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The Limits of Social Mobilization in Planning

by

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Abstract

This paper tests the limits of social mobilization in planning by considering its ethical and practical boundaries. In the first section I explore two theorists of social mobilization in planning, John Friedmann and Mark Purcell. I argue that both rely on the claim that there is something morally problematic about decision-making in planning that is not exercised directly and democratically. Moreover, they both argue for the morally superiority of direct democratic control in planning.

In the second section I consider two arguments for why we might accept the view that social mobilization is morally preferable to other forms of decision-making in planning. The first is by arguing that indirect centralized power structures alienate people from their original state of autonomous control. The second is by arguing that social mobilization will lead to the morally best outcomes. Ultimately I conclude that neither argument works well and that there are not conclusive reasons to argue that there is something morally better about social mobilization as a decision-making structure in planning compared to other forms of decision-making that don't rely on direct democratic control.

In the third section I consider subjectivity in social mobilization. That is, I argue that social mobilization implies a certain view of subjectivity as able to consistently resist social and political passivity, and universalize a kind of perpetual struggle for autonomy. Then, in the fourth section I analyze subjectivity in social mobilization through the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Based on Merleau-Ponty, I argue that subjectivity as implied by social mobilization is not plausible. Instead of viewing passivity as the enemy of justice, phenomenology reveals passivity to be a necessary and fundamental structure of subjectivity.

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I want to thank my supervisor, Professor Peter Mulvihill, for granting me the freedom and having confidence in me to pursue this rather atypical major paper, and for offering me valuable guidance in navigating the academic world.

Foreword

Having entered the MES degree program with a BA and MA in philosophy, my approach to the plan of study and major paper has been fundamentally informed by moral and political philosophy. For this reason this major paper is likely atypical for a paper submitted in the planning stream. Rather than focusing on a specific planning problem or case study this major paper (and plan of study) engages with fundamental questions of subjectivity and morality related to planning. This also means that the method I use is rather argumentative, and engages with major ideas in planning theory through philosophical scrutiny.

This major paper is also centrally situated in the realm of social and political theory broadly, which is consistent with my area of concentration, 'Social and Political Theory in Planning". This also serves as a logical step in my academic development, as I will be continuing my studies at the University of Toronto in the PhD in Political Science (Theory Stream) in September 2017.

As mentioned in my plan of study, one of my main objectives was to explore the moral justifications of certain approaches to planning. This major paper does just that, by exploring a certain strand of leftist planning theory broadly referred to as social mobilization. This major paper also addresses at least some aspect in each of my three component areas. First, by engaging with ideas of political subjectivity. Second, by appealing to major figures in planning theory (such as John Friedmann). Third, by incorporating concrete examples of planning practice (such as NIMBYism) and democratic decision-making in planning.

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Introduction

This major paper is an attempt to untangle certain contradictions and confusions that I have detected in academic planning theory and professional discourse. I witnessed an instance of this contradictory discourse at a panel on planning and climate change. The panel consisted of several planning academics and high-level municipal professionals. During the question and answer period the issue of how planning might best address climate change was raised. I noticed that the same people would recite two inconsistent kinds of answers. On the one hand, they diagnosed the major problem to be lack of meaningful community participation and grassroots organizing. On the other hand, they also argued that planning departments are too weak to overcome burdensome NIMBYism (not-in-my-backyard) and politics.

Thus, the sentiment is basically this. Planning should be more driven by the grassroots community and planning is ineffective because public participation, and sometimes the corresponding political pressure reject good ideas. The contradiction, in case it is not obvious, is that in the first case the problem is not enough participation and in the second case the problem is too much of a certain kind of participation (NIMBYism). Could it be the case that both these claims are true? Admittedly, it likely depends on the particular planning context. Often however, what planners seem to mean is that they want more public participation as long as that participation agrees with certain progressive principles. So the problem is not so much lack of community participation generally, but lack of participation driven by the 'right kind' of principles in particular.

I think this contradiction anticipates the dilemma in planning theory between privileging the process versus the outcome in planning. Planners pay a lot of lip service to the process of public participation while at the same time they hold a number of concrete beliefs about outcomes they'd like to see happen. I remembered that a certain approach to urban political theory privileges the process of grassroots public control over the importance of specific outcomes. This stream can be broadly described as a social mobilization view of planning. The animating

claim in social mobilization is that the planning process ought to be driven and controlled by the people that live in the community. In addition to this positive claim, social mobilization is driven by the negative claim that any social or political structures that interfere with people's direct control of the planning process should be opposed. While few planning theorists would make these precise claims, many imply some versions of them. Indeed, a lot of critical planning and urban theory denounces centralized power structures as the root cause of problems in planning, both normative and practical.

Susan Fainstein places what I call social mobilization into the broad category of 'just city' theory. This wide theoretical approach adopts a utopian way of thinking in planning theory by advocating for a number of revolutionary leftist ideas meant to address justice in the city. Thinkers in this tradition include David Harvey, Neil Brenner, Manuel Castells, Peter Marcuse, John Friedmann, and Fainstein herself, among many others. As Fainstein argues, just city theorists fall into two camps, political economists and radical democrats. Radical democrats "believe that progressive social change results only from the exercise of power by those who previously had been excluded from power. Participation is the vehicle through which that power asserts itself (Fainstein, 2000, p. 15)". Thus, on this definition, social mobilization is a radical democratic approach to planning.

Another very influential figure in urban social mobilization is Henri Lefebvre. His idea of 'autogestion', meaning literally self-management, is often used as an alternative to, and critique of, state-centred planning. According to Neil Brenner, Lefebvre's basic idea is that because state-capitalism has lead to an unjust set of social and material relations, all social and political institutions should be radically democratized with decision-making power returning to the people (Brenner, 2001, p. 795; Lefebvre, 1976, p. 120). According to Lefebvre, legitimate democratization must emerge from the grassroots spontaneously in a way that it fills the social void left by the state (Lefebvre, 1976, p 120). In a significant sense, social mobilization is a kind of utopian anarchy that sees problems in social and political life as a direct result of citizens no longer exercising direct control of their conditions. Regaining direct control is the site of utopian potential.

The above is a view I have heard endorsed, in various forms, from both fellow graduate students and professors. There seems to be a kind of totalizing critique of state institutions and capitalism coupled with an absolute faith in grassroots community control that has never seemed especially convincing to me. The reasons for my skepticism were not initially clear to me, especially since I consider myself to be politically left. Moreover, there are many concrete critiques of neoliberalism consistent with social mobilization that I do find convincing. Something about the way it is often presented in critical planning and environmental studies left me intellectually unsatisfied.

Therefore, this paper is an attempt give meaning and content to my skepticism. The approach I take tests the limits of social mobilization in planning by considering its ethical and practical boundaries. In the first section I explore two theorists that I see as paradigmatic examples of social mobilization, John Friedmann and Mark Purcell. I argue that both theorists rely on the claim that there is something morally problematic about power that is not exercised directly. Moreover, they both argue that there is something morally preferable about direct democratic control. This set of claims is what I will call claim 1.

In the second section I scrutinize claim 1 by considering why we might accept the view that social mobilization is morally preferable to other views that do not rely on direct democratic control. I consider two arguments in favour of claim 1. The first is by arguing that indirect centralized power structures alienate people from their predisposition to control their own conditions. The second is by arguing that social mobilization will lead to the morally best outcomes. Ultimately I argue that both defenses of claim 1 fail, and that there are good reasons to reject the idea that there is something inherently morally preferable about social mobilization as a decision-making structure in planning.

In the third section I consider subjectivity in social mobilization. That is, I argue that social mobilization implies a certain view of subjectivity as able to consistently resist social and political passivity, and universalize a kind of perpetual struggle for autonomy, even if that struggle does not lead to actual universalized autonomy. In the fourth and final section I analyze subjectivity in social mobilization

through the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Based on Merleau-Ponty, I argue that subjectivity as implied by social mobilization is not plausible. Instead of viewing passivity as the enemy of justice, phenomenology reveals passivity to be a necessary and fundamental structure of functioning subjectivity.

Ultimately my goal is not to condemn all forms of social mobilization, but rather to test how far pure versions can take us, both practically and ethically. Indeed, social movements are obviously an important aspect of a vibrant political culture. However, I question the reductive way social mobilization condemns all centralized power structures in planning and politics. Rather than a condemnation of social mobilization writ large, this major paper should be read as a plea for nuanced thinking in leftist planning theory.

Chapter One: The Morality of Social Mobilization in Planning Theory

As I mentioned in the introduction, social mobilization in planning theory is the view that the planning process should be driven directly by the (socially mobilized) population, rather than external processes and entities (such as capitalism and state bureaucracies). This paper will focus on what I see as two of social mobilization's purest examples, John Friedmann and Mark Purcell. Although these theorists have different conceptual sensibilities, in this chapter I will argue that they share a crucial commitment to the claim that there is something morally superior about a decision-making process that is driven by a politically engaged and activated population, a kind of direct democratic control. Moreover, their view seems to suggest that any processes or entities that function to separate the population from the decision-making process is morally problematic. The separation of the population from the decision-making process is often discussed in the Marx-inspired language of *alienation*.

Mark Purcell appeals to what I see as a useful conceptual distinction, that of autonomy versus heteronomy. I would argue that this distinction is better because it is not as morally charged as the alienation versus non-alienation distinction. Autonomy is when the source of an action is internal to the thing that acts, and is not affected by external forces. In contrast, heteronomy is when actions are influenced or originate external to the thing that is acting. Thus, social mobilization is when the decision-making process originates, as purely as possible, in the population.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how Friedmann and Purcell are committed to the view that autonomy is morally superior to heteronomy in the planning decision-making process, and that there is something morally problematic about processes and entities that lead to heteronomy. Indeed, on Friedmann and Purcell's view, forces and entities that lead to more heteronomy in the decision-making process are not only seen as leading to unjust outcomes, but also contaminate the population's potential tendency for self-governance. Therefore,

according to Friedmann and Purcell's views, we should be working to avoid heteronomy in planning. As I will show in the forthcoming pages, their views seem to depend on the following set of claims. *The power to make decisions in the planning process ought to be squarely and as completely as possible, with the population, because decision-making power executed through heteronomy is morally problematic, therefore we should struggle for autonomy.* Or what I will now refer to as **claim 1**.

Friedmann's Planning Theory

In Friedmann's main work of planning theory, *Planning in the Public Domain,* distinguishes planning theory into four broad and interrelated theoretical traditions. Each tradition addresses a different way of "how knowledge should properly be linked to action" (Friedmann, 1987, pp. 73-74). These include planning as social reform, as policy analysis, as social learning, and as social mobilization. From these traditions Friedmann develops a radical view of planning as 'recovering of the political community', largely inspired by the traditions of social mobilization and social learning. It is a view that prescribes the planning process be altered to depend more on socially mobilized direct action from the people as opposed to planning by state entities. I will argue that this view accepts claim 1, that democratic autonomous decision-making is morally superior to representative democratic systems that are indirect democracy. As mentioned above, Friedmann situates his theory in the context of four main traditions in planning theory. Friedmann does this to demonstrate how historical development in the field of planning has led to a crisis in connecting knowledge to action, a crisis Friedmann argues his view can address.

The social reform tradition sees planning as a *state*-centered process whereby civil society is guided by scientific rationality, and a progressive political ideology. Key decision making actors in the social reform tradition are planning professionals in fields such as economics, sociology, and political science. Politically, social reformers are progressive and open to change within the limits of the existing state and social structure. Thus, social reformers believe that "through appropriate

reforms both capitalism and the bourgeois state can be perfected" (Friedmann, 1987, p. 76). This can be achieved by addressing three main concerns, economic growth, increased employment, and wealth redistribution (Friedmann, 1987, p. 77). In sum, the social reform tradition is defined by a belief that ideologically progressive state-centered action, with some level of political consensus building, based on instrumentalities and procedures can address the general public interest (Friedmann, 1987, p. 136).

As a concrete example, ideological expression of the social reform tradition in planning is detectable in the City of Toronto's Official Plan. In it, policies are outlined to achieve "a competitive advantage over other [cities], locally, nationally, and internationally (City of Toronto, 2010, 1-3), and "to ensure that housing choices are available for all people in their communities at all stages of their lives (City of Toronto, 2010, 1-3)" Moreover, the plan also seeks to ensure that "a variety of jobs is available to people with a range of education and abilities that creates and sustains well-paid, stable, safe and fulfilling employment opportunities for all Torontonians (City of Toronto, 2010, 1-3)". This reveals political motivations consistent with the social reform tradition. Much of the above expresses a desire to improve on the existing state apparatus, and that changes within the existing framework can basically address the public concerns and wellbeing.

