates on the ontological turn amongst anthropologists (de Castro, 2014; Graeber, 2015).
7. Not only from abusive police forces but also from the drug trafficking and armed militias that take over these territories. Today, the Rio de Janeiro story of favela militarized police units intensifies conflicts amongst these forces. Their locations, restricted to the strategic parts of the city either inserted in its postcard or World Cup/Olympics circuits, is very telling of their connections to a city marketing/land rent/urban financialization nexus.

8. Alternatively, dislocating centers towards Asia—as in Arrighi's (1994) interpretation of this geo-economic shift as inserted in a centuries old Braudelian genealogy of capitalist centers changing places in each long cycle of accumulation.
9. It is worth noting that the *epistemologies of the south* which Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) invokes have been an important and influential theoretical intervention in Brazil and Latin America in the last 20 years. Also through practical engagements with the World Social Forum and its networks of movements, Santos' approach to popular knowledge and political epistemologies of southern *Others* could be an interesting additional point of contact and dialogue for contemporary postcolonial urbanists.
10. On Storper's (2016) critique of the idea and concept of the neoliberal city, it is important to note how it speaks from a technocratic standpoint that is very common amongst neoclassical hegemonic economists that deny the validity of the adjective—in spite of the IMF itself engaging with the term 'neoliberalism' in technical discourse more recently (Ostry, Loungani, & Furceri, 2016). It also does not seem to realize the trans-scalarity of urban neoliberalism (as a concept that refers to a scalar-relational set of processes), or this connection to the state as a major pillar, implying a general democratic deficit that is intensely experienced in the contemporary metropolis.
11. Bringing important implications for the contemporary left, in recognizing that the roots of organized resistance movements in Brazil are far from the immigration of Italian anarchists in the early twentieth century, as the common story tells.

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CHAPTER 13

Counter Publics and Counter Spaces

Walter Nicholls and Justus Uitermark

Introduction

Marginalized groups often engage in broad struggles to demand recognition of their equality. Lesbians, gays, transgenders, and queers have struggled to assert their fundamental equality in the public sphere.[1] These struggles resulted in remarkable changes in opinions and policies as courts and legislatures have passed measures to recognize equality in various ways. In cities across the United States, African Americans have been mobilizing against institutional racism and police repression, asserting the simple yet poignant claim that 'black lives matter.' Precarious immigrants have also mobilized to legalize their status and oppose large-scale deportations. They have struggled hard to gain recognition that they possess fundamental rights in spite of their unauthorized status. These mobilizations are different in many ways but they share some things in common: the groups undertaking them have faced intense marginalization, and they developed strong political identities that placed them in opposition to the status quo. In addition, these mobilizations are oftentimes situated in specific cities (San Francisco and New York; Ferguson and Oakland; Los Angeles and Chicago). The aim of this theoretical essay is to explore the links between the oppositional identities of

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marginalized groups and the cities where these groups are rooted. It performs the task by urbanizing the concept of 'counter public'. Nancy Fraser (1990) conceptualized 'counter publics' as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (1990, p. 68). Counter publics enable people to construct critical political imaginaries and identities. These help identify injustices, construct possible alternatives, and motivate marginalized people to engage in contentious political activities. While Fraser's analysis remains important three decades after its original publication, she provides little discussion concerning the spatial underpinnings of such counter publics. We attempt to reveal the 'urban' component of these counter publics and, following from this, how these counter publics actually help form new oppositional identities. Our approach is different in terms of both goals and means from scholars who follow Jacques Rancière's understand of 'the Political' and 'politics' (Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016b; Uitermark & Nicholls, 2014; see also Beveridge & Koch, 2017). In this conception, the 'Political' label is reserved for those acts that stipulate equality and disrupt the status quo. Whereas Rancierians feel that it is their task to define (and invariably support) what is properly 'Political' and to distinguish it from (invariably despised) mere "politics," we are not interested in such normative questions. We are instead concerned with identifying the preconditions for challenges against the status quo. We do not subscribe to the Rancierian notion that 'the Political' (however understood) is equally likely to be instantiated anywhere. On the contrary, we think that there are specific conditions that nourish challenges to the status quo and that it is up to social scientists to discover those conditions. It is with this purpose in mind, that we propose to study the counter spaces accommodating counter publics. That is, we intend to situate counter publics in their specific urban spaces. Our hope is to untangle some of the mechanisms linking the cities where combative groups emerge to the oppositional identities that fuel broader struggles for recognition and equality. Building alternative political imaginaries and oppositional publics necessarily involves the production of space (see Kohn, 2003).

