

SCALES OF POLITICAL LIFE:
SPACE AND POWER BEYOND THE POLIS

by

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Abstract

This dissertation considers how geographic scale shapes the theory and practice of politics. It develops a dynamic, relational approach to scale that finds folds and overlaps between micro- and macro-processes. The project asks how subjects negotiate non-concentric political domains: bodies, localities, cities, nations, the globe, and the planet. In contrast to hierarchically nested models of belonging, it emphasizes transnational, transversal, and eccentric forms of ethical and political interconnectedness. Attending to the elaborate interactions between the embodied, local, urban, global, and planetary complicates state-centric images of politics as well as those that present a flattened, reductive approach to globalization.

By tracking an undercurrent in political theory through readings of Machiavelli, Michel Foucault, Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, David Harvey, and Manuel De Landa, the project renders explicit a theory of scale that has remained at the margins of work on each of these thinkers. It connects this geographic formulation within political theory to bodies of literature focused on the *polis*, contemporary studies of cities, and urban interconnection. In contrast to predominant approaches to political theory and international relations that privilege either the national or global scale, this project takes the city as the starting point for an inquiry into the ethics and politics of a globalizing world. By selectively emphasizing the political space of the city and its complexities, it pursues the areas of overlap and intersection between multiple scales with rough edges. Urban theorists, such as Harvey and De Landa, have envisioned the city as a multiscalar space. This analysis locates similar tendencies in thinkers less frequently noted for their writings on cities. Machiavelli, Foucault, Hardt, and Negri reflect on the city as a site in

which a people, a multiplicity, or a multitude is organized in a world of intersecting scales. The dissertation thus focuses on the city as a strategic point of departure in order to ask how shifts at one scale reverberate through politics elsewhere and how these relations are in turn reflected in the material and social composition of cities.

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Introduction

How many maps, in the descriptive or geographical sense, might be needed to deal exhaustively with a given space, to code and decode all its meanings and contents? It is doubtful whether a finite number can ever be given in answer to this sort of question ... It is not only the codes – the map’s legend, the conventional signs of map-making and map-reading – that are liable to change, but also the objects represented, the lens through which they are viewed, and the scale used – Henri Lefebvre¹

Within contemporary political theory, an emerging focus on geography and spatiality has begun to conceptualize the multiple, irreducible scales of politics.

Transformative projects of social and ecological justice in contemporary thought require attention to scale. Labor, environmental justice, housing, and anti-war movements must navigate the interplay of bodily, local, urban, national, global, and planetary scales.² As these movements shift across scales, distinct power dynamics come into focus. Scalar crossings reconfigure the coordinates of political thought and action. This complex interweaving of spatiality differs from an image of politics in which a nested set of scales centered on the human subject form concentric circles of belonging. In such an image, scales of politics, serving as neatly bounded sociospatial containers, produce hierarchies of ethical connection and political solidarity. In place of this image, this project offers a

¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 85 – 86.

² In the case of the environmental justice movement, it seeks alternatives to fossil fuel-driven energy policies at the national scale and harmful consumption habits at the scale of individuals. It faces the uneven geography of capitalism at the global scale as it promotes ecological thinking on a planetary scale in order to address climate systems at a tipping point. Advocates of environmental justice are not alone in negotiating an elaborate political spatiality. The contemporary anti-war movement encounters an equally complex set of scalar arrangements in the form of the “military-industrial-media-entertainment network” (MIME-NET), a war-making complex woven together out of multiple geographic scales. James Der Derian, *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network* (New York: Routledge, 2009), xxxvi. Within the MIME-NET, a transnational security industry interfaces with multiple national security states. Arms flows move from national militaries to state and municipal police. Media and aesthetics target the scale of the body and subjectivity.

non-centric, entangled approach to multiple scales with rough edges. Through such an approach, neglected spatial relations come into view. Seemingly unlikely resonances, hidden disparities, and nonlinear relationships between scales now appear as indispensable facets of contemporary political life.