In planning as policy analysis there is less emphasis on 'the public interest', and instead focuses on problem solving through systematic knowledge application. As Friedmann points out, the policy analysis tradition in planning has no particular normative position on matters of the state and society, and for this reason tends to accept whatever the existing ideological context might be (Friedmann, 1987, p. 79). Indeed, policy analysis sees decision procedure in planning as categorically separate from normative judgments with a belief that the objective methods of science can and, indeed, should be used to make policy decisions more rational. Consequently, more rational decisions would materially improve the problem-solving abilities of organizations. In addition, "proponents of… policy analysis worked with a concept of system that involved, at its most elementary level, inputs, outputs, an environment, and complex feedback loops (Friedmann, 1987, pp. 139-140)". Thus, the policy

analysis tradition tends to view the world through a somewhat reductive lens by focusing on instrumental reason and the language of systems. When compared to the social reform tradition, policy analysis is similar in its use of scientific methodology and belief in the effectiveness of large top-down entities, however it also differs in its apparently agnostic attitude toward normative questions.

The third tradition in planning theory, called social learning, diverges from formal scientific methodology in an important way. Indeed, compared to social reform and policy analysis, social learning seeks to overcome the divide between theory and practice. Inspired by the philosophical pragmatism of John Dewey, social learning puts epistemological priority on 'learning by doing' (Friedmann, 1987, p. 81). In social learning, meaningful knowledge is achieved only by practical action whereby knowledge gleaned from action is integrated back into adjusted praxis. This approach to planning was the result of the growing view that existing institutions relied too heavily on instrumental reason. Whereas thinkers in the traditions of social reform and policy analysis generally believe that "the social world [corresponds] to immutable social laws", social learners believe that societal behavior can be changed by active social experimentation (Friedmann, 1987, p. 82). Another important difference is that in social learning, relevant societal actors are no longer limited to technocrats and bureaucratic elites. Indeed, grass-roots activists, individuals, and private organizations can all count as meaningful planning actors. This is because social learning views legitimate societal change as emerging from all levels, whether by individuals or communities (Friedmann, 1987, p. 185). Therefore, in social learning, planning is no longer viewed as a primarily top-down process.

The final tradition discussed by Friedmann, and the one from which his own view is most heavily influenced, is social mobilization. Social mobilization stands in particularly stark contrast when compared to social reform and policy analysis in its opposition to top-down planning. Indeed, in social mobilization relevant actors comprise "direct collective action from below" (Friedmann, 1987, p. 83). The social mobilization tradition is, first and foremost, a morally informed political movement. Within social mobilization, Friedmann makes a distinction between two

approaches: utopian-anarchism, and Marxism. In utopian-anarchism there is a tendency toward a "*politics of disengagement* carried on by alternative communities that demonstrate to others new ways of living (Friedmann, 1987, p. 83, Author emphasis)". Marxist approaches employ a "*confrontational politics* that emphasizes political struggle as necessary to transform the existing relations of power (Friedmann, 1987, p. 83, Author emphasis)". As Friedmann points out, while these approaches may seem opposed, they only differ on tactic for societal change, but not a difference in fundamental ideology (Friedmann, 1987, p. 83)[1]. Indeed, all are unified in their moral outrage at the conditions of industrial capitalism, globalization, and concentration of power by ruling elites, and all agree on the need for collective action from below (Friedmann, 1987, p. 228).

Friedmann and Radical Planning

Friedmann argues that there is a crisis in planning. That is, "knowledge and action have come apart (Friedmann, 1987, p. 311)". Although writing in 1987, Fridmann's diagnosis of the crisis in planning, a crisis in our ability to connect knowledge to action, likely still applies today. What Friedmann has in mind is the many ways state-centered planning is failing to address problems facing the city. If we think about the Toronto context, there is certainly strong evidence of an impending housing crisis driven by neoliberal 'competitive city' policies, and planners have few tools to address it. For this reason there is a growing affordability crisis for both renters and buyers in Toronto (See: Wright & Hogue, 2017). Debates and the consequent decisions related to transit expansion continue to be contaminated by politics rather than good evidence of need. For example, the decision to expand transit to Scarborough was based on reelection prospects rather than actual measurable demand[2]. With such a muddle of planning in Toronto, it certainly seems

[1] For summary of precise differences see: Friedmann, 1987, pp. 251-255

[2] See: Toronto Star, March 28th, 2017 https://www.thestar.com/news/city_hall/2017/03/28/council-discuss-next-steps-on-scarborough-subway-extension.html

plausible to wonder whether there are preferable ways to 'connect knowledge to action', as Friedmann would say.

To address this crisis Friedmann ultimately proposes a radical conception of planning inspired by social mobilization and social learning. The project of radical planning is "the emancipation of humanity from social oppression (Friedmann, 1987, p. 301)", by oppositional and experimental social struggles of both particular individuals and groups employing social learning. This struggle joins the universal with the particular such that particular fragmentary social victories are joined into a global network that eventually lead to "the final and possibly utopian goal of a free humanity (Friedmann, 1987, p. 301)". The client of such a project is "the mobilized community or group (Friedmann, 1987, p. 301)". Importantly, Friedmann sees radical planning as inherently oppositional meaning authentic radical planning cannot be state-centered and must rather be the result of an *impulse that originates from within the community* (Friedmann, 1987, p. 301). The idea is to encourage cultivation of critical consciousness within the community ultimately leading to direct action. While the state cannot be involved in fostering authentic critical consciousness, the role of a community organizer is an important for the success of coordinated action (Friedmann, 1987, pp. 301-302). Indeed, for Friedmann radical planning is concerned with organizing the community in a way so that relevant skills and knowledge are imparted by connecting different localities together to coordinate collective struggles towards housing, community food access (gardens, etc.), local employment, etc. (Friedmann, 1987, p. 398).

The knowledge involved in radical planning is, as mentioned above, epistemologically related to the social learning traditions. It is through community practice itself that radical planning knowledge is created and used. Because radical practice is envisaged as taking place mostly in the context of particular and fragmented community groups, the setting should not be bureaucratized, and so the role of "planner" as specialized holder of knowledge is best avoided (Friedmann, 1987, p. 303). Just like traditional forms of planning, radical planning is concerned with linking knowledge to action, however unlike traditional planners, radical

planners begin with explicit moral and political critiques of the present situation (Friedmann, 1987, p. 305).

Friedmann also cautions that coordinated group action often leads to the emergence of a decision-making leadership. It is the responsibility of radical planners to resist this tendency and ensure that information and participation in the decision-making process is spread as widely as possible (Friedmann, 1987, p. 305). Otherwise there is a risk of falling into the same elitist bureaucratic tendency as the state. From this we can conclude that radical planners need not be part of the state apparatus (although they can be), nor do they need to have specific technical skills (though they can be useful). Instead, radical planners connect critical community level knowledge to action with the express goal of social transformation. In this way, a radical planner takes many forms in society, from community organizers, to activists.

Friedmann's Political Community

According to Friedmann, the ultimate aim of radical planning practice is the *recovery* of the political community. The implication being that something of essential human value has been lost. In this chapter I will address two related subjects. First I will explain what Friedmann means by the concept of "political community" and why he thinks it is essential to his account, or indeed any political theory. Second, I will consider more precisely the specifics of the political community that Friedmann envisions. That is, get clear on what it is that will be recovered.

Friedmann prefaces his account of radical practice with a defense of certain fundamental assumptions. Specifically, Friedmann wants to assume the existence of public interest, and thus, a public domain. Indeed, as Friedmann explains, "the recovery of political community requires that we believe in the reality of common interest (Friedmann, 1987, p. 314)". Without such a belief, Friedmann cautions, we risk leaving ourselves undefended to the possibility of an authoritarian repressive state. This follows from the idea that every normative claim about a policy or action's moral rightness or wrongness contains a claim about what is good for

human beings generally. Claiming on the basis of good for human beings generally is equivalent to claims in the name of a common interest. Friedmann's ultimately argues the common good consists in recognizing the public domain as essentially the right to self-govern and self-determine. That is, the right to true self-governing democracy. This is something Friedmann argues the state apparatus has subverted (Friedmann, 1987, p. 339-340).

The next question to answer is this; what does this recovered political community look like for Friedmann? We can begin with two central aims. The first is to increase "the relative access of individuals and groups to the several forums of collective decision-making. The second is to strengthen individual and group ability to influence contested outcomes (Friedmann, 1987, p. 346). Friedmann argues that the current imbalances of power (income inequality, etc.) can *only* be corrected "through a reactivated political life that will draw the masses of those who now are relatively powerless into the processes of civil governance (Friedmann, 1987, p. 347)". A recovered political community should contain equal access to the bases of effective social power, a collective culture that actively enhances people's capacity for independent critical thinking, where the legitimate power of the state and the economy is subordinated to "the people's sovereign will at all levels of territorial life (Friedmann, 1987, p. 348)". Moreover, a recovered political community will shift the logic of market relations to a rich mix of development goals – social, environmental, economic, cultural, and political. The political momentum to achieve such objectives must emerge from self-reliant action across collectively linked communities (Friedmann, 1987, p. 348).

Based on Friedmann's view, there are good reasons to think he is committed to claim 1, that autonomous socially mobilized decision-making are morally superior to state-centered or market-based decision-making (heteronomy). This seems intuitively true since he prescribes a network of socially mobilized connected communities, and a "reactivated political life that will draw the masses of those who are now relatively powerless into the process of civil governance (Friedmann, 1987, p. 347)".

Purcell's Planning Theory

Whereas John Friedmann's radical planning theory is a response to a crisis in planning's ability to connect knowledge with action, Mark Purcell's theory is responding to the social, moral, and economic harms associated with neoliberalism. Like Friedmann, Purcell positions his view as "a set of oppositional democratic attitudes to resist neoliberalization and imagine more democratic urban futures (Purcell, 2008, p. 76)". For Purcell, the process of economic and social neoliberalization has had increasingly negative effects on urban development and democracy more broadly. Neoliberalism, as an ideology, is the idea that "open and competitive markets not only produce the most efficient allocation of resources, but they also stimulate innovation and economic growth (Purcell, 2008, p. 13)". Extended to urban development and governance, neoliberalism has resulted in cuts to affordable housing, less investment in transit, disappearance of public space, and development generally driven by market forces rather than social welfare (See: Purcell, 2008, pp. 17-18, 27-28; Purcell, 2013a, pp. 8-9). Beyond market forces, there is reason to think neoliberalism has coercively influenced social relations as well. This is expressed in individualistic attitudes and the corresponding logic of market efficiency presented as being in the common good (of the economy, jobs, etc.). This makes it appear that certain social outcomes, such as solving poverty, or building better transit, are not in the common interest because they do not further the logic of economic efficiency (Purcell, 2008, p. 14).

According to Purcell, it is important that we do not think of neoliberalism as a policy of non-interference with the markets. On the contrary, Purcell points to the fact that neoliberalism functions as a state-sponsored intervention intended to further capital accumulation by private interests. Indeed, it is state policy; for example by bailing out too-big-to-fail banks, to ensure a certain kind of capital accumulation continues all under the guise of the common good of a continually productive economy (Purcell, 2008, p. 15). This analysis of the relationship between the liberal-democratic state and neoliberalism leads Purcell to argue that liberal democracies are really not democratic at all, but rather oligarchic. Indeed, liberal-

democracies with their selective and narrowly defined parliaments and institutions function so that

> relatively few people are selected, separated out from the population, and designated to govern the whole. It is therefore a governing structure in which the few rule the rest. This arrangement is more properly understood as an oligarchy, rather than a democracy (Purcell, 2013b, p. 313).

According to Purcell, any state that resembles the arrangement described above cannot be properly described to be a democracy (Purcell, 2013b, p. 313).

For Purcell, the way the state continually props-up neoliberalism is good evidence to think it does not function in the interest of democracy at all. In particular, the modern liberal-democratic state is responsible for authorizing the many social and economic injustices. Examples that Purcell points to include the many US-sponsored military dictatorships of the last 50 years, including Augusto Pinochet of Chile, that were designed to quash democratic alternatives to neoliberalism. The growth of multinational, too-big-to-fail corporations, and the non-governmental organizations, such as the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF, that supports the existing system. The crucial point is that all the above-mentioned institutions are minimally subject to democratic control (Purcell, 2008, p. 24). As Purcell puts it

> Since in a liberal democracy the state is the principal institution through which the people are empowered, neoliberalization's drive toward deregulation and outsourcing means that democratically elected governments are less able to manage the economy, and "the people" of liberal democracy are therefore ceding power to markets and the firms that hold power in those markets (Purcell, 2008, p. 24).

Purcell is by no means the only theorist to write about the undemocratic and unjust outcomes of neoliberalism[3]. Indeed, while not an uncommon critique, it remains quite a central and important theme in political theory. However, our main concern

[3] Notable recent example is *Undoing the Demos,* Brown, 2015

is not with whether neoliberalism has led to unjust outcomes (I believe it has), but rather how best to respond to these injustices, and plan a more just polis. For Purcell the most plausible answer is to transfer the decision-making power from the state to the people. As I will now argue, this answer is based on the belief that socially mobilized bottom-up decision-making is morally preferable to indirect (or alienated) decision-making (through bureaucracy or capital influence, for example).