The paper is theoretical in focus and content. It draws on different cases to illustrate central arguments. The first section provides a short overview of Fraser's original argument. The second section identifies how processes that facilitate the emergence and politicization of marginalized groups. The third section discusses the informal and formal connections that tie these groups together and how such ties influence the formation

of oppositional identities and cultures. The final section describes how oppositional groups scale up and engage in political contests in the dominant (bourgeois, white, male, heterosexual, Christian) public sphere. The section highlights the problems that result from direct engagement in the dominant public sphere and how such problems restrict the 'emancipatory potential' of oppositional struggles.

Publics and Counter Publics

Fraser provides a sympathetic yet forceful critique of Jürgen Habermas's concept of the 'public sphere'. The concept made an important contribution to Marxist literature, she argued, because it provided the conceptual tools to examine a sphere that exists between the economy and state:

> The idea of "the public sphere" in Habermas's … designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. The public sphere in Habermas's sense is also conceptually distinct from the official-economy; it is not an arena of market relations but rather one of discursive relations, a theater for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling. Thus, this concept of the public sphere permits us to keep in view the distinctions between state apparatuses, economic markets, and democratic associations, distinctions that are essential to democratic theory. (Fraser, 1990, p. 57)

The public sphere is an institutional space that permits the production and exchange of discourses. It is a relatively autonomous arena consisting of associations, newspapers, salons, and so on. These institutions permit people to step out of their individualized worlds, encounter circulating ideas, and debate the direction of general society. "[T]he idea of a public sphere is that of a body of 'private persons' assembled to discuss matters of 'public concern' or 'common interest'" (1990, p. 58).

Fraser welcomes this intervention, but she also develops an important critique. She shows that the public sphere was made possible in the nineteenth century by excluding multiple others (women, non-property owners, minorities, etc.). To engage in 'public matters', individuals needed to suspend private concerns and be capable of turning their attention to the

general interest. The inabilities of marginalized groups to bracket off their private interests limited their abilities to engage in truly public debate. Protecting the 'public' nature of the public sphere therefore required the exclusion of groups unable to shed their particularisms. Keeping the public sphere rational, free, transparent, and equal necessitated the exclusion of others who threatened to pollute it. Public sphere elites and gatekeepers in the nineteenth century (bourgeois white males) produced an arena of debate *for themselves*, using lofty values (rationality, public spiritedness, and so on) to legitimate the exclusion of others from taking a role.

The exclusionary character of the public sphere contributed to introducing important points of conflict in modern society. Exclusion and conflict were not accidental, contingent, or a reflection of decline as Habermas once suggested. They were instead constitutive elements of the public sphere. Fraser argued that:

> The exclusions and conflicts that appeared as accidental trappings from his [Habermas's] perspective, in this view become constitutive. The result is a gestalt switch that alters the very meaning of the public sphere. We can no longer assume that the bourgeois conception of the public sphere was simply an unrealized utopian ideal; it was also a masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule. (Fraser, 1990, p. 62)

Fraser adds that the exclusionary nature of the dominant public sphere was not strictly repressive. It did not result in passive subjects who quietly assumed their proper place on the margins of society. Echoing Michel Foucault (1978, 1982) on the productive nature of repressive powers, Fraser argued that exclusion contributed to the production of "subaltern counter publics". These counter publics were made up of groups of different marginalized groups (women, working class, minorities, gays, etc.).

Paralleling the dominant public sphere, excluded groups ('subalterns') developed their own institutions like associations, newspapers, cafes, and salons. This counter public sphere provided excluded and marginalized groups an infrastructure to come out of their private worlds, express common grievances, and engage in wide ranging debates concerning the righting of existing wrongs. Drawing on observations of the feminist movement, Fraser remarks that, "feminist women have invented new terms for describing social reality, including 'sexism,' 'the double shift,' 'sexual harassment,' and 'marital, date, and acquaintance rape.' Armed with such language, we have recast our needs and identities, thereby reducing, although not eliminating, the extent of our disadvantage in official

public spheres" (1990: 67). The ideas produced and exchanged within this discursive sphere helped provide excluded groups with the language needed to analyze power relations, understand how such relations contributed to their subordination and exclusion, and express why this is a fundamental wrong that needs to be remedied through collective struggle.

Cities, Counter Publics, Oppositional Identities

We agree with Fraser's critique of Habermas and embrace her concept of the counter public sphere. The concept remains powerful because it asserts the productive aspects of exclusion, identifies the concrete mechanisms involved in creating a counter public infrastructure, and points out how exchanges and interactions through this infrastructure produces ideas needed to construct oppositional identities. As Fraser explains, counter publics emerge from complex relational processes. We would add to this that cities contain unique properties that enable and accelerate these relational processes. In the discussion that follows, we highlight three ways that cities influence the formation of counter publics and shape oppositional identities of marginalized groups.