As a starting point for theorizing this relationship between politics and spatiality, Nancy Fraser elaborates the role that geographic scale plays, often implicitly, in defining the scope and substance of justice. Fraser focuses on the ways in which scale, “the geographer’s metric for representing spatial relations,” informs notions of redistribution and recognition.³ Scale separates those who are able to make claims within a political order from those deemed outside the bounds of ethical and political consideration. It defines constituencies and determines what counts as an “externality.”⁴ Furthermore, scale helps to determine the spatial and geographic coordinates of political perception and action. The spatial relations between political forces, processes, and subjects come into view through the scale employed in the mapping of political life.⁵

Contemporary political thought, nonetheless, tends to prioritize the state and the national scale. As Fraser emphasizes, within this state-centrism, theories of the state range from atomistic homogeneous units of political authority to variegated bodies with complex internal dynamics. Regardless of their particular content and structure, state-

³ Nancy Fraser, *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 1.

⁴ Fraser, 149.

⁵ Mapping has come to refer to both the production of maps, as specific geographic artifacts and forms of knowledge, and to the relations of constituent parts in a structure or system. Frequent invocation of the terms “map” and “mapping” tend to blur these two meanings with everything becoming a map. Rather than emphasize the disambiguation of these two uses of the term, I find the current ambiguity in social thought productive, particularly in the inquiry into the spatialization of socio-political structures and systems.

centric approaches prove reductive. Privileging the scale of the nation-state results from a “Keynesian-Westphalian frame.”⁶ This frame naturalizes the national scale and, by extension, positions state spaces of the national economy as privileged sites of politics: “arguments about justice were assumed to concern relations among fellow citizens, to be subject to debate within national publics, and to contemplate redress by national states ... [I]t went without saying that the unit within which justice applied was the modern territorial state.”⁷ The Keynesian-Westphalian frame confines the conversation about justice by privileging the rights claims and economic conditions of citizens within a state. Inhabitants of spaces outside the state fall beyond the zone of ethical obligation. Thus the world is divided into “domestic” and “international.” “Whereas ‘domestic’ space was imagined as the pacified civil realm ... subject to ... obligations of justice, ‘international’ space was envisioned as ... a warlike realm of ... devoid of any binding duties of

⁶ Fraser, 12. Fraser acknowledges that under colonialism and neocolonialism the Keynesian-Westphalian frame never accurately captured the degree to which forces exceeding the boundaries of the state exercised political control (Fraser, 95). She qualifies this claim by arguing that the Keynesian-Westphalian frame nonetheless set a framework for inclusion of the colonized: “[I]t seemed that in correlating publics with political citizenship, one simultaneously captured the forces of the all affected principle. In fact, this was never truly so, as the long history of colonialism and neocolonialism attests. From the perspective of the metropole, however, the conflation of membership with affectedness appeared to have an emancipatory thrust, as it served to justify the progressive incorporation, as active citizens, of the subordinate classes and status groups who were resident in the territory but excluded from full political participation” (Fraser, 95). As Fraser’s “appeared” might telegraph, the repeatedly qualified and conditional grants of sovereignty to the colonized and formerly colonized within the Westphalian frame render the “emancipatory thrust” of this system doubtful. See for instance Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Siba N’Zatioula Grovogui, *Sovereigns, Quasi-Sovereigns, and Africans: Race and Self-Determination in International Law* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

⁷ Fraser, 12 – 13. Fraser clarifies that her use of “Westphalian” does not denote that the Treaty of Westphalia served as the formative event in the constitution of the modern territorial state. However, she notes, it nonetheless played a formative role in the modern political imaginary, a conjunction of thought and practice, “that mapped the world as a system of mutually recognizing sovereign territorial states” (Fraser, 160 – 161).

justice.”⁸ This state-centric approach to politics privileges citizens of a “domestic” space as living within the confines of law while relating to the occupants of international space in the ethically limited terms of humanitarianism or the instrumental and often brutal terms of security.

A profusion of events have thrown the validity of the Keynesian-Westphalian-national frame into question. Global warming, the spread of disease, non-state international violence, superpower unilateralism, expanded media, neoliberal capitalism, and transnational social movements all lead to a world in which, according to Fraser, “many believe that their chances for living good lives depend at least as much on processes that trespass the border of territorial states as on those contained within them.”⁹ The bias of social scientists toward the national scale and the Keynesian-Westphalian frame not only reproduces a map of sovereign states, but it deems non-political a vast array of emerging political spaces, flows, and potential crises. Cities, slums, “free speech” zones, refugee camps, borders, checkpoints, fortifications, empires, networks, virtual environments, economic summits, social forums, and flows of persons, information, commodities, weapons, financial instruments, and viruses inhabit a political world irreducible to the Keynesian-Westphalian frame.¹⁰ The structures of political

⁸ Fraser, 4.