In thinking about what is meant by democracy, Purcell argues, "we live in a world that equates democracy with the liberal-democratic state, which is a form of oligarchy that sets severe limits on democracy and insists that anything beyond those limits is impossible (Purcell, 2013a, p. 26)". Purcell wants to shift the meaning of democracy to something much more revolutionary and direct.

Purcell's View of Democracy

According to Purcell, we should resist the negative consequences of neoliberalism and transform society by radical democratizing the state and the productive capacities of industry (Purcell, 2008, p. 77). Further democratization is more than just a moral good in itself. Through its opposition to neoliberalism, Purcell's view of democracy is argued to help solve problems like global climate change and the "war on terror" (Purcell, 2013a, p. 24). Democratization could mean any number of things so it's important to get clear on what Purcell's precise conception entails. An important presupposition in Purcell's democracy is that it has little to do with consensus building. This is in contrast with deliberative and participatory democrats who base their theories on reaching a consensus based on the common-good (Purcell, 2008, p. 77). Following political theorists Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, Purcell argues that all decisions and their corresponding political and social arrangements will necessarily lead to some unequal and unfair outcomes. This seems plausible in the sense that no political arrangement could be expected to satisfy everyone everywhere. For Purcell, neoliberalism and the institutions that function to support it cover up these unequal outcomes, and so prop-up the fiction of reachable consensus, by arguing that stable markets are in the broad common-

good (Purcell, 2008, p. 78). Indeed, neoliberalism justifies itself through the objective language of 'efficient use of resources', competitiveness, and 'stability of markets', with the explicit assumption that these concerns are for the common good.

Ultimately Purcell argues for a social-movement model of democracy and planning. True democracy, according to Purcell, requires specific oppositional attitudes. Two interrelated conceptual dichotomies are key to understanding what kind of oppositional attitudes Purcell has in mind. The first is oligarchy/democracy the second is heteronomy/autonomy. In contrast to autonomy where actions emerge internally through self-management and self-rule, heteronomy is action that emerges in whole or in part, externally, influenced or governed by non-self actors. Oligarchy is a form of heteronomy where a few (people, institutions) rule the many (Purcell, 2013a, p. 74). In an oligarchic planning context, decisions and the corresponding activities regarding community issues are influenced and decided upon mostly by actors external to the community and its residents. In contrast, a democratic planning context would see decisions and actions about the community made *only* by the residents of that community. Indeed, planning decisions not made by all (or at least most) members of that community would necessarily veer towards heteronomy and oligarchy.

Thus, true socially mobilized planning is active struggle against oligarchy and heteronomy, and struggle towards more autonomy and democracy (Purcell, 2013a, p. 74). In developing this view, Purcell draws on a number of political theorists including Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Jacques Ranciere, and perhaps most importantly, Henri Lefebvre. As Purcell argues, all these theorists have broadly analogous democratic tendencies. Indeed all of the aforementioned theorists see democracy as a "question of the relationship between the proper power of people – all people – and the entities that have expropriated and organized that power" (Purcell, 2013a, p. 73). In response to this question Purcell seems committed to the view that "the entities that have expropriated and organized that power" away from the people do not have sufficient moral legitimacy. As Purcell puts it,

> If the gist of modern political theory is an effort to legitimate the transfer of popular power to these institutions, democracy is then simply the struggle of people to take up that power again" (Purcell, 2013a, p. 73).

If democracy is the struggle to retake power that was expropriated by institutions, and Purcell endorses this kind of democracy, then it's clear that Purcell is committed to a view that morally condemns any institutions or structures that contribute to heteronomy, and expropriate power. Case in point:

> We declare our intention to govern ourselves, to keep our own power for ourselves, to give the laws to ourselves, to manage our community our city, and our affairs for ourselves (Purcell, 2013a, p. 74).

Another important aspect of Purcell's view of democracy, also inspired by many of the above-mentioned political theorists, is the idea that democracy is not a static goal that will eventually be reached, but rather a perpetually necessary reenacting of social struggle against oligarchy and heteronomy (Purcell, 2013a, p. 88). Indeed, we should be careful not construe Purcell as committed to some naïve view that there will one day be a planning regime where all citizens will act directly and collectively on all actions related to their community. Rather, Purcell acknowledges democracy to be a struggle towards something unreachable. As the saying goes, "it's not the destination that matters, it's the journey". Democracy *is* the struggle (journey) for it, not the *end* of it. *It* is the struggle from heteronomy, from oligarchy, from the state, not an 'end of history' resulting from these struggles (Purcell, 2016, p. 12).

Purcell and Friedmann Compared

The above should serve as strong evidence suggesting that both Purcell and Friedmann are committed to claim 1, that heteronomous decision-making (in planning or politics) is morally problematic, so we should prefer some form of autonomous direct democracy, in some form of bottom-up social mobilization.

Moreover, since Friedmann and Purcell both offer us prescriptive accounts of social mobilization about planning and urban politics, I would argue that their views depend on accepting claim 1. Without accepting claim 1 there would be no reason to, as both Purcell and Friedmann seem to do, argue for the *process* of social mobilization over its *outcome*. Indeed, they both seem to be arguing that there is something morally superior about social mobilization views of democracy. That being said, it is clear that both believe that the process of social mobilization will lead to preferable outcomes. Interestingly, it is difficult to extract an actual argument from either Purcell or Friedmann on why this might be the case. Rather, they seem to accept it as self-evident. Both prescribe their prospective views of social mobilization as a way of addressing morally problematic realities in the public domain. For Friedmann it is to address the crisis in planning's ability to connect knowledge to action, either because of state-capitalism or bureaucratic inability, all shown to cause social harms. Purcell positions his theory as a response to the many harms caused by neoliberalization. Thus, Friedmann and Purcell's moral justification for preferring social mobilization could be construed as reducing harms related to contemporary neoliberalism. In other word, it is argued that because the current regime (of heteronomy) is failing to meet our needs it is probably best to throw it away and start with something radically new. To be sure both theorists effectively point out the many injustices associated with the current political, economic, and social context. However this is hardly a conclusive argument for accepting claim 1. Indeed, neither makes an argument to show why social mobilization (as moving toward autonomy) is morally preferable, nor do they offer an argument for why it is the best way to reduce injustices (beyond arguing about how bad the current situation is). In the next chapter I will consider two ways in which Friedmann and Purcell might defend claim 1.

Chapter Two: Testing the Morality of Social Mobilization

Introduction

To defend claim 1 we would need to establish moral value in the idea that autonomy in the decision-making process is preferable, because heteronomy is morally problematic. Before proceeding it should be acknowledged that in general there are plausible reasons for viewing autonomous decision-making to be an intrinsic good. Indeed, Immanuel Kant famously derived the moral worth of human beings in their ability to exercise their autonomy and reason. However, he also carefully crafted his moral theory around the moral *limits* of autonomy and reason through his categorical imperative. That is, an action is moral to the extent that its universalization would not conflict with human autonomy and reason (Kant, 1964, p. 70-72). In other words, for Kant a functional moral system requires limits to autonomous self-interest. While I am not a Kantian, I think his insights are a useful way into analyzing the implications of claim 1. Specifically, as best as I have been able to reconstruct, Friedmann and Purcell seem to view heteronomy in the decision-making process to be morally problematic precisely because of the way it places limits on socially mobilized autonomy. So I think we can draw some kind of analogy between Kantian morality and the moral status of autonomy in political and planning decision-making. Thus, what I think may be in need of a moral defense is not so much the placing of moral value on autonomy – since I believe this claim on its own is fairly uncontroversial. But rather, it is the way Friedmann and Purcell seem to morally condemn heteronomy in an absolutist way. It is the implications of this that I will be engaging in the forthcoming pages.

To further the above analysis I will consider two plausible ways of defending claim 1 that I see as following from both Friedmann and Purcell's views. In both theorists I have noticed the implication of the need for a *return* to some lost consciousness, or state of being. For Friedmann this is exemplified in his call for a *recovery of the political community*, a community of active and engaged subjects that *once* controlled their own conditions. For Purcell this is implied in various appeals for a *reappropriation of power* that was once in the hands of the people (See: Purcell,

2013a, p. 74). As Purcell puts it, "state power is power that has been alienated from its original locus in the bodies of people (Purcell, 2013a, p. 38)". Thus, there is a sense in which both Friedmann and Purcell seem to hold the view that autonomous power in the people is the *original or natural* state of being, which modern conditions of capitalism or bureaucracy have somehow subverted. Indeed, there is a sense in which they seem to view heteronomy (in the form of state and capitalism) as morally problematic precisely because it has perturbed us away from our original self-organized society. To be clear, I am not claiming that Friedmann and Purcell hold this view explicitly (though there is evidence for this), I am rather considering this view as a path to accepting claim 1, that there is a moral superiority associated with autonomous power, because the heteronomous state and capitalism have alienated us from ourselves. After all, if we accept this it might be possible to mount some kind of moral argument. Of course, the obvious problem with this line of reasoning is the naturalist fallacy. That is, something being natural is not a prima facie reason for it being morally better. We would need to also show that the fact of its naturalness also brings with it some added moral weight, perhaps in the form of satisfying a human predisposition. In other words, we would need to show that humans are predisposed to a state of autonomy, because that is their happiest state (or some similar claim). Therefore the first defense of claim 1 I will consider is what I will call the *alienation argument* for claim 1.

The second path to defending claim 1 brings the question of process versus outcome in planning to the forefront. In both Friedmann and Purcell's views there seems to be a focus on the process of social mobilization, and less attention paid to the outcome. Nonetheless, both theorists are clear in their view that social mobilization will lead to better outcomes. Since they see capitalism and state bureaucracy as the main causes of unjust outcomes, socially mobilized struggle against capitalism and state bureaucracy is prescribed. Thus, the second defense of claim 1 will consider whether the process of social mobilization will lead to the best outcomes. To do this I will review examples of what we would plausibly consider autonomous social mobilization and how this connects to good outcomes in planning. Moreover, I will also consider other social movements that struggle for

autonomy (and NIMBYism) and consider if they can be considered expressions of social mobilization. If they can be, this leads to some confusion over what exactly is meant by autonomous decision-making. The idea that the process of social mobilization will lead to the best outcomes is what I will call the *socially mobilized outcomes argument* for claim 1.

Ultimately I will argue that both defenses of claim 1 are problematic, and that it is not plausible to ascribe moral superiority to autonomous decision-making in planning, at the expense of decision-making processes that involve heteronomy. This does not mean that we should avoid social mobilization in planning, only that we should not view it as inherently morally preferable to other forms of decision-making. Because moral status depends on the particular circumstances, we should not decide in advance that heteronomy is morally wrong.

The Alienation Argument

The first way we might defend claim 1 is by showing that humans are predisposed to autonomy in the planning and political decision-making process, meaning that heteronomy is warping predispositions. Another way of stating this is that autonomy is morally preferable because heteronomy alienates us from ourselves, and consequently causes a kind of harm. The argument might go something like this:

Premise 1 (P1): Causing harm is an intrinsic moral wrong

P2: Human harm is caused by strictures or social arrangements that prevent or limit humans from doing that which they are predisposed to doing.

P3: Autonomy in the (social, political, planning) decision-making process is something human beings have been predisposed to doing.

P4: The state and capitalism has functioned to prevent or limit human autonomy from the above-mentioned processes.

Conclusion (C): The state and capitalism in the planning process causes harm by limiting autonomy, and is therefore a moral wrong.

There's a lot more that could be said to elaborate on the above argument, and it is in no way exhaustive. It is also possible that neither Friedmann nor Purcell would agree that their views require the above argument. Indeed, as I've said I am using this argument as a possible way of defending claim 1, not ascribing it to their views (though I think there are reasons for thinking their views imply a version of it). There are implicit versions of this argument in many revolutionary political theories that rely on the concept of alienation. Indeed, theories that appeal to a Marxist theory of alienation tend to suggest autonomy to be the "original locus" of social praxis. In any case, were I able to render the above argument plausible, Friedmann and Purcell's defense of claim 1 would be in a much better position.

It should be noted that the argument schematization method I am using above is somewhat unusual in the realm of planning theory. I believe it to be a helpful way of enabling us to see what kinds of claims a view relies on for its plausibility. If any of the four premises are shown to be implausible it might require social mobilization theorists to rethink certain unquestioned assumptions about the moral status of socially mobilized planning. Indeed, one of the reasons I have chosen to schematize the argument is because I think it will helpfully reveal how many assumptions Friedmann and Purcell rely on lack clear justification. And as I will ultimately argue, once considered carefully, P1 and P3 are lack justification.