Forming Oppositional Institutions and Groups in Cities

A central precept of classical urban sociology is that cities are propitious environments for marginal groups to settle and flourish (Park & Burgess, 1921; Saunders, 1986; Wirth 1938). Large and complex urban areas make it easier for Fraser's 'subalterns' to emerge and form into relatively coherent groups. Cities are certainly not the only environment that facilitate group making, but they provide environments that are particularly good at helping 'deviants' and outcasts to emerge, connect to one another, and consolidate themselves into groups with common ways of thinking and feeling about matters in their broader sociopolitical worlds.

Drawing on this classical literature, Claude Fischer (1975) argued there were destructive aspects of cities that led to social *disorganization*. But, disorganization made it possible for the *reorganization* of new social groups. Large numbers in cities facilitate anonymity, weaken general collective norms, and favor tolerant dispositions among residents. These conditions create a particularly good environment for the emergence of new and different 'subcultures'. People bearing a stigma or engaged in deviant conduct may face greater restrictions in small towns because *smaller numbers*

permitted greater social control and sanctioning capacities by the established group. The large numbers found in big cities break down social control mechanisms and provide greater space and freedom for these groups to form. Fischer does not suggest that cities are spaces of total freedom but simply that large numbers make it more difficult for established groups to police the conduct and lives of outsiders, providing the latter more breathing room to take root, cluster, and grow.

Large numbers of outsiders provide economies of scale needed to sustain institutions like religious organizations, associations, media, socializing venues, and other organizations. These institutions are important because they provide social and emotional support for newly emerging groups. They also enable people to leave their homes, interact with one another, and exchange ideas about a range of general matters pertinent to the group. Numbers therefore create conditions for 'institutional completeness', which facilitate a parallel social, political, and cultural worlds to mainstream society. Institutional completeness is a fundamental condition that makes it possible for outsiders to construct cultural and political worlds apart from dominant society. Fischer expresses this formulation in the following way:

> The larger a subculture's population, the greater its "institutional completeness". That is, given basic market mechanisms, arrival at certain critical levels of size enables a social subsystem to create and support institutions which structure, envelop, protect, and foster its subculture. These institutions (e.g., dress styles, newspapers, associations) establish sources of authority and points of congregation and delimit social boundaries. In addition to the simple fact of the numbers themselves, they make possible and encourage keeping social ties within the group. (Fischer 1975, pp. 1325–26)

The large numbers of gays and lesbians in New York and San Francisco for instance made it possible to create relatively *complete*, *segregated* worlds (Armstrong, 2002; Chauncey, 1995; Duyvendak, 2011). By the 1980s and 1990s, Jan Willem Duyvendak argues (2011), these segregated worlds became "havens" for a particularly oppressed group of people. Small towns may have a handful of outsiders (e.g. gay youth) but strong social controls and low numbers may deprive these outsiders the room and economies of scale needed to develop robust institutions of their own. Large numbers do not mean that a group automatically develops "institutional completeness" but numbers provide conditions that increase the chances for this to happen.

The probability that oppositional institutions will emerge increases further when places come to be identified with marginalized groups. This happened, for instance, with the Castro district in San Francisco or the West End in Vancouver. This helped create strong 'pull effects' as people are drawn to these places for better support and relatively more freedom (Bouthillette, 1997). As these places attract more people, the group grows in size, complexity, and institutional strength. Just as important, larger numbers from the same group spur internal diversity. Higher densities in environments with limited carrying capacities spurs competition. Competition encourages people to seek out niches and develop innovative ways to survive and thrive in these urban environments. Such a process produces a greater variety of institutions (businesses, associations, political organizations, denominations, newspapers, etc.) to support the group and a more robust discursive space to support the circulation of different ideas. This can produce a population that may seem to casual onlookers as homogenous and unified but also one that is internally diverse and dynamic on the inside. Institutional completeness is an important condition for Fraser's counter publics.

The formation of many relatively segregated subcultural groups in areas of the city results in what Robert Park (1921) once called a "mosaic of little worlds." He argued that people traversed different worlds in their daily lives: moving from a world controlled by dominant groups in the day and settling back in the world of their subculture in the evening. We suggest that everyday movements between these institutionally complete worlds requires people to constantly work and rework their identities. This 'identity work' helps shape individual identities, which then feeds into the construction of broader collective identities (Snow & Anderson, 1987, p. 1348). George Chauncey describes how crisscrossing these separate worlds contributed to producing gay identity in New York during the 1920s:

> Although the anonymity of the city was important because it helped make it possible for gay men to live double lives, it was only a starting point … The complexity of the city's social and spatial organization made it possible for gay men to construct the multiple public identities necessary for them to participate in the gay world without losing the privileges of the straight: assuming identity at work, another in leisure; one identity before biological kin, another with gay friends. The city … sustained a 'mosaic of little worlds', and their segregation from one another allowed men to assume a different identity in each of them, without having to reveal the full range of their identities in any one of them. (Chauncey, 1993, pp. 133–34)

Switching between gay and straight worlds, dominant and insurgent cultures played an instrumental world in producing a gay identity and shaping the subjectivity of group members. Physical proximity is crucial for many of these functions. The development of innovations as well as emotional bonds require constant and intense exchanges that can only be sustained through physical proximity. However, this does not mean that these counter publics are exclusively local. They are connected through translocal networks that allow the circulation of people as well as information.[2]

Sharpening Oppositional Identities Through the Fires of Hostility

The above discussion described the conditions that permitted outside and marginalized groups to produce 'different' institutional worlds, and identities with distinctive symbolic and physical boundaries. But difference is not necessarily oppositional in the sense that a group might not position itself in a contentious and adversarial relation to dominant groups. We now point to relational interactions within cities that help make emerging identities not only different but also 'oppositional'.

The increased presence of subgroups (LGBTQs, African Americans, immigrants, and so on) can and often does trigger hostility by dominant groups. Hostility is often directed at a specific group because it is viewed as morally 'unclean' (Elias, 1994, p. xxx) or because it is seen as a threat to the power, privilege, and opportunities of dominant groups (Massey, 2008). Hostility can disrupt subgroup formation but it can also accelerate the process by brightening boundaries and bolstering group solidarity. Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) argued that when immigrant groups in cities are faced with great hostility and few exit options, there is a stronger likelihood that in-group solidarity develops (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993, p. 1329). Illustrating the dynamic with Nathan Glazer's well-known study of New York Italians, they point out that, "These immigrants learned *to think of themselves as Italian and to band together* on that basis after the native population began to treat them in the same manner and to apply to them the same derogatory labels" (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993, p. 1328, emphasis in original). The emergent and institutionally complete counter public worlds made an emergent identity possible but hostility spurred solidarity and brightened the boundaries separating this world from others in their vicinity (see Alba, 2005). Dominant groups were not

simply seen as 'different' but also as pitted against one's own subordinate group in contentious, zero-sum relations. This helps solidify the common identity of disparate people with a common background while making their principal adversaries an important and constituting element of how they think, talk, and feel in a stratified and conflict-ridden world.

Discriminatory public policies can further sharpen the oppositional edge of emerging group identities. The local is a generative space of government discrimination and exclusion because local public officials have great discretionary powers to circumvent national laws and institutions designed to guarantee equal rights (Massey, 2008). As a consequence, the locality is a space that is saturated by visible and invisible regulations that aim to exclude and repress subordinate groups. African Americans were once banned from public parks and shunned to the back of the bus; immigrants must contend with police checkpoints, random police stops, and housing and job discrimination because of their status; and gay and lesbian people have contended with countless city measures to block their assembly and interactions in public places. These and other marginalized groups do not confront systemic inequalities and discrimination in the abstract. They encounter institutionalized discrimination in their everyday urban worlds. Confronting small and large aggressions throughout the course of a normal day can serve as a springboard for considering principles of social justice. The gay rights movement in the United States emerged in response to persistent police repression of gay spaces. Gay people developed a profound sense that their fundamental rights and equality were being violated. The police crackdown of the Stonewall Bar in New York in 1969 was a flashpoint and helped accelerate the movement's development (Adam, 1987; Epstein, 1999). These acts of repression that made up everyday gay life helped solidify an identity that was not only different from straights but that stood in a contentious and oppositional position to the dominant heteronormative order. In a very similar way, the civil rights movement emerged from concrete struggles over discriminatory policies expressed over the use of public space, transit policies, and local education (McAdam, 1982). In these and many other instances, identities of marginalized groups emerged from the fires of everyday individual and institutional hostility. Each act of hostility nourishes senses and feelings that a wrong is being done, and that the members of the group deserve respect and recognition as equals in society dominated by adversarial groups (bourgeoisie, whites, males, straights, national citizens).

Organic Intellectuals and Crafting the Oppositional Identity

The previous discussions identified how dominant group and out-group interactions in cities can generate oppositional sentiments and feelings of emergent groups. The existence of institutionally complete worlds and counter publics helps translate these feelings and sentiments into crisp political identities. This subsection stresses that the actual work of transforming sentiments and utterances into sharp, politicizing identities is performed through the interaction between 'organic intellectuals' and 'subaltern publics'. This work occurs through the concrete discursive spaces of the counter public: newspapers, associations, churches, schools, union halls, and so on. Interactions in these spaces help transform loose sentiments, utterances, and cultures into an identity that is bounded, oppositional, and political.