⁹ Fraser, 14. Yet in the face of numerous transnational and global shifts, the Westphalian frame continues to hold prominence. The result is what Fraser calls “misframing ... as when the national framing of distributive issues forecloses the claims of the global poor” (Fraser, 144). In her example of the injustice committed to the global poor, the reduction of the global economy to a Keynesian-Westphalian frame renders those affected by global capital flows and transnational ecological harm without a political space in which to express their grievances.

¹⁰ Much of this list is drawn from Jodi Dean’s review of Fraser. See Jodi Dean, “Book in Review: *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space Globalizing World*, by Nancy Fraser,” *Political Theory* 38 (2010): 303. Dean sees Fraser ignoring the vast literature in multiple disciplines – anthropology, geography, and sociology to name a few – pointing to the proliferation and reconstitution of political spaces. While I concur with Dean that Fraser should be pushed further

spatiality that result from these bodies, flows, places, and processes require more vivid imaginings of the scalar domains enabling political mobilization and action.

Two contending tendencies guide Fraser's approach to scale and politics. One inclines toward pluralization, multiplying the scales at which claims for justice may be made and complicating ossified understandings of the political. She begins to admit transformations in the structure of political spatiality through her observation of "*multiple non-isomorphic structures*, some local, some national, some regional, and some global, which mark out a variety of different 'who's' for different issues."¹¹ Here, politics occurs on multiple, irreducible scales that take on non-isomorphic properties. That is to say, the local, national, urban, regional, and global are not simply nested processes organized concentrically. Instead, each scale enables and constrains political possibilities in different ways. For instance, the urban scale produces different constituencies from the national scale. Urban organization may frequently rely on face-to-face encounters, tap into a sense of place felt by fellow urban citizens, and forge formal solidarities and informal connections with other cities. In contrast, the national scale organizes encounters through state institutions, legal apparatuses, and patriotic national identities. Rather than homology between the two scales, the national and urban exhibit entanglements between scales with different edges. The task of political theory becomes one of assessing the "levels and kinds of effectivity" that emanate from multiple scales of politics.¹²

in discussing political spaces beyond the transnational democratic arena, Fraser's work provides an important starting point for elaborating on the concept of scale in political theory.

¹¹ Fraser, 39.

¹² Fraser, 40.

There exists both *politics at a certain scale*, in which governance, power, struggle and contestation unfold through a particular socio-spatial domain, and a *politics of scale* in which the framings of governance, power, struggle, and contestation are structured and contested. Clarifying the politics of scale, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing suggests that rather than scale being given in advance:

Scale is the spatial dimensionality necessary for a particular kind of view, whether up close or from a distance, microscopic or planetary... [S]cale is not just a neutral frame for viewing the world; scale must be brought into being: proposed, practiced, and evaded, as well as taken for granted.¹³

Tsing sees scales and politics as mutually constitutive. Scale denotes a relative size, a “spatial dimensionality,” bringing this dimensionality into being and reproducing it as a space of struggle, contestation, cooperation, and power. For Tsing, specific scales do not precede political life but emerge through practices. Politics also operates through the neglect or evasion of particular scales. For instance, the elision of the planetary scale in neoliberal discourse reinforces strict boundaries between global capitalism and the quasi-independence of geological, climatic, and ecological systems that recoil back and forth upon each other. By avoiding the discussion of a planetary scale in which capitalism operates, neoliberals position these larger systems as “externalities” outside the purview of social and political concern.

The aim here is not to argue that scales are rationally calculated, perfectly instrumental, or ideological in nature. Rather, as Keil and Mahon argue, “scales are socially produced and reproduced through myriad, sometimes purposeful, sometimes

¹³ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 58.

erratic, social, economic, political, and cultural actions.”¹⁴ We might add that nonhuman, planetary processes play a role too. Scales emerge through deliberate political action combined with unintended consequences and unforeseen cumulative effects. New scales may emerge, for instance, through efforts to render intelligible the sociospatial relations of a constituency. Scales bring into focus collectivities that include not only human actors but nonhuman “nature,” built environments, (systems of) belief, material practices, and flows of things, ideas, concepts, and habits. Following on this expanded definition, a scale is a sociospatial formation of bodies, somatic dispositions, and flows that is partially shaped by political life. It denotes a set of relations between human and nonhuman constituents bound loosely together in a political network.