Harm, Predispositions, and Autonomy

In order to properly test the plausibility of P1-P4 I will begin by discussing harm and moral justification. In moral philosophy it is widely agreed that interference with autonomy is considered to be harmful. To take one view of harm, Bernard Gert includes amongst his list of harms; killing, causing pain, disabling a person, depriving a person of pleasure, and depriving a person of freedom (Gert, 1984, p.

533). If harm includes depriving a person of some measure of freedom, is this harm always morally wrong?

As John Stuart Mill famously put it in his Harm Principle, power used to limit people's freedom is only justifiable to prevent greater harms (Mill, 1986, p. 9). Thus, according to Mill there are cases when limiting freedom is morally justified. For example, for the purpose of preventing certain kinds of violent crimes few would argue that limiting some autonomy is morally wrong. However, by the above definition it is still harm, but justified harm. Therefore I would argue that P1 is false because harm's moral status is not absolute, and depends on the context.

Even if P1 is false, we might still say that the moral wrongness depends not on the fact that the state limits autonomy, but that it limits a certain predisposition toward community self-organization or planning, as Friedmann and Purcell seem to argue. Indeed, aimless autonomy is not the kind of predisposition the above argument is trying to consider. We are talking about communities taking control of their own conditions of governance and functioning. In other words, we are talking about people controlling specific tasks associated with planning – roads, food production, shelter, etc. Assuming we accept that there is a human predisposition toward some kind of social self-organized planning, can we confidently say that the fact that it is a predisposition gives it a special moral status such that any interference is morally wrong? Let's consider the case of another radically different and controversial predisposition. It is widely agreed that pedophilia is likely a sexual orientation – in other words, a predisposition. Using state power to prevent pedophiles from pursuing their sexual satisfaction is justified on the grounds that it will prevent greater harm to children. In this case we are limiting a person from pursuing their predispositions, and by the above definition, causing harm. In a way we are forcing pedophiles, through state-enforced laws, to *alienate* themselves from their desires. Would we want to argue that this kind of harmful alienation is intrinsically morally wrong? Likely not. Obviously pedophilia and social mobilization are radically different and I am in no way trying to suggest any moral similarity. Instead I am trying to show that *the fact of something being a predisposition cannot be the moral grounds for which we preclude interfering with it*

(through state-action). Thus, P2 is true only inasmuch as strictures and social arrangements that interfere with autonomy are harmful. However, as I have argued, sometimes such harmful interference is morally justified.

Autonomy as Social Predisposition

So far I have shown that interference with autonomy (and its associated harm) is sometimes morally justified, and that something being a human predisposition does not grant it a special moral status such that state-interference is never morally justified. While perhaps the above might be sufficient to weaken and perhaps defeat the argument, I still think it is worth considering P3, whether self-organized social decision-making in the realm of planning is a human predisposition. P3 seems to be the crux of political theories that appeal to the concept of alienation. That is, somehow the state and capitalism is alienating people from a power and decision-making they once enjoyed. In this section I want to ask what grounds we have for believing people are predisposed to socially mobilized autonomy?

To begin with it is useful to restate exactly what is meant by self-organized autonomy in the planning process (through social mobilization, etc.). Based on what both Friedmann and Purcell have written with reference to alienation in the decision-making process we come to an important detail. When they refer to a recovery of democracy, or the "political community", this tells us something about the thing that has purportedly been lost, the thing we are predisposed to. Central to both Friedmann and Purcell is their calls for opposition to hierarchies in the planning decision-making process, since hierarchy leads to heteronomy. For example, Friedmann argues that radical planning has a "responsibility to resist the tendency toward the concentration of information, knowledge, and decision-making" and ensure the widest possibility of equal participation (Friedmann, 1987, p. 305), toward the eventual dismantling of "the social barriers that constrain self-reliant practice (Friedmann, 1987, p. 400)". Similarly, when discussing the possibility of integrating principles inspired by the right to the city into law, Purcell argues that

> The greatest danger is that legal codification will dissipate the energy of social movements, that it will make them seem no longer necessary. That outcome is a severe threat to democracy. The right to the city must always remain primarily a political *claim* made by mobilized groups (Purcell, 2008, p. 99).

The above examples reaffirm the idea that for social mobilization theorists the alienating force consists of social structures that lead to heteronomy, either concentrated power or codified laws. If these social structures (laws or concentrated power) are the thing that has forcibly alienated us from something original (a predisposition), then we should find empirical evidence suggesting human society is predisposed to living without these kinds of social structures (the original unalienated state). What does history tell us about human society and hierarchy? While I would prefer to avoid a lengthy digression into anthropology, the history of human society (Western or non-Western) has been defined by hierarchical social structures. Structures that tend to concentrate power and limit the decision-making process to a select few. If anything there is more reason for thinking that the heteronomy of social structures are the human predisposition. Indeed, I would even argue that Friedmann admits as much above when he argues that radical planners must resist "the *tendency*" toward concentrations of power etc. A tendency seems similar to a predisposition, something already within us that we must resist. Moreover, Purcell goes even farther when he says

> The struggle of the people against oligarchy and heteronomy is also very much a struggle within. It is a struggle to reclaim the power that we also want to give away. We desire to be ruled, to be relieved of the burden of ruling ourselves (Purcell, 2013a, p. 93).

Therefore it seems as though Purcell acknowledges that humans are predisposed to being ruled (through heteronomy). This places the truth of P3 in serious doubt. Indeed, it seems to me autonomy in the planning decision-making process is not something humans are predisposed toward, in fact likely the opposite is true. In

chapter 4 I will explore the human desire for heteronomy (and passivity) through the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty. For now I claim that using the alienation argument as a way of defending the idea that heteronomy is morally wrong (claim 1) is not a plausible strategy. This is because autonomy in the political and planning process is not something we are predisposed toward. Therefore moral reasons for condemning heteronomy cannot originate in the idea that we have been alienated from a predisposition if that predisposition is in doubt.

Before proceeding, I want to briefly discuss Friedmann and Purcell's use of the language of "recovering the political community", and "alienation". They appeal to this language in a way that makes it seem like we have been robbed of something fundamentally human. It is like the romanticized idea that we must return to a time when we were in an unalienated authentic state of being, when, as Guy Debord put it, "everything was directly lived (Debord, 2002, 1)". Yet at the same time they acknowledge that humans have a tendency toward heteronomy. This seems to be a puzzling contradiction. To be clear, this is not a critique of their theories per se, but of the language they use to express it. It would seem more accurate if they acknowledged that their theories are not a call for a return to something, but actually a brave step into something radically new. Since the autonomy they describe likely has no precedent.

In the above I have offered the alienation argument as a possible moral defense of the idea that heteronomy in the planning and political decision-making process is morally wrong (claim 1). The argument depended on the idea that autonomy in the decision-making process is a human predisposition and that anything that interferes with a predisposition is harmful and morally wrong. I ultimately argued that 1) harm is not always morally wrong, 2) the fact that something is a predisposition cannot be moral grounds for defending it, and 3) that autonomy in the political and planning process is not a human predisposition.

The Socially Mobilized Outcomes Argument

If we are not able to defend claim 1 based on the idea that autonomy in planning and politics is something that was once the default state, then we need to find some other way to argue that heteronomy is morally problematic. Specifically, we would need to show that there is something morally better about social mobilization in planning. The most obvious path for this would be to argue that social mobilization leads to better outcomes. Interestingly, social mobilization seems to be more about process than outcome. Or at least, it is much more concrete about the way it describes the process than it is about the possible outcomes. Indeed, social mobilization is described as popular bottom-up struggle against the social structures of control and domination. Essentially it is ordinary community members coming together to fight for control of their own conditions (social, spatial, political). Both Friedmann and Purcell argue that this process is the best way to fight injustices related to neoliberalism and state, but are not clear on why this is necessarily the case. That is, why is it that social mobilization logically leads to just outcomes in its resistance to neoliberalism etc.? In this chapter I will examine what reasons we might have for thinking social mobilization leads to better outcomes. When I say better outcome I mean ability to solve planning problems effectively, and morally. Planning problems such as affordable housing, climate change, public health (addiction), among others, are the types of problems by which we should consider the effectiveness of social mobilization. In other words, we need to look for reasons that social mobilization might do a better job at solving these problems, and that forms of power that involve hierarchy and heteronomy are worse by comparison.

Based on what I will be exploring below, I will argue that we do not have good reasons for thinking social mobilization leads to better outcomes. Indeed, there are reasons for thinking social mobilization can lead to both good and bad outcomes. To be clear, I am not saying models of democratic decision-making that rely on social mobilization are bad, but rather that we should not prefer them over

other forms that involve heteronomy. Indeed, we should not prefer the process over the outcome, nor should we prefer the outcome with no regard to the process.

Social Mobilization in Practice

It should be noted that there are no examples of a fully transformed society that embraces social mobilization in way that resembles the societies described by Friedmann and Purcell. Indeed, Friedmann offers little in the realm of real life examples of movements resembling the ideals of social mobilization. However, Friedmann is pretty clear that recovering the political community through social mobilization would need to satisfy two conditions. First, that groups and individuals have equal access to collective decision-making. Second, that they have equal ability to influence contested outcomes (Friedmann, 1987, p. 346). This can at least give us some form of reference when thinking about how we judge the favorability of outcomes in social mobilization. Indeed, we could consider how outcomes might change if all had equal access and influence in the process.

In the case of Purcell we are pointed toward actually existing social movements purported to be on the right track. Some such examples include

> the Zapatista movement in Mexico, the Landless Workers' Movement in Brazil, the Narmada Valley dam protests in India, the meetings at the World Social Forum, the movement against GMO food, and blogging networks designed to provide alternatives to corporate media (Purcell, 2008, p. 82).

All these movements share in a common opposition to the state and neoliberal globalization, and some demand for autonomous self-reliance. In the interest of space, I will only make specific remarks related to the Zapatistas and the Landless Workers' Movement, since social mobilization theorists often cite them as examples.

The Zapatista movement in Mexico gained significant traction after the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. The movement was particularly motivated by the way NAFTA eroded the rights of

indigenous communities[4]. The Zapatistas have built self-reliant peasant communities around the Chiapas region in Mexico largely grounded in Marxist-inspired ideology. Their main principles consist in an opposition to the way globalization has affected peasant workers and indigenous communities, and a commitment to participatory bottom-up decision-making that attempts to limit the emergence of centralized leadership, and work to build self-reliant communities. Such communities grow their own food, manage educational and healthcare services, and coordinate collective production of basic goods. Throughout its development, the Zapatista movement has made a point to not involve itself in fighting for governmental reforms, since it views this process as illegitimate. Nor has it allowed itself to form a political party, preferring to continue its own alternative way of doing things.

The landless Workers' Movement of Brazil is similar to the Zapatista movement in its opposition to neoliberalism and commitment to localized self-reliant community building. Specifically, the movement is composed of unemployed and landless farmworkers who occupy, camp, and ultimately settle in absentee-owned farmland. Like the Zapatistas, the Landless Workers' movement builds its own functioning communities on occupied land including the construction of houses and schools (though with the some support from tax credits) (Hammond & Rossi, 2013, p. 1). The Landless Workers movement is ideologically grounded Leninism and anti-hierarchical liberation theology where the decision-making process functions collectively through grassroots assemblies (Hammond & Rossi, 2013, p. 2).

The above examples certainly seem to share the major theme of resisting heteronomy in a struggle for autonomous self-reliance. In both cases there is an emphasis on giving members of respective communities equal access to the decision-making process and a moral suspicion of the state and capitalism. Assuming that both above examples function as effectively as advocates claim they

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[4] See Paul Salgado's story in Jacobin at http://jacobinmag.com/2016/04/zapatistas-ezln-san-andres-marcos-chiapas/

do[5], to what extent do they provide evidence for thinking social mobilization is morally better than any other form of decision-making in planning? Moreover, how do these examples help us in thinking social mobilization will be better at solving contemporary planning problems? I will attempt to answer these questions below.

Considering the Outcomes

In this section I will be considering the potential consequences of privileging autonomy and equal access and influence in the decision-making process, combined with a moral opposition to state-power and capitalism (heteronomy). Before engaging this line of thought I want to notice an apparent contradiction operating in Purcell and Friedmann. On the one hand they want to resist heteronomy, work toward equal access for all groups and individuals to influence decision-making in planning (and politics). On the other hand, they both envision a progressive and inclusive political society that opposes neoliberalism and state power. It seems that they assume disadvantaged groups (and other groups), if given the opportunity, would necessarily share the same basic opposition to neoliberalism and belief in controlling their own conditions in the city and society (to be perhaps, like the Zapatistas, universalized). Of course, this control would need to be inclusive, equitable, and progressive to truly follow in the spirit of Friedmann and Purcell. Adopting a political attitude that constantly opposes any top-down limits (heteronomy) on social mobilization while simultaneously expecting that the populous would adopt the civic values envisioned by Friedmann and Purcell, let alone to solve concrete political and planning problems is a very ambitious expectation. Indeed, disagreement seems to be a constant in human society as even Purcell and radical democratic theorists acknowledge in their skepticism of consensus building in politics. Again, to restate the seeming contradiction, Purcell is skeptical that we can ever reach consensus about politics, let alone any idea of public interest, yet he has a vision for a progressive self-managed city that removes

[5] In the case of the Landless Workers' Movement, there's some evidence suggesting it sometimes devolves into authoritarianism (Hammond & Rossi, 2013, p. 2)

as many top-down constraints as possible. Without any constraints on the public it seems reasonable to worry about the outcomes. This contradiction parallels the contradiction at the planning conference I cited in the introduction to this paper. Planners seem to have a clear vision of 'good planning' and wish they had stronger tools to overcome NIMBYism and political obstacles to get the job done. Yet they continue to espouse the need for greater and more substantive public participation. I would argue that there is a subtext in both social mobilization and planning discourse that amounts to idealizing public participation or social movements, but always in a way that imagines the public as agreeing with the right kind of progressive principles. We cannot construct plausible futures built on this kind of assumption. Instead we need to think carefully about human fallibility.