Antonio Gramsci (1971) argued many years ago that marginalized groups have implicit cultures and discourses about their positioning in the social world. They draw upon this thick cultural reservoir to frame their thoughts and talk about the injustices they encounter in their daily lives. The 'popular' or 'folk' culture of marginalized groups contained, according to him, reactionary elements, but these elements "are juxtaposed in popular consciousness with progressive elements which as 'that mass of beliefs and opinions on the subject of one's "own" rights which are in continual circulation amongst the popular masses, and are forever being revived under the pressure of the real conditions of life and the *spontaneous comparison between the ways in which the various classes live*'" (Gramsci, in Billings, 1990, p. 8, emphasis added). People have an implicit, if not always articulate, understanding of equal rights and such understandings bubble up through everyday *interactions* with dominant groups or social classes ("spontaneous comparison"). Their implicit ideas of equality serve as the raw material and building blocks for constructing a more robust oppositional identity, an identity that resonates directly with the feelings, experiences, and ethics of the group.[3]

Crafting a coherent oppositional identity from this unprocessed, mishmash of 'folk' culture requires, according to Gramsci, the intervention of "organic intellectuals." The emergence of institutionally complete counter publics in cities facilitates the cultivation of diverse organic intellectuals from different institutions (Gramsci, 1971). They can be teachers, artists, activists, musicians, writers, religious leaders, and so on. These are everyday intellectuals (as opposed to "traditional intellectuals") rooted in the

lives of the people they work with and serve. They share a common *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984) with the people they serve, and as such, they possess an intuitive understanding of their culture and how to employ it in ways to produce an oppositional identity. Their specialized work in producing and managing discourse, narratives, rituals, and symbols allows the organic intellectual to use pre-existing, folk ideas about rights and justice as building blocks for overarching discourses and mobilizing frames. Through these broader frames and discourses, different members of the group begin to have common ways to diagnose what is wrong with the existing order of things and what needs to be done to right these wrongs (Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow, Benford, Rochford, & Worden, 1986). The organic intellectual therefore helps ground social justice talk. People do not experience the ideas of social justice as an abstraction because organic intellectuals in their midst use the language and concrete experiences of the 'people' to make broader sense of the unequal world they live in. The rootedness of organic intellectuals allows them to play a pivotal—if not necessary—role in crafting discourses that mesh well with the pre-existing identity of the marginalized group.

Organic intellectuals do not express frames and critiques individually. They are members of an organization or institution (newspapers, schools, associations, cafes, churches, workshops, etc.), and these serve as spaces that enable constant interactions with smaller publics (readers, students, parishoners, audiences). Within these institutions, normal people are stimulated to come out of their individual worlds, interact with intellectuals, and begin discussing their specific experiences and grievances with other members of their group. These *situated interactions* between people and organic intellectuals help sift through grievances, identify commonalities across different experiences, and begin assembling and crafting broader oppositional frames, discourses, and narratives. We therefore believe that the construction of overarching frames and narratives is an interactional process inscribed in the everyday back-and-forth between intellectuals and regular people in various institutional settings. In these spaces, grievances, values, and emotions swirl together, and organic intellectuals help to bring these together into broader frames and narratives. Immigrants seeking day labor work in Los Angeles, for instance, gather at worker centers to search for employment (Nicholls, 2016). The centers play an instrumental role in finding laborers employment for day or multi-day work. Activist organizers running the centers ('organic intellectuals') use the physical assembly of workers to discuss problems. They encourage the workers to identify

commonalities and think about the broader structural forces (racism, poor labor market protections, lack of legal status) causing these problems. Rather than talking *at* the workers by imposing abstract ideas of justice, the organizers at the centers employ the tacit culture of the immigrants (manners of speech, jokes, moralities, mannerisms) to help them draw broader connections for themselves.

Discourses and frames are often diffused through *networks* between organizations making up the counter public, and the people constituting the organizations. Institutions and organizations are oftentimes connected to one another through their publics and formal organizational networks. Churches, schools, immigrant associations, radios and newspapers can be linked to one another through common audiences, board members, and informal links. This results in what network theorists call "multiplex networks" (Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001). Pre-existing relations between organizations through institutional links or members facilitate the flow of ideas, frames, discourses, and information. A worker center, for instance, may also be connected to a neighborhood community center and local church through personal and formal ties. This means that frames produced in one institutional space are likely to spread to these other spaces, intersecting with other ideas, discourses, and frames. Sometimes these ideas overlap and reinforce one another, with people moving across these institutions (from church to association to community center) encountering similar messages and frames. This helps provide the basis for common group norms and values. Other times there may be differences, debate and disagreement. The networked world of the counter public therefore becomes a source for constructing a common political identity but also many opportunities for people to debate the nature of that identity and what people should do address injustice facing them.