The second tendency in Fraser’s thought is a contrary inclination that constricts the political. It appears in her insistence upon the formalization of political practices, their “binding authority,” and the enhancement of “administrative capacity.”¹⁵ Instead of investigating the ways in which spatial connections at multiple scales complicate political action, this second move transposes state-centric institutions and practices onto a global scale. Although Fraser’s reimagining of political space differs from predominant forms of

¹⁴ Roger Keil and Rianne Mahon, “Introduction” in *Leviathan Undone? Toward a Political Economy of Scale*, eds. Roger Keil and Rianne Mahon (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 8. In *Leviathan Undone?* Keil and Mahon attempt to condense and make explicit the conversations on scale within critical geography and political economy. The defining work on the topic is Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008). Smith’s approach has been adopted, with slight modification by a number of critical geographers. Andrew Herod, for instance, contends in his political geography of labor movements, “social actors create geographic scales through their activities” (Andrew Herod, “Labor Spatial Praxis and the Geography of Contract Bargaining in the US East Coast Longshore Industry, 1953 – 1989,” *Political Geography* 16 (1997): 147). Within this body of thought, Erik Swyngedouw also suggests “scale is not politically neutral, but embodies and expresses power relationships” (Erik Swyngedouw “Neither Global nor Local: “Glocalization” and the Politics of Scale” in *Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the Power of the Local*, ed. Kevin R. Cox (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 140).

¹⁵ Fraser, 67, 98.

cosmopolitanism, it nonetheless envisions a shift from state sovereignty to global justice as an extension of the institutions and authority of sovereignty and democracy without qualitative change. Her vision of global democracy and sovereignty involves geographic and territorial expansions that fail to think through their fundamental political transformations at different scales.

Although the formal, decisive capacities for political action within the institutions emphasized by Fraser should not be neglected, they represent only a small portion and relatively late formation of what constitutes the political. The insistence upon formal qualities within emerging fields of power and resistance understates the cumulative effects of seemingly small political shifts. This move risks funneling new political formations, emerging from scales below, over, above, or beside the state, into familiar institutional procedures. Multiple scales of political life give way not only to unforeseen injustices but also to new practices of political struggle, organization, and collective life. These new practices exceed the existing political vocabulary. Furthermore, new or simply unacknowledged organizations of bodies and spaces within, across, and between territorial states do not always fit the criteria of formal institutions with binding authority and administrative capacity. They nonetheless have profound effects on political life.¹⁶

As such, political action requires not only the expanded workings of formally recognized

¹⁶ To her credit Fraser takes such tensions within her own work seriously and grapples with the conflict between these two tendencies. She worries about the possibility of setting a “new normal” frame for justice in place of the Westphalian frame and its attendant political language. She aims instead to institute a form of “reflexive justice” capable of “entertaining urgent claims on behalf of the disadvantaged, while also parsing the meta-disagreements that are interlaced with them” (Fraser, 73). She seeks at once to facilitate a nuanced understanding of the political and harness this complexity as an important resource for egalitarian projects. However, her insistence upon institutionalization remains in need of opening or expansion to micropolitical, bodily, urban, and planetary scales of political life that have resounding effects at state and global scales.

political institutions but also entails what William E. Connolly refers to as “multiform activism ... that folds an ethos of *cultivation* into political practices set on several intercoded scales: local, familial, workplace, state, theological, corporate, global, and planetary.”¹⁷ Activism across multiple scales moves in and out of formal institutions. This mode of political action involves cultivating forms of attunement and responsiveness to previously unforeseen developments as they manifest at different scales. Working through a multiscale political geography involves working on political subjects even as those subjects attempt to engage their political world.

Amplifying the first dimension of Fraser’s project while working against the second tendency, I pursue a geographic approach to politics in which multiple scales overlap, fold, and jostle each other. This processual approach to scale asks how subjects negotiate within and across non-concentric political domains: localities, cities, nations, and the globe. An examination of scale discloses multiple relays between micro- and macro- processes of politics. Attending to the complex interactions between the local, urban, and global is to complicate state-centric images of politics as well as flattened, reductive approaches to globalization. This multiscale political geography intensifies the tendency toward pluralization, thereby emphasizing “multiple, non-isomorphic structures” of political spatiality. Once the Keynesian-Westphalian frame is cracked, scales begin to proliferate. The appearance of scales traversing the national state throws into question what counts as political thought and practice. Politics may emerge experimentally, contingently, or even accidentally. As Rob Nixon notes, scale poses “decisive challenges” for contemporary critical work, which must explore how we can

¹⁷ William E. Connolly, *Fragility of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 6. Emphasis in original.