Therefore, my overarching concern with removing top-down constraints is that we might devolve into dangerous regressive populism. That is, not only might we not get a better outcome; we might get a morally disastrous one. Purcell might protest that my objection is

> akin to heeding pragmatic pronouncements that tell us only some things are possible, that advise us to take certain political goals off the table and banish them from our imagination. This pragmatism is merely laziness. It is giving in to the seductions of heteronomy and oligarchy. It is an excuse to settle for passivity under the guise of being smart, strategic, and pragmatic (Purcell, 2013a, p. 90).

Pragmatism is probably and accurate label. Indeed, I care about how we can get good planning done, and make life in the city better for people – in other words, what works best. For example, I agree with Friedmann when he says the four pillars of a good city include housing, health care, fairly waged work, and adequate social provision (Friedmann, 2011, p. 101). It is just not at all obvious to me that social mobilization is the best way to get there. I want to ask serious questions about the practical and moral consequences of continually opposing top-down institutions (heteronomy), in order to leave people to 'manage their own affairs'. I am not trying

to dismiss radical democracy for partisan reasons, but rather because I very much want progressive initiatives to succeed.

NIMBYism and Social Mobilization

In planning theory and discourse the issue of NIMBYism (not-in-my-backyard) often comes up. While the term is somewhat contentious, it is basically the name given to local community opposition to some kind of proposed change to that community, whether planning related or otherwise. It is often justified by those participating in NIMBYism as the community defending its self-determination against government or developer (capitalist) interest. Planners often express frustration concerning NIMBYism, especially when extensive evidence has been accumulated supporting a proposed initiative. One example that exemplifies this frustration well is the struggle to combat drug addiction and related crime through harm reduction. According to The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) harm reduction is based on key principles including:

1. Pragmatism: it is assumed that some drug use will inevitably occur in a normal society and it is best to reduce existing tangible harms rather than focusing on the abstract goal of a drug free society
2. Humanism: A non-judgmental humanistic attitude toward the fact that people use drugs. Drug users are treated with dignity and respect (Riley, 1998, Sec 9).
3. Centered on Harm: "The focus of harm reduction policy and programs is the reduction of harmful consequences without necessarily requiring any reduction in use, since a change in mode of administration or pattern of use may also reduce harm (CAMH, 2002, p. 2)".
4. Priority of Goals: Emphasis is placed on the "immediate and realizable reduction in drug-related harm rather than hoped for long-term outcomes (CAMH, 2002, p. 3)".

Approaches to harm reduction implementation include clean needle exchanges, methadone maintenance treatment (MMT), and drug consumption sites (including supervised injection of intravenous drugs). All of the above approaches are supported by overwhelming medical evidence showing that they reduce harm by limiting the spread of HIV/AIDS, improving health and social outcomes for addicts,

increasing use of addiction services, reducing crime, saving public money, and saving lives with minimal negative impacts on communities (City of Toronto, 2005, p. 31; Erdelyan & Young, 2009, p. 11; Health Canada, 2003; Toronto Drug Strategy, 2013, p. 20; McLachlin, 2011, [136]).

At the community level, for such harm reduction programs to work, they require the opening of facilities to service drug users in local communities. The attempt to open such facilities has had a contentious history with NIMBY reactions functioning as a key barrier (See: Bernstein & Bennett, 2013; Alexander, 2010; Tempalski, Friedman, Keem, Cooper, & Friedman, 2007). As Christopher B.R. Smith argues, drug treatment spaces suffer from a systematic socio-spatial stigmatization where addicts are conceptualized as "as criminally 'dangerous', morally and criminally 'deviant', and 'diseased' (Smith, 2010). As Smith recounts, community members have sometimes ignored evidence of the benefits, with one person calling a cited CAMH report on the evidence surrounding MMT "a step-by-step guide on how to indoctrinate a community" (Smith, 2010, pp. 12). Throughout the years NIMBYism against harm reduction programs has succeeded (especially in the USA, which is currently experiencing an opioid crisis) and people continue to die everyday from something harm reduction could easily prevent.

I would argue that the above example is useful because it forces us to consider the wisdom of, as Friedmann argues, giving people equal access and influence in the decision-making process. It seems like a reasonable worry that in some cases people will use that equal access and influence to exclude and harm others (based on not wanting addicts in the neighborhood). In cases where people are clearly wrong about the evidence, where their wrongness is actually costing lives, centralized power can step in to do the morally right thing. Purcell addresses the NIMBYism concern by essentially dismissing it as a bad "habit of thought". Instead he advocates for a new habit of thought that "refuses to fall back on the State…[and] forces us to ask how we can negotiate these questions without the State (Purcell, 2016, p. 9)". He continues by pointing out that

> There are countless examples of people working out questions like this for themselves, without any significant involvement by the State. These examples range from the mundane (neighbors negotiating how to use the parking spaces on their street) to the spectacular (people in informal settlements figuring out how to hook up and regulate an electrical system for tens of thousands of people). These kind of relations, both among communities and between smaller communities and wider publics, are being negotiated all the time, in real life, without the State, by urban inhabitants themselves. And so the empirical habit of thought here is: *pay attention* to these practices (Purcell, 2016, p. 10).

I am paying attention to those practices, but I argue that we must pay attention to the full range of human practices and decision-making. People are clearly vulnerable to making morally problematic decisions and political theory should take this possibility seriously. Thus, I want to argue that inasmuch as NIMBYism against harm reduction is an instance of, as Purcell would say, people demanding control of their own conditions, it is an example of how we cannot always assume such demands will lead to morally better outcomes.

Social Movements and Social Mobilization

Beyond planning disputes it is helpful to consider social movements more generally, especially those with an ideological element of self-reliance. As discussed earlier, Purcell points to several examples of social movements as instances of people demanding control of their own conditions, demands for democracy. In addition to examples listed above, Purcell cites 2009 protests in Iran, the Arab Spring, and movements like Occupy Wall Street, as instances of "absolute democracy" (Purcell, 2013a, p. 90). Even if we accept the most favorable account of the above-mentioned social movements, I can just as easily cherry pick examples of social movements with morally problematic ends. For example, recent anti-globalist right-wing populism in the United States, partially credited with the election of Donald Trump. This recent American anti-globalism shares its ideological lineage with long-

standing tradition of Patriot Militia movements that mobilize against the perceived "tyranny of the federal government"[6]. Militia ideology is heavily informed by a self-reliant, 'frontierist' mentality. As one member of the Militia of Montana put it

> In the cities people are much more dependent on government for their services. If the electricity fails they're screwed. Here we light a candle. If we have to eat we go shoot a deer. You can't do that in a high rise in Manhattan. They're socialized to accept government gradually taking over their lives (Mulloy, 2005, p. 146).

Echoing the social movements cited by Purcell, these groups could be interpreted as essentially struggling against the heteronomy of the state.

Unlike the progressive politics envisioned by Purcell, militia movements often mobilize for morally questionable ends. Among many complaints against the government, these groups object to the way lands are regulated for the purposes of environmental regulation designed to combat pollution and climate change (See: Mulloy, 2005, p. 148). Militia Movement ideology also often includes an aspect of racist anti-immigrant sentiment, again on the grounds of federal government and globalist tyranny – much of this sentiment now present in the so-called alternative-right movement.

Another instructive example comes from the predominantly indigenous rural parts of the Mexican state of Oaxaca where governance and conflicts are resolved by what's called 'traditions and customs' (usos y costumbres) (See: Esteva, 2007). Sometimes touted to be a model for indigenous justice and self-determination, the moral consequences have not always been favourable. Case in point, in 2016 an eight-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a 55-year-old local pastor; the pastor was ultimately found guilty by the local community tribunal. In accordance with the system based on traditions and customs, the pastor was ordered to buy the victim's father two cases of beer[7]. The system was supposed to respect the local traditions

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[6] See: The Hill, July 1st, 2016, http://thehill.com/policy/national-security/265062-militia-movement-growing-at-rapid-rate

[7] See: The Guardian, October 8th, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/08/mexico-man-rape-girl-buy-beer-father

and autonomy of a diverse indigenous population but has sometimes lead to problematic human rights abuses. I am of course not suggesting such results are an inevitability, but only that these kinds of outcomes are possible when we privilege autonomy over everything else.

Finally, in 2013 when Purcell endorsed "blogging networks designed to provide alternatives to corporate media (Purcell, 2013a, p. 90)" as a sign of emerging democracy, he could not have known the negative political consequences. Alternative blogging networks, with their lack of centralized editorial standards, have been identified as a crucial condition in the rise of the alternative right and Donald Trump, exemplified by Breitbart, fake news, etc. As philosopher Kathleen Higgens observes, we have reached a point where "the public hears what it wants to hear, because many people get their news exclusively from sources whose bias they agree with (Higgens, 2016)". Essentially people have taken control of their own truth conditions, leading to a situation where there is no longer a centrally recognized authority for what counts as the news and the truth. I would argue that this is analogous to the danger I see in steadfastly opposing centralized decision-making (heteronomy), where we see a 'siloing' of media and knowledge, we might see a 'siloing' of political and social outcome. It seems reasonable to imagine some communities holding to progressive views, while others becoming regressive and racist communities.

It may sound as though I think people cannot be trusted to do the right thing because they are too stupid or selfish. While this will be discussed at length when I explore subjectivity in social mobilization in chapter 4, I will say that it is more a question of fundamental human weaknesses. My view is not that people are governed by selfishness, or are incapable of understanding complex consequences. Instead it's that people are limited in the amount of considerations they can engage on a day-to-day basis. Because of this, people are vulnerable to bias and poor judgment, and I worry when political theories do not take seriously the question of correcting for this, as best as possible.

To reiterate, my main point is that political autonomy will necessarily come in many shades of ideology and outcome. It could be inclusive or exclusive,

progressive or regressive, and indeed, morally helpful or harmful. The way social mobilization morally condemns heteronomy writ large seems to be in line with a common mistake in thinking. That is, because heteronomy can, and in many cases has led to morally terrible outcomes must mean that heteronomy is morally terrible. This is a mistake because it ignores the morally relevant circumstances that led to particular outcomes. It would be like saying science created the nuclear bomb therefore science is evil. The problem is not science or heteronomy but how they were used. This is also why I am not morally condemning social mobilization but instead pointing to the way it could be used for morally negative consequences.

I would argue that in order for Friedmann and Purcell to be conceptually consistent, they must accept that granting people equal access to process and influence in the decision-making process could easily (and would sometimes likely) lead to morally negative results. Therefore, returning to the main issue in question, *it is not clear at all, based on the above considerations, that social mobilization is likely to lead to morally better outcomes. Indeed, there is reason to think the opposite might be true.* Based on this, I would argue that we must have primary regard for outcomes in planning theory, with certainly some regard for process. But we must pay primary attention to the particular morally relevant circumstances.

The Moral Implications

In the above pages, I argued that social mobilization is not an inherently morally better decision-making process in planning than those that involve different degrees of heteronomy. As I argued above, both the alienation argument and the socially mobilized outcomes defense failed to show us that social mobilization is morally preferable. In the case of the alienation argument, I considered the idea that social mobilization is morally preferable because it actualizes a human-social predisposition toward autonomous control of the social conditions of life. I argued in contrast that something being a predisposition cannot be the ground for deriving moral value, and even if it could, human society is not predisposed to autonomous control of the social conditions of life. If anything, it seems like human society has a

predisposition toward heteronomy. The second way I considered whether social mobilization is morally better was to argue that it leads to morally better outcomes in planning and politics. I argued, with reference to NIMBYism and populist social movements, that there are just as many reasons, if not more, suggesting that social mobilization could lead to morally negative outcomes. Specifically, it leaves society vulnerable to regressive populism.