Associations, newspapers, and religious institutions are not simply mechanisms for passing information and words along. They can also invest words and symbols with value, transforming them from utterances into 'truth statements'. As individuals frequently encounter the critical ideas in different institutional settings (community center, radio, workers association), the ideas over time are assumed to be truthful statements. The legitimation of critical discourses among the subaltern groups contributes to their naturalization, whereby members no longer see the critique as dangerous or foreign but as a natural way to describe the existing order and the group's place within it. For instance, persistent racial inequalities are viewed by most members of the African American community as stemming

from racism and injustice. Such views are considered to be legitimate statements of fact by members of this community. Once, members of the community may have viewed the use of such discourses to be subversive and dangerous. Now, many members of this group view these discourses as normal and common sense ways to describe race relations. What were once discourses and ideas that were perceived as illegitimate, unreasonable and troubling to substantial segments of a group (racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.), become normalized through the work of organic intellectuals to push them out there, and through their increased circulation through the circuits of the counter public sphere. These "dangerous ideas" become a part of the habitus and political disposition of subjugated groups. "Consensus" is reached in the subaltern community when there is broad agreement concerning the source of the problem. Debate does not pivot on whether the socio-political order is bad or good, normal or wrong, legitimate or illegitimate. There is a consensus over the diagnosis: the order of things is responsible for persistent inequalities and injustice. The point of debate shifts towards the prognosis: "what is to be done" about the wrongs facing the group. Whereas some may opt for a strategy of incremental reform, others may be filled with feelings of political urgency and argue that waiting is simply not an option.[4] Deep feelings and expressions of urgency motivate some activists to make their claims within the dominant public sphere (Fraser, 1990). While dominant groups may push back and assign blame to the bad culture and moralities of the group, these politically energized groups struggle to make their grievances and concerns into a legitimate issue of public debate.

Fraser stresses the dual character of "subaltern counter publics": they help form oppositional groups and identities, and this process makes it possible for such groups to engage in contentious political battles concerning systemic wrongs:

> The point is that, in stratified societies, subaltern counter publics have a dual character. On the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and *regroupment*; on the other hand, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics. It is precisely in the dialectic between these two functions that their emancipatory potential resides. This dialectic enables subaltern counter publics partially to offset, although not wholly to eradicate, the unjust participatory privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups in stratified societies. (Fraser, 1990, p. 68)

According to our formulation, urban areas facilitate the rise of counter publics and these spaces are strategic arenas where oppositional identities are constructed, legitimated, normalized.

Engaging in the Dominant Public Sphere: Between Opposition and Conformity

The last section of the paper addresses how oppositional groups scale up from urban bases and engage in struggles in the dominant public sphere. It identifies some of the dilemmas that arise from these struggles. The rules for producing counter public and oppositional identities differ from the rules that enable legitimate engagement in the dominant public sphere. The language and discourses that make certain discourses legitimate and compelling for the marginalized group may produce the exact opposite effect in the dominant public sphere. The contrasting conditions of legitimacy (between the group and broader public) introduce dilemmas for marginalized groups engaging in broader political debate.

Fraser stresses that counter publics create possibilities for "emancipatory potentials" because they permit group making processes and help inculcate groups with oppositional identities and wills (ibid.). While "emancipatory potentials" certainly result from this process, we also believe that these potentials can break down once the struggle moves into the dominant public sphere. The collective power (social and cultural) accumulated in counter publics is important and enabling but it is oftentimes not sufficient to offset the overwhelming symbolic power of elites. These elites wield their symbolic power to define the terms of acceptable and unacceptable speech in the dominant public sphere, often excluding groups who fail to speak, act, and emote in the correct way (Bourdieu, 1994; Dikeç, 2004) Fraser's initial critique of Habermas still holds. Groups emerging from counter publics have accumulated certain levels of collective and discursive powers that enable them to become political and engage in broader struggles for equality. However, once they enter the public sphere, they must contend with adversarial elites in a game that that is heavily rigged against them. A strong counter public enables a marginalized group to enter the public sphere but the group does not enter as equals but as subordinates facing unfavorable 'rules' of engagement.