“imaginatively and strategically render visible vast force fields of interconnectedness against the attenuating effects of temporal and geographical distance.”¹⁸ New modes of thought and practice are required to intervene in a political field extending beyond the map of territorial states and outside the confines of formal institutions.

This is a political spatiality in which, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, “every politics is simultaneously a *macropolitics* and a *micropolitics*.”¹⁹ Micro- and macro-scales, or molecular and molar as Deleuze and Guattari sometimes prefer, involve a politics of non-isomorphic interplay. Although the structures of micro- and macro- scales differ, movement on one scale nonetheless entails reverberations elsewhere. They differ not in terms of the quantitative measures of space each occupies, “but by the nature of the system of reference envisioned.”²⁰ Local or micro-scales may exude intensity, richness, or thickness that exceeds the global and macro-structures in which they participate.

My aim here is not to dispense with notions of systems but, instead, to offer a vision of systematization in which local scales remain irreducible to the characteristics and determinant forces of their counterparts. Politics often involves multiple scales overlapping in a tangled web of relays. In this political geography, micro- and macro- are not nested political scales that can be encapsulated by characterizations such as “top-down” (in reference to hierarchy) and “bottom-up” (as necessarily democratic and grassroots). Instead, the socio-spatial organization of political life emanates from multiple

¹⁸ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 38.

¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 213.

²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, 217. Deleuze and Guattari reject the language of scale. However, this seems to refer to a purely quantitative understanding of scale compared to geometric notions of size and dimension: “the molar and the molecular are distinguished not by size, scale, or dimension” (Deleuze and Guattari, 217).

directions and nonlinear relations. We, Deleuze and Guattari say, “are segmented from all around and in every direction . . . Dwelling, getting around, working, playing: life is spatially and socially segmented.”²¹ Scale, as I conceptualize it, involves segmentarity – social and spatial partitioning that enables certain pathways of connection while foreclosing others. Segmentarity delineates the rough edges of scales through “compartmentalizations and partial processes that interconnect, but not without gaps and displacements.”²² This is a geography of partiality and surplus, fragment and excess, in which multiple scales often defy linear order and instead produce a fractal patterning of political life.²³

Rescaling the *Polis*

Whereas Fraser begins to open our thinking of scale by outlining deliberative practices that question contemporary state-centric images, this dissertation unearths resources in the history of political thought that elaborate alternative scalar visions. I seek subterranean lines of inquiry and analysis in the past which exceed the Keynesian-Westphalian political imaginary. As a formative concept of political theory, the *polis* offers a starting point for rethinking historical transformations of political space. For classical political thinkers the *polis* embodies an absolute form of political spatiality in

²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, 208.

²² Deleuze and Guattari, 210.

²³ Here, I use the term “fractal” to refer to the fractured dimensionality of these mathematical figures, the seemingly infinite length of their line segments that never quite amounts to an area. In this sense, they are neither two nor three dimensional. I do not wish to invoke the ways in which fractals are isomorphically scalable, a quality I intend to resist in the characterization of political life. To reframe my critique of state-centrism in the terms of Deleuze and Guattari, it “is constituted not by the abolition of circular segmentarity but by a concentricity of distinct circles, or the organization of a resonance among centers” (Deleuze and Guattari, 211). In state-centric political thought the centers of all scales, or circular segments, reside at the same point.

the sense that space, place, and scale, to borrow the terms of contemporary spatial theory, coincide exactly. The *polis* names the city in general, the *space* of politics through which citizens move, the particular *polis* (e.g. Athens, Sparta, etc.), the *place* of politics to which citizens belong, and the city-state, the *scale* at which questions of collective good come into focus.²⁴ The *polis*, as the scale of politics, sets a spatial frame that emphasizes some political claims, agents, and spaces while dismissing or excluding others. For ancient Greek thinkers, the scale of the *polis* designates the boundaries of a political milieu. This small territorial body with limited population, strict class divisions, and established traditions of authority unified the field of political spatiality.

However, place, space, and scale diverged as the primacy of the *polis* came into question. As Sheldon Wolin suggests, “the *polis* had ceased