Despite this, it is possible there are other ways of arguing that social mobilization is morally preferable. Perhaps democracy for Purcell (and to a lesser extent Friedmann) is an end, in and of itself, the importance of which trounces the risk of possible negative outcomes. Indeed, there are reasons for reading Purcell as thinking the risks are worth the rewards, and that we must have the courage to step into unknown consequences. As Purcell puts it, "in a human community without a State, we are capable of the full range of human behaviors and relations… we are not fated to war. Rather, much more plausibly, we are *capable of anything* (Purcell, 2016, p. 8, my emphasis)". It seems as though Purcell is fully aware of the risks, yet willing to take a 'leap of faith', regardless of the potential moral consequences. This willingness is, I suspect, based on the idea that radical democracy is somehow the more authentic way of doing things. As Richard Rorty describes it, it is a view that argues that any "movement which is not mass-based must somehow be a fraud, and that top-down initiatives are automatically suspect… the belief that there is virtue only among the oppressed (Rorty, 1999, p. 65)". It is an attitude indicative of a kind of fundamentalist purity politics. The danger of which is that when confronted with problems where the evidence for a solution is overwhelming (and people are actually dying, as in the case of harm reduction), we argue that everyone have their say, even if that say is contaminated by bias, poor judgment, and racism. In such cases I want a centralized authority to come in and override human weakness, when moral reasons justify it. This seems especially salient in the context of global climate change, where the stakes are likely to be existential.

Finally, I do not mean to suggest that social mobilization cannot give us positive results. Indeed, it would also be a mistake to think I endorse the status quo, far from it. Rather, if things are going to change for the better we need to be clear on

potential consequences. It is irresponsible to dismiss as "mere laziness" real questions about the moral impact of dismantling central political and administrative institutions. Certainly we need to build more responsive governments and control the unjust results of neoliberalism. But let's focus on ways of doing just that by make use of the existing institutions of power and social movements. Surely, social movements are a crucial component of any just society; I just don't think there is any reason to believe the answer is a perpetual state of social mobilization. We need to avoid falling victim to the purity politics trap of viewing an entire way of doing things with prima facie suspicion. I would argue that the truth of real politics is that they are messy, and impure. I echo Rorty when he calls for the end of the

> idea that only bottom-up initiatives, conducted by workers and peasants who have somehow been freed from resentment as to show no trace of prejudice, can achieve our country. The history of leftist politics in America is a story of how top-down initiatives and bottom-up initiatives have interlocked (Rorty, 1999, p. 53).

Chapter Three: Subjectivity in Social Mobilization

The possibility of significant social and political change, especially change precipitated by popular bottom-up activation, is to a meaningful extent dependent on how subjectivity functions. The question is this: what aspects of subjectivity influence the possibility of, and limits on social and political change. When Friedmann and Purcell write about political theories of social mobilization, they are at least implying a view of how subjectivity can become socially mobilized. This section will attempt to reconstruct what it would mean to be a socially mobilized subjectivity in accordance with Friedmann and Purcell's theory. I will argue that Friedmann and Purcell are committed to the possibility of mass perpetual political activity and resistance. That is, a population that can overcome, while perhaps not completely, at least significantly, its tendency toward subjective passivity (accepting claim 2).

While Friedmann does not address the question of subjectivity directly, he does offer us an account of what a socially mobilized society might look like, particularly how to avoid the trap of centralized rule. In contrast, Purcell directly engages the question of subjectivity by critiquing the way existing institutions of power coerce the population into a state of subjective passivity. Moreover, his work argues for the importance of activating subjectivity from its state of passivity. As will become clear later, passivity/activity is an important conceptual distinction for Purcell, along with the earlier discussed concepts of heteronomy/autonomy and oligarchy/democracy. Importantly, I do not claim that either theorist is implying some kind of utopian end state, though we might argue that Friedmann is open to the possibility. Instead I take them as arguing for a kind of perpetual struggle. However, despite not reading them as implying a utopian end state, they are implying something crucial about subjectivity in arguing for a perpetual state of political and social struggle.

Towards a Socially Mobilized Population in Friedmann and Purcell

When Friedmann offers his outline of "the collective self-production of life", he is describing it as the goal of social mobilization. Steps necessary for the collective self-production of life include, "to enhance people's independent critical thinking and acting", "to assert people's sovereign will at all levels of territorial life", and "to selectively de-link from the dominant system of market relations" and mass media. As Friedmann elaborates, the energy to generate such changes must come from within "each territorially based community (Friedmann, 1987, p. 348)". Self-reliant production is important for Friedmann because market and state forces are argued to be one of the main forces preventing a truly activated political community (Friedmann, 1987, p. 347). A crucial aspect in developing a socially mobilized population is resisting centralized leadership and power structures. This is why one of the key roles of radical planning is to help coordinate action in a way that resists the tendency toward centralized decision-making by encouraging collective access and influence for all members of the community (Friedmann, 1987, pp. 305-306).

Friedmann also expresses concern for the way the mass media can serve to 'brainwash' the population in a way that limits the possibility of the self-production of life (Friedmann, 1987, p. 362). This is why it is crucial for households to begin the process of self-production by turning outwards to other households undergoing the same process. That is, as each household engages in self-production, the experiences, resources, and skills can be shared to other households in an effort to collectively change the community, and then by extension, the larger society (Friedmann, 1987, p. 362).

It is important to be clear that for Purcell, the goal is not an actually existing fully democratic society. Instead, the idea is to encourage as much popular bottom-up socially mobilized struggle as possible. The main goal being to reclaim as much ability to manage conditions collectively and autonomously as possible. It is impossible, according to Purcell,

> to ever be fully autonomous. The political imperative can only ever be to struggle to *become* autonomous, to flee heteronomy and move toward the horizon of autonomy to the extent that we can (Purcell, 2013a, p. 88).

This admission enables Purcell to avoid charges of utopianism, since his political vision will never reach completion.

While admitting that there can never be a perpetual state of democracy, Purcell does argue that

> we must engage in a perpetual struggle to move away from domination… In those rare instances where we achieve a breakthrough, we must continue to ward off the re-formation of oligarchy and heteronomy (Purcell, 2013a, p. 88).

Thus, Purcell's theory, instead of requiring perpetual democracy, seems to require perpetual struggle against heteronomy, toward autonomy.

Purcell does put a lot of hope in achieving a kind of generalized breakthrough in democracy. This is exemplified by his theoretical disagreement with Jacques Ranciere's political theory. For Ranciere, politics exists only as moments when what he calls the existing 'police order' (the structures of society, the laws, customs, habits, traditions, assumptions and morals) is disrupted, interrupted, and called into question at a fundamental level, usually by some kind of social-political uprisings. The result of such a moment is always a reconfiguration of the existing police order in a way that incorporates demands expressed by the disruption in order. After this, the energy of the initial uprising is dissipated (Ranciere, 2001). Thus, the political for Ranciere is a perpetual series of disruptions and reconfigurations taking place in the police order. This also means that there is no escaping the police order, since it always reconfigures itself in a way that re-pacifies the population, until the next disruption.

For Purcell, Ranciere's vision of politics does not go far enough. While Purcell agrees that a state of perpetual democracy is not possible, he seems committed to

preserving some way in which social and political struggles can reach a breakthrough state of perpetual mobilization. As Purcell puts it,

> So far what I have said… aligns with Ranciere's democracy, a democracy that emerges, that *may* make a difference to the social order, but then relents and dissipates. But we need to go further than Ranciere does… we should press for a breakthrough, a generalized democratic explosion (Purcell, 2013a, p. 89).

Purcell's worry is likely that if the momentary energy dissipates we fall back into passivity such that the socio-cultural institutions of society return to general acceptance.

This reveals what I think is a crucial point in understanding Purcell's view of democracy, and how this impacts our understanding of socially mobilized subjectivity. Indeed, what Purcell's theory seems to require is for the energy associated with resistance to remain active. In other words, the subject must remain in a state of mobilized activity. In contrast, Ranciere seems to think true moments of political mobilization are only possible as momentary disruptions. This is not good enough for Friedmann and Purcell since both emphasize generalized and permanent socially mobilized action. Action that constantly resists capital, mass media culture, and leadership structures since these lead to passivity and heteronomy. Ranciere's view of democracy is problematic for Purcell because it accepts a certain level of inescapable passivity in political subjectivity.

Socially Mobilized Subjectivity: Activity and Passivity

The task remains to isolate the crucial aspects of active subjectivity, the absence of which would render Friedmann and Purcell's social mobilization view of democracy implausible. I will argue, following Purcell, that the essential concept in socially mobilized subjectivity is the distinction between active and passive. I argue that for Friedmann and Purcell's theory to make sense, a high level of subjective activity is

required. To see how this is the case, we need to get clearer on what is meant by subjective activity as it relates to social mobilization.

One of Purcell's central concerns is to explain how it is that so much of the populace remains politically passive. Political passivity is the idea that most people do not question the customs and institutions of centralized and cultural power (Ranciere's "police order"). In other words, people allow the decision-making process to happen in a heteronomous manner, and seem to prefer being ruled by others. Indeed, according to Purcell there exists a deep subjective tendency toward "inertia, inactivity, passivity, to have someone else make decisions for us (Purcell, 2013a, p. 93)". The connection between subjective passivity and heteronomy is now evident. Subjective passivity to allow others (institutions or rulers) to make decisions for us is heteronomy, since through political passivity decisions get made external to collective will. Like Friedmann, Purcell blames this tendency toward passivity on the governments, institutions, and mass media for effectively brainwashing the populace with ideas including that the state

> is identical to the public, that it exists only to serve our interests, that we would descend into chaos without it. Apple actively cajoles us into believing we cannot survive without an iPad. The whole complex of strategies... [works] to keep us passive, consuming, and governed (Purcell, 2013a, p. 94).

While a lot of blame can be placed on the above influences, Purcell admits that such influences only work because we already have a desire to be ruled. Indeed, this is why the project of democracy "isn't so much the project to confront a power wielded by malevolent forces beyond our control. Rather, democracy is a struggle against our own desire for oligarchy" (Purcell, 2013a, p. 93). Therefore, subjectivity involved in social mobilization must be capable of overcoming its desire to be passively ruled.

Overcoming this desire to be ruled, according to Purcell, requires cultivating a desire and faculty for political activity. This is a faculty that Purcell claims has lacked appropriate exercise in liberal-democratic culture (Purcell, 2013a, p. 95). To

finally overcome the tendency for passivity requires a painful struggle. To illustrate this point, Purcell appeals to David Foster Wallace's writings where he uses drug addiction as a metaphor for the temptation of passivity. He describes two scenarios, the first depicts spectators in a near future where an "entertainment" becomes so compelling it lulls people into a perpetual infantile and catatonic state of passivity, so much so that they die of dehydration. The other scenario describes an addict's

> efforts to ward off "the substance" to remain clean and avoid returning to a hellish life of addiction… they must actively struggle to retain control of themselves, to manage their destructive desires. If they fail in their struggle, the will surely die (Purcell, 2013a, p. 103).

In this rather dramatic use of metaphor, Purcell is telling us that the struggle for democratic activity amounts to a struggle to live. No doubt this is meant to show how difficult becoming truly democratic is.

While Purcell does not downplay the difficulty associated with subjective activity, he does see a hopeful side of the struggle. Quoting Lefebvre, Purcull argues that even though

> autonomous activity requires "painful effort,"… [Lefebvre] is quick to add that it also offers "the joy of creation," a feeling of deep delight that so often comes when we achieve a task through a concerted effort (Purcell, 2013a, p. 109).

Thus the claim is that exercising our democratic faculties will lead to a joy related to creativity. The perpetual struggle to be active, according to Purcell, is analogous with maturing into an adult that takes responsibility. The temptation to be passive is the desire for a paternal figure to take care of our conditions. To become full adult subjects, we must commence the project of overcoming in order to control our own conditions (Purcell, 2013a, p. 107).

Socially Mobilized Subjectivity: Resisting Passivity

Based on what Purcell has described with regard to becoming active, as well as the type of society Friedmann envisions, I want to argue that socially mobilized subjectivity relies on the possibility of a continuous and reasonably consistent attitude of overcoming the tendency toward passive subjectivity. That is, the subject of active social mobilization is one that needs to continually question its concrete conditions as will as the conditions of its own thinking. Without such questioning it is likely to fall into passivity in a way that prevents the kind of struggle for democracy expressed by Purcell, and implied by Friedmann.

What I mean by the subjective questioning of concrete conditions, is that the subject must attempt to consider the way in which the conditions of life are produced, controlled, and decided upon. As an example, for me to be truly striving for democracy in Purcell and Friedmann's sense I need to be critical and aware of how I get hydropower, for example. The same could be said for where my food comes from, where I go shopping, etc. If I do not strive to question these material conditions I am not truly striving for democracy. Simply allowing these conditions to remain unquestioned is to allow *someone else* to make those decisions for me, and fall victim to heteronomy. It is important to remember that I may not succeed in understanding the intricacies of the material conditions around me, but to be struggling for democracy means I at least need to try. The moment I get comfortable with my material conditions is likely the moment I am no longer striving for democracy.