Oppositional discourses may speak to the hearts and minds of subordinate groups and motivate them to engage in political action. The power of these discourses lies in their proximity to the people and their convincing

ways to reveal the urgency of political action. These discourses are legitimate and politically enabling for the group *but* the broader public may not view them as wholly legitimate. Critiques of capitalism, institutional racism, national borders, or heteronormativity may have great legitimacy for marginalized groups but they may also be seen as illegitimate to the broader public. Dominant adversaries can use their symbolic power to dismiss these discourses as nonsensical 'noises' of a radical and uncivilized mob rather than the reasonable claims of a legitimate political group. For example, participants of massive immigrant rights demonstrations in California in 1994 proudly waved flags from different countries in the world. They proudly asserted their difference and rejected exclusionary immigration measures. These political performances and discourses were articulated in an unfavorable and largely xenophobic political field. Within this context, their anti-immigrant adversaries used this act of dis-identification (to use Jacques Rancière's term) to argue that immigrants were irreducibly foreign, resistant to assimilation, and intent on reconquering America (Chavez, 2008). Rather than carving open a space in the public sphere, the expression of an identity that stood in *opposition* to dominant norms resulted in closure. Thus, discourses that are legitimate, enabling, and motivating for subordinate groups (e.g. pride in country of origin, anti-border) may be viewed as illegitimate and polluting within the dominant public sphere, automatically disqualifying subordinate groups for entry into the formal political arena. What is productive and enabling at one stage in the politicization process (making oppositional group) becomes counterproductive and disabling at another (entering battles in the public sphere). Whereas the first is important to achieve the second, bringing the first into the second can and often does lead to fast and sharp dismissal, or at least political marginalization.

Because the strategy of 'dis-identification' can be counterproductive, challengers oftentimes favor a strategy of 'identification' (Nicholls, 2013). Such a strategy aims to produce discourses and performances that demonstrate shared values and conformity with the dominant culture. Challengers employing the strategy stress a direct tie to the society through discourses of rootedness and assimilation, discuss goals and aspirations in ways that resonate with dominant values, and represent themselves as contributors to the common good. If abnormality, deviance, and other uncivil attributes are the basis for justifying exclusion and marginalization, it becomes more difficult to legitimate exclusion when the presumed Other has many of the same qualities as the dominant group. When a group successfully demonstrates its normalcy, the grounds of

exclusion no longer exist. The system is 'wrongly' excluding a group that merits fairness and equality. The strategy of identification facilitates entry into the political field by helping present a legitimate way to frame the critique of the system. The critique is not of the core tenets of the system but that the system is not living up to its virtuous promises because it is not recognizing the equality of people who merit such recognition. Such arguments can resonate with broader parts of the public because it rests on hegemonic ideas of right and wrong. By revealing the limits of a society's equality (i.e. the gap between what is said and what is actually done), activists present a compelling argument for why the system should address these wrongs and extend legal rights and resources to marginalized groups.

While the strategy of identification helps challengers to gain legitimacy and recognition, it reinforces the idea that the 'rights of others' (Benhabib, 2004) are most commonly recognized when others are the same as the dominant group. Immigrants, gay people, women, poor, etc. gain broader support for their cause when they demonstrate their good conduct and upstanding moral character. By default, those unable or unwilling to demonstrate conformity face greater difficulty justifying their claims. The more success one group has in demonstrating themselves as 'good' and 'deserving' subjects, the more they draw attention to the attributes that make others 'bad' and 'undeserving' subjects. Good and deserving challengers consequently become unwitting agents of stigmatization and marginalization of less desirable others (Nicholls & Uitermark, 2015). Once viewed as less deserving by the public, these other groups may subsequently find it more difficult to gain moral and political support for themselves and their cause. The strategy of identification opens the door to marginalized groups and helps point out injustices in the system, but the same strategy can help reproduce inequalities by reinforcing distinctions between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' groups, making the struggles of certain groups more legitimate than others.

What constitutes legitimate discourses in counter publics and dominant public can differ sharply, resulting in the circulation of conflicting and contradictory ideas concerning the political identities of subordinate groups. Both types of discourses circulate uneasily in the discursive arenas of marginalized groups. The discourses of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X both gained great prevalence in African American life in the 1960s, giving rise to well-known 'framing disputes' between the different factions within this counter public. Similarly, the highly conformist discourses of some

immigrant activists in today's immigrant rights movements (deserving of rights because a person is fully assimilated in national cultural life) are juxtaposed to much more radical discourses expressing pride in one's undocumented status and the hope of a world without borders. The circulation of these contradictory discourses often result in major conflicts between different factions but this plurality of discourses also drives debates forward and function to push the general goals for equality forward (the left 'flank' effect). The willingness of the U.S. government to work with Martin Luther King Jr. was, for insance, facilitated by its fear of Malcolm X's growing prominence on the left flank of the black community.