Questioning the conditions of my own thinking is connected to taking responsibility for myself. I must own the way I think, and as Friedmann argued, I must cultivate strong independent critical thinking skills. Assumptions we might have about ethics and humanity for example are just other ways of being passive and not taking responsibility for how we think and treat each other. To use Ranciere's term, it is to blindly accept the 'police order'. To be truly democratic then, is to always be questioning your own ethical intuitions by asking, "have I really done

enough?" The only correct answer in a struggle for true democracy is "no". Mobilized activity must continue its effort to overcome passivity and heteronomy.

Activity, as opposed to passivity, is essentially resisting the comfort associated with accepting the given socio-political situation. If we recall from Purcell's critique of Ranciere, moments of social mobilization are not enough, because the goal of the true democrat is a 'generalized breakthrough' where all "insistently push out further toward activity, awareness, and democracy, radically so (Purcell, 2013a, p. 121)". Therefore, the project is to win a breakthrough where socially mobilized struggle, and where subjects strive for active resistance, is generalized in the population. Based on my reading of Purcell and Friedmann, without the above-described features of subjectivity, their political theories are not plausible. Because Purcell has set up passivity as the enemy of democracy, my description of an active subject seems essential if perpetual struggle is to succeed. Consider the subject that does not continually consider its material conditions, or the conditions of its thinking. Following Purcell's logic, this would open the door to passivity, heteronomy, and oligarchy. For Friedmann, though he does not explicitly discuss passivity and activity, his description of the self-production of life seems to imply the need for a similar kind of subjectivity. Indeed, he describes the need for resistance to leadership, independent critical thinking, and the collective self-management of conditions. For this reason I would also claim Friedmann's view fits my concept of socially mobilized subjectivity as perpetual resistance to passivity.

Conclusion

In the above chapter I explored what it means to be a socially mobilized subject. I argued that Friedmann and Purcell's theories rely on a subjectivity that perpetually resists the passivity involved in accepting its conditions through a perpetual questioning of both its material conditions, and the conditions of its thinking. Without these features, the socially mobilized subject risks falling into passivity, heteronomy, and oligarchy. Because of this I argue that Friedmann and Purcell are indeed committed to claim 2. Their views rely on a subject capable of overcoming,

while perhaps not completely, at least significantly, its tendency toward passivity as described by Purcell, and implied by Friedmann. Therefore, the next chapter will consider whether this view of subjectivity is plausible.

Chapter Four: Phenomenology and The Limits of Socially Mobilized Subjectivity

> The act of becoming aware and becoming active is therefore only a first step… the second step must be to fight like hell… we must fight to stay active, to ward off our desire for heteronomy and oligarchy, and to reaffirm our desire for autonomy and democracy (Purcell, 2013a, p. 119).

Introduction

The above is a powerful sentiment, the kind of message we might want to rally around. However, is this kind of struggle possible on a consistent basis? That is, is it realistic, or even possible to ward off passivity? In this chapter I will endeavor to answer this question by drawing on a phenomenological account of subjectivity. This will involve considering the requirements previously set for socially mobilized subjectivity. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology offers us valuable insights that problematize the passive/active distinction and forces us to reconsider certain assumptions about subjectivity that I will argue are included in socially mobilized subjectivity.

Objective Thought and Merleau-Ponty

It is useful to begin by briefly explaining phenomenology as a method of philosophical inquiry. Phenomenology is essentially a study of the structural features of experience, as they are perceived (J. Smith, 2017). This amounts to a philosophy that is highly descriptive of the phenomena of experience.

In *Phenomenology of Perception,* Merleau-Ponty problematizes an idea about perception he calls 'objective thought'. Objective thought is the name Merleau-Ponty uses to describe a certain way of describing the subject's relationship with perception and the world (See: Merleau-Ponty, 2013, pp. 69-74; Dreyfus, 2002, p. 378). As Lawrence Hass puts, objective thought is

> The view that external material objects activate one's sense organs, which cause sensations in one's mind or brain, which in turn the understanding compiles or "internally represents" as perceived objects such as a table and chairs (Hass, 2008, p. 29).

According to objective thought, we operate in the world by developing certain mental representations of perceived sense datum. For example, according to objective thought the reason I perceive a chair as something to sit in is because I have learned to develop the concept of chair as a mental representation in my head, and corresponding conceptual content pointing to its usefulness. The idea being that I recognize the chair because I have the concept of chair in mind and I can compare my perception to my mental representation of chair, and then recognize it. Therefore, for objective thought, mental representations function to bridge the divide between perceiver and perceived world, and allow the subject to function in the world. Thus, the subject relies on developing mental representations that accurately reflect objects perceived in sense datum (Dreyfus, 2002, p. 377).

One of the implications of this view is that it essentially accepts the idea that the world and the subject perceiving that world are separated. Another way of thinking about this is to imagine that you have the world on the one hand, functioning as sense datum. And you have the 'thinking subject' on the other hand, actively receiving and interpreting the perceived world. The crucial point to notice here is the primacy these views place on the 'thinking subject'. By thinking subject I mean that the primary mode of being for the subject on this view is that it thinks, it is always interpreting its perceptions, and building mental representations to better operate in that world. Put another way, on this view the subject spends its time consciously aware of its desires, and its actions. The thinking subject, by and large, holds its desire and action in the foreground of awareness.

An important point to flag is that this view of subjectivity affords the subject a significant amount of control and autonomy. This is because mental representations are by their nature actively grasped and judged by us. On this view, the thinking subject is always actively aware of the mental representations that make sense of the perceptual world. Not being actively aware of the conditions of its

actions and desires would necessarily reduce subjective control. In other words, active awareness is a necessary step for having autonomy.

Social Mobilization and the 'Thinking Subject'

I want to make the claim that social mobilization views like Friedmann and Purcell's accept a version of 'objective thought' in their implied accounts of subjectivity. Such views essentially argue that the reason people are not socially mobilizing is because they do not have the right kind of mental representations in their minds, the kind that would allow for sustained coordinated resistance. This is why Friedmann and Purcell spend so much time talking about people becoming aware of their conditions, and realize how they are being manipulated into passivity by vacuous desires in media and neoliberal culture. Indeed, social mobilizations requirement to constantly question our material conditions and the conditions of our thinking is to render them into continually graspable mental representations.

Purcell explains the lack of active political resistance partially by ascribing a *desire* to be passive. This desire supposedly comes from the idea that people would rather let others take care of them, a desire to regress to an infant state. To overcome this requires that people cultivate a new desire to be active, to realize that the desire for passivity is mistaken and the result of manipulation, and that being active is actually in our best interest. The key point here is that such desires for passivity are still the kind of thing that can at least be partially overcome by becoming aware. In other words, political action depends on the right kinds of collective beliefs (mental representations). In a way, political passivity is reduced to a failure to think properly, to realize what is in our interest. This account, I would argue, is consistent with subjectivity as privileging the actively 'thinking subject', a subject that acts on beliefs and mental representations.

In the next few pages, I will explain how Merleau-Ponty makes this entire view of the thinking subject problematic. What Merleau-Ponty argues in *Phenomenology of Perception* is that the subject of perception relies much less on conscious mental representations, and is more intertwined with the world it

perceives. Indeed, for Merleau-Ponty, the subject takes a much more passive role in perception and engagement with the world.

The Habit-Body and Non-Representational Passive Perception

According to Merleau-Ponty, subjectivity does not act primarily on beliefs or mental representations, but rather on the basis of embodied habituation. As we can recall, objective thought argues that actions in the world depend on conscious mental representations of objects and ideas in the world. For example, walking to a window and opening it depends on mental representational content that allows us to recognize the windows. To be sure, Merleau-Ponty does not deny that we can have mental representations, such as windows and chairs. Rather, he argues that mental representations are rarely involved in everyday actions. Actions are normally accomplished because our bodies have become attuned with certain habits of movement and passive sensitivities to particular contexts (See: Merleau-Ponty, 2013, pp. 143-148).

The best way to explain Merleau-Ponty's view of the habit-body is to analyze skill acquisition. Consider already acquired skills. For example, when I tie my shoes I am not thinking about each movement of my fingers, comparing it with a representation of how shoes should be tied. When I drive I do not concentrate on the movements in my feet by calculating the amount of pressure needed to accomplish my task. On the contrary, the above best describes the experience of trying to learn a new task. Indeed, consider the perceptual difference between driving for the first time, and driving now. In the first instance I am clumsy, my movements are inconsistent and overly deliberate. I have to think carefully about each movement in a way that almost prevents me from doing anything. Most experienced drivers can likely recall being on 'autopilot', only to arrive at their destination with almost no memory of the journey. Similar experiences can likely be recalled in cases of walking a familiar route through a neighborhood. Also, consider typing on a keyboard. Typing quickly and effectively depends almost on not thinking about the movements of your fingers and just allowing your body to do the work for

you. We develop the above-mentioned skills not by thinking and developing a mental representation, but by exposing our bodies to repeated situations and movements. Acquiring skills and habits in this way results in an alteration of the way perceptions appear for us (See: Merleau-Ponty, 2013, pp. 153-155).

This is an important point. The result of habituation is that all perceptions come with built in values and claims, many of them related to opportunities and demands for action. That is, everyday perceptions point our attention towards certain aspects, and lead us to ignore others. These experiences appear in perception not as the result of conscious judgment, but are passive responses resulting from embodied habituation. I see the traffic light turn red and the perception is a prohibition on certain actions. Before I can reflect on the idea of red light as a concept, my body becomes passively sensitive to the situation and responds by pressing the breaks. Consider an experienced hockey player. The player does not see the lines on the rink as simply colored lines, but rather perceives them as actual opportunities and limits on action within their context. The hockey puck is not simply a black disk, but rather, it becomes – as a result of the player's involvement – a puck to-be-intercepted, and to-be-shot into the opposing teams net. Conscious judgment and conceptual thinking play only a minor role in such situations with the primary mode being passive sensitivities to the context resulting from embodied habituation. Imagine the alternate scenario, one where each time the hockey player encountered the blue line, they would have to accomplish a mental inference to remember what role it plays. In such a circumstance it is difficult to imagine successful skillfulness.

Considering other examples, the difference between how a skilled climber and a novice climber perceive a steep rock face is instructive. Whereas the skilled climber will perceive the textured rock face as containing several opportunities for climbing, the novice may only see an impassable rock wall. Moreover, imagine watching a movie that is supposed to be set in a pacific northwestern forest but was actually filmed in the Appalachia. Most of us would never notice. However, for an experienced botanist the fact that certain species of tree or plant does not belong would likely jump out at them. Both the botanist and non-botanist are viewing the

same visual stimuli however for the botanist, due to their training (habit), different details are called forth. These examples support Merleau-Ponty's claim that our primary mode of being in the world is through a process of being exposed and exposing ourselves to movements and situations to the point that our bodies reconfigure themselves to perceive appropriately in the given situation (what Herbert Dreyfus calls 'absorbed coping' (Dreyfus, 2002, p. 378)). Unlike traditional philosophical views that imply a mind-body dualism, Merleau-Ponty's view emphasizes the role that the body plays in subjectivity. Indeed, the body is our ontology. For Merleau-Ponty, habit is a crucial ontological feature.

If we consider the world the subject is born into, depending on the culture it finds itself in, certain cultural customs function like embodied habits and become part of perceptual reality. There are always already passively experienced action and value-laden perceptions of the world. Seeing two people walking down the street holding hands points to the claim that they are a romantic couple (and ignores other possibilities). Again, there is no conscious inference or mental representation in these experiences, the perception simply shows up as such. Just like the acquisition of skills of movement, this perceptual *directionality* is experienced passively as a result of the subject coping with the milieu of contingent social signifiers and customs (Merleau-Ponty, 2013, p. 363). For Merleau-Ponty, the subject is always already coping with a world of values and practices that determine certain passive contextual sensitivities. Consider the alternative scenario, one in which perceptions showed up as requiring continual judgment, where perceptions never showed up as demanding action or announcing meaning, and where such truths required active inference – this in no way resembles the world we live in.

To be sure, human subjectivity does involve reflective conceptual representations. What Merleau-Ponty reveals is that they are involved far less often than people may think. In a way, reflective thought is an interruption in our day-to-day movements and practices. Most of the time we are absorbed into our tasks and routines. Critical thought is perhaps a way of lifting ourselves out of our situation to question our routines and habits. However, as I will argue, based on the nature of

the subject as habit-body it makes no practical sense to argue for a perpetual state of active critical reflection and resistance.

The Habit-Body and Socially Mobilized Subjectivity

Why is Merleau-Ponty's account of subjectivity as the habit-body relevant to socially mobilized subjectivity? Purcell's social mobilization makes passivity and heteronomy the enemy of democracy. Indeed, Purcell argues that the true democrat is someone who endeavors to be in a perpetual state of active resistance against heteronomy and passivity. However, as Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology reveals, passivity and heteronomy play a crucial role in subjectivity. Indeed, to be able to function in the world is to surrender some activity and autonomy to habitual perception and action. We must let the world and our situation influence our body if we are to function successfully in the world.

Perhaps it is possible to argue that we need to encourage the habit of active resistance. Surely, developing new habits can be a positive worthwhile endeavor. However, turning active resistance into a habit would be a category mistake. What I mean is, to be habituated is to develop a certain way of perceiving the world that ignores other ways of perceiving it, thus eliminating some critical nuance. As demonstrated in the above example, when you see two people walking down the street holding hands the perception just assumes a couple, and ignores other possibilities. It shows up as if given to you. To pull oneself out of that given perception and question it is to transcend the habitual response. Thus, to think we might make a habit out of questioning habitual givens is to misunderstand habit. Or, in other words, you cannot make a habit of avoiding habits.

Attempting to question given perceptions is certainly a worthy exercise. The problem I am pointing toward is not with the idea of questioning our perceptions, but with building an entire political theory around the idea that passivity and heteronomy are somehow the enemy of justice and democracy. In a way we are creatures of heteronomy and habit. It is ironic that Purcell uses drug addiction as an analogy for the democratic struggle against heteronomy. Indeed, as Purcell put it,

struggling to resist the 'substance' of addiction because it will kill you is essentially the same justification for resisting oligarchy. The reason this is ironic is because of how clearly frivolous 'the war on drugs' has been, and how successful harm reduction treatments involving controlled doses of illegal drugs has been. Thus, escaping the drug completely may not be necessary, and the 'war on passivity' as hopeless as the way on drugs. Indeed, there is considerable emerging research that argues that addiction has little to do with the substance itself, and more to do with how people use it in their given social and psychological context (Alexander, 2010). I would argue that the same is true with heteronomy, not only is it likely impossible to resist, but it is also valuable for functioning subjectivity (and political society). Indeed, the fact that when we learn a skill it becomes almost automatic is the thing that makes skillfulness so useful.

The truth of subjectivity is much more complicated than social mobilization seems to suggest. It is a little bit too easy to proclaim 'down with heteronomy and passivity!' The truth about the conditions that lead to political action, resistance, and change, is that it is a messy mixed-up affair. As Merleau-Ponty aptly describes,

> Our freedom, it is said, is either total or non-existent. This is a dilemma of objective thought… We are mixed up with the world and others in an inextricable confusion. The idea of a situation precludes there being an absolute freedom at the origin of our commitments and, for that matter, at their end. No commitment… can cause me to transcend all differences and render me free for anything (Merleau-Ponty, 2013, p. 481).

Indeed, we cannot build our hopes on transcending our conditions through radical freedom. Our context, including perceptual habits, defines our possible actions. In this way the landscape of possible political actions is always in some way given by other conditions, and thus inescapably contaminated by heteronomy.

Habits of Politics, The Politics of Habit: Phenomenological Lessons

As someone who wants to see meaningful progressive social and political change in planning, I think Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology offers useful lessons about how change might happen, and the limits on that change. When it comes to limits on political change we need only observe many activists movements. Part of the problem, I would argue, is a continued belief in the primacy of the thinking subject. That is, we tend to believe our perceptions of the world are accurate and not influenced by habits of perception. This is evident if we observe radical activist movements that purport to be resisting conditions of injustice. While most of these activist groups begin with legitimate grievances, and true observations, what tends to happen is loss of nuance. Indeed, what is easily detectable in most activist movements is the emergence of a kind of fundamentalist consciousness. Everything becomes explainable by the one injustice a given activist group is fighting against. Whether a movement is on the cultural right, where the grievance might be too many immigrants, or on the cultural left, where the grievance might be colonialism and racism, the 'truth' tends to become a totalizing explanation for all injustices.

Considering Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, it shouldn't be surprising that when people expose themselves to a certain kind of social milieu they begin to develop a corresponding perceptual habit. Indeed, the perceived world has effectively changed for people involved in such movements. The habit-body compels them to notice certain details while ignoring others (a non-intellectualized way of describing confirmation bias). Just like the botanist whose training compelled them to notice certain vegetation, people involved in political activism are training themselves to perceive in a specific way, for better or worse. The important lesson here is to stop reducing people's political beliefs to beliefs at all. Habituation on Merleau-Ponty's view runs much deeper than belief. The world literally presents itself passively to the subject in a way that is suggestive of their context. The mistake is made when we are too confident in our ability to be a thinking subject, and not open to our vulnerability as habit-bodies. Activists and other political ideologues believe they are seeing clearly because they believe they are a thinking subject that

has uncovered a unifying truth. However, Merleau-Ponty shows us that this is far from the case. The problem with Purcell's radical democratic politics is that it reduces injustice to heteronomy. The fact that we do not have absolute control of our conditions seems to be the only concern for Purcell. Purcell's faith in our ability to 'fight like hell' and resist heteronomy and passivity is I think demonstrative of his belief in the thinking subject as primary mode of being.

Another important lesson offered by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is that it offers a plausible explanation for how and why social and political change either happens or doesn't. Once we understand subjectivity as habit-body, we realize that political disagreements are more than intellectual disagreements. People actually perceive the world in a certain way based on passive sensitivities to certain contexts, and it takes tremendous effort to overcome. People often do not accept contrary evidence presented to them because of how they have developed perceptual habits. There are affective attachments associated with the ways people perceive their world and it is beyond a mere intellectual task to overcome this. This is also why NIMBYism is so prevalent in planning. People, because of their subjectivity as habit-body, fight to stay in the comfort of their existing perceptual milieu. It takes more than just arguments that appeal to people's interest to foster political change. Sometimes, dare I say it; it needs to be forced on them, if the moral context demands it.

The Practical Implications: Habit as Necessity

> The problem is, how to do it when things return to normal, when people get tired of being permanently mobilized[8]
>
> - Slavoj Žižek

I want to conclude by considering what a political culture built around real resistance to heteronomy and passivity might look like. Given Merleau-Ponty's account of subjectivity, what would resistance to heteronomy entail? Escaping

[8] At lecture at Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid (Spain), delivered on June 28th 2017 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OYSMWJafAI&

passivity and heteronomy would necessarily entail subverting our habits of perception and action. This follows from the idea that habituation is a kind of heteronomy and should therefore be resisted. There's an episode of a YouTube video series on science called SmarterEveryDay that addresses this. In the episode, Destin (the YouTuber) recounts his attempt to learn how to ride a 'backwards bicycle' [9]. The bicycle functions exactly like any other bicycle except that when you turn the handle left, the wheel turns right, and vice versa. In the video Destin attempts to ride it, failing almost immediately. Bringing the bicycle with him to talks all over the world, person after person fails exactly as Destin did, unable to keep the wheel straight. Destin comes to the conclusion that *knowledge does not equal understanding*. Even though he knows what he needs to do to make the bike move the way he wants, he can't actually do it. Something isn't letting him. As Destin put it in the video, "once you have a rigid way of thinking in your head, sometimes you cannot change that, even if you want to". I want to suggest that there is something very similar about the idea of building a society based on resisting heteronomy. We have the theoretical knowledge of the material steps we need to take to resist heteronomy but we do not really understand the practicality of what it would entail. Destin has theoretical knowledge of what he needs to do to ride the backwards bike, but his body won't let him. Both expectations disregard the kinds of creatures of habit we are.

Ultimately Destin spent five minutes per day for eight months practicing and was finally able to ride the backward bicycle. The only problem was that it resulted in his no longer being able to ride the normal bicycle. In a way, Purcell's social mobilization expects us to inhabit a space between heteronomy and autonomy, a space right before something becomes habit. It is as if he wants us to simultaneously occupy the space between riding a normal bike and a backward bike, a space I would argue we are incapable of inhabiting. Indeed, we inevitably fall to one aspect of being or the other, but not both. Therefore I want to suggest that it is not plausible to expect that subjectivity can overcome, while perhaps not completely, at

[9] Worth watching: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFzDaBzBlL0

least significantly, its tendency toward subjective passivity as described by Purcell, and implied by Friedmann (claim 2). Passivity is a crucial aspect of subjectivity in that it allows us to develop habitual perceptions that make being in the world practical and possible. It is true that this fact also makes humans vulnerable to fundamentalism and errors in thinking. The remedy is not to resist passivity and habit, but to acknowledge and better understand its role in politics. I also think this offers a justification for heteronomy in politics.

While Purcell wanted to get beyond Ranciere's view of the political as momentary eruption and reconfiguration of the police order, I would argue it is a view much more consistent with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

> [For Ranciere], the democratic eruption of the people that destabilizes the *partage du senible* can never be a breakthrough, as in Deleuze and Guattari, nor a generalization of autogestion, as in Lefebvre, nor a hegemonic shift, as in Laclau and Mouffe. Rather, the outcome is always a resettling, an institution of a new police order (Purcell, 2013a, p. 70).

Indeed, subjectivity can reconfigure its habituation in much the same way Ranciere describes a reconfiguration of the police order. A moment of clarity where I can suddenly ride the backwards bicycle. Purcell wants this breakthrough moment of resistance to heteronomy to become the generalized norm. But based on what I have argued, this seems impossible.

I do want to affirm the importance of social struggles for planning and politics. They can play a hugely important role in changing society for the better by, as Ranciere would argue, reconfiguring the police order. But we must understand their limits in a broader human context.

Conclusion

In the above pages I argued that social mobilization is a flawed view of planning. From both an ethical and practical perspective, social mobilizations offers little justification for believing it to be inherently preferable. Despite this I want to emphasize that I think social movements are crucially important for any free and progressive society. Rather than reading me as arguing that social mobilization should be completely condemned, I should be read as trying to determine some limits for how social mobilization can be reasonably invoked and discussed as a solution. I want social movements to be part of a progressive political future just not at the expense of all potential solutions. My objection is not with social mobilization, but how theorists like Friedmann and Purcell transform it into a totalizing purity politics that sees any transgression of the struggle for autonomy as contributing to the problem. Thus, this major paper should be read as a plea for nuanced thinking in planning theory. Indeed, I endorse thinking that doesn't reject the impurity of mixed solutions involving autonomy and heteronomy in politics. Purity politics does nothing but limit our ability to evaluate a problem from many different perspectives.

I want to also offer a preliminary defense of planning theories that focus on moral considerations of justice. An example is Margaret Kohn's solidarist argument for the right to the city. The idea is essentially that the city as a division of labour, creates a social product that should not belong solely to individual property owners. This is because the city is not reducible to a collection of individuals, but a collectively and historically produced commonwealth. Put another way, an incredibly wealthy property owner relies on the city's existence, and all the people in the present and past that have contributed to its construction and development. Indeed, property in a city is valuable because many people live and work there. Based in this, the solidarist argues that when someone accumulates a disproportionate share of wealth they should have a moral and contractual obligation to assist the worst off people in the city (Kohn, 2016, p. 24-25). This is

essentially a moral argument for redistribution of wealth. One of the limits of social mobilization is that its not clear how it would arrive at a similar conclusion, nor how if could enforce this kind of redistribution. This is because social mobilization is not based on explicit principles of fairness. Of course, social movements might contribute to a popular movement that demands something like a solidarist redistribution of urban wealth. However, I also think there is something morally valuable about having institutions that enforce newly decided upon principles of justice. In a social mobilization model morally preferable arrangement become difficult to secure since all mechanisms of enforcement are judged with suspicion.

Finally, I want to make some final remarks on the political implications human frailty. While Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology provided an account of how subjectivity and perception are influenced by habit, there are many streams of science that reveal related shortcomings and vulnerabilities in human judgment. A 2011 study found that parole board judges grant parole just after lunch breaks at a rate of 65 percent compared to as low as 3 percent just before lunch. This suggests that judgment might be incredibly vulnerable to hunger (Danziger, Levav, & Avnaim-Pesso, 2011). Another study found that the amount of food a person will eat can be significantly influenced by the size and color of the dinner plate (Van Ittersum & Wansink, 2012). Or to take a more famous example, the Milgram experiment showed how up to 65 percent of participants could be convinced to administer a fatal shock to a stranger if a figure of authority (a man in a lab coat) instructed them to do so (Milgram, 1963).

My point is to remind us how vulnerable human beings are to suggestion and poor judgment. At the same time, we are capable of identifying those vulnerabilities in moments of reflective consideration and evidence analysis. However, as Merleau-Ponty reveals, these moments of reflective analysis are just that, moments. Most of the time we remain vulnerable to mistakes and suggestion. Knowing this, it seems reasonable to prefer a political structure that tries as best as possible to correct for these vulnerabilities through, for example, legal and regulatory frameworks. This kind of view is likely to be unacceptable for purveyors of social mobilization since it affirms the need for heteronomy. In a healthy political community such frameworks

should of course be open to constant revision and critique. But based on what we know about human beings it seems patently irresponsible to suggest we should struggle against anything that resembles heteronomy.

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