Fraser suggests that counter publics present "emancipatory potential" for progressive social change. We however argue that this potential often comes apart when oppositional groups enter the dominant sphere. It produces three major problems that eat into this emancipatory potential: discourses that are legitimate for counter publics are often illegitimate in the broader public sphere; the strategy of identification results in discourses that aggravate divides between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' groups and reproduce the core exclusionary logics of the system; and attempts to reconcile conformist and oppositional discourses can produce powerful framing disputes that eat into and undermine the solidarity of the oppositional group. In this way, we would suggest that the formation of counter publics enable the politicization of marginalized groups but entry into the dominant public sphere results in very real problems that restrict emancipatory potentials.

Conclusions

Counter publics are important for constructing oppositional groups. And spaces are important for constructing counter publics. These are spaces where individuals who are excluded and stigmatized can come out, connect to one another, build solidarities, build common frames and narratives, and become socialized into this distinctive cultural world that stands apart and in opposition to the dominant order. Numbers and proximity are conditions found in large urban areas that strongly facilitate the creation of institutions that enable disparate individuals to form into groups. In addition to this, we suggest that juxtaposed worlds and hostility towards outsiders spurs the proliferation of cultural forms, discourses, and symbols that brighten 'boundaries' and position outsider groups in a contentious and opposition relation to dominant groups. Through intensive

interactions with different smaller publics in these institutions, organic intellectuals work with people to build up and circulate oppositional imaginaries. Through time and countless debates and discussions, these oppositional cultures and imaginaries become legitimate and normalized, becoming the common sense ways outsiders see and feel themselves in the hierarchy of things.

The existence of counter publics, as Fraser stresses, is an essential first step in entering the broader public sphere with a certain degree of power and will. While we agree the basis of 'emancipatory' struggles begins with these robust counter publics, entry into the dominant political sphere introduces powerful constraints that produce new problems that ultimately undermine the 'emancipatory potentials' of oppositional groups. Here we stress the clash between the identities viewed as legitimate among the outside group and the 'rules' governing discursive exchanges in the dominant public sphere. Things that inspire and empower outside groups to become political and assert their right to have rights may simply be rejected in the public sphere and open the group to sharp attacks by adversaries. We suggest that when challengers adjust their discourses and frames to achieve greater legitimacy in the dominant sphere (the strategy of identification), this can and often results in differentiating between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' outsiders and reproducing underlying exclusionary rules.

These and other problems help limit the 'emancipatory potentials' of counter publics and oppositional groups. Embedded in these constraints, we believe, challengers cannot and should not expect their challenges to produce an emancipatory break with the existing order of things. Instead, they can expose injustices, push the envelope on what is reasonable, make aggressive political moves when cracks open up, and build up on small wins to pursue ongoing transformations. 'Emancipation' assumes that there is point beyond bondage; that there is a St. Paul moment in which all the constraints of our political and social worlds can be transcended and 'true' liberty and equality can be attained. We are skeptical about such propositions because of the contradictions we point out in this paper. This does not mean that we believe resistance is futile. Instead, we advocate a *realpolitik* of radical guerrilla-like resistances in which oppositional groups struggle through never ending trench warfare with different expressions of power in their specific emanations. These fights are messy, dirty, compromised, and filled with impure power plays that do not fit the neat binaries of ('police' and 'politics') of post-political literature inspired by Rancière. They do not and will not achieve *égaliberté* because life outside of power is impossible.

They can however push back on exclusionary boundaries as we know them today and provide marginalized peoples with a larger space for asserting their own voice in the public sphere. Over time these struggles can produce better conditions for a group but such conditions will be associated with new powers, exclusionary institutions, standards of normal/abnormal behavior, inequities, constraints and disciplinary measures, and so on. Unanticipated unfreedoms and inequalities emerging from struggles will serve as the basis for new oppositional subject formation and the pursuit of new struggles in the future. We conclude with a singular assertion: power is permanent and so too is resistance. This means that there can only be permanent fights for the ideas of liberty and equality (in their countless interpretations) but such fights are by necessity messy. These fights produce advances but also new and unanticipated forms of exclusion, opening up new pathways of struggle.

Notes

1. The first part of this chapter includes fragments from Nicholls and Uitermark (2016a).
2. It can be asked to what extent these insights—derived from the classics of urban sociology—are still relevant today in increasingly "hyperdiverse" cities (see also Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016b). Arguably, Park's "mosaic of little worlds" does not apply well to metropolises with neighborhoods that are extremely diverse in terms of ethnicity as well as other characteristics. To the degree that this is indeed the case, we would expect that these neighborhoods perform less significant roles as sites for counter publics. In other words, the mechanisms are the same even if conditions and outcomes have changed.
3. James C. Scott argues something similar when he discusses the back talking and small acts of sabotage that subaltern groups engage in. Counter publics are then places where such subaltern discourses are made public.
4. A classical statement capturing this sense of political urgency was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s essay, "Why We Can't Wait."

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by "n" refers to notes.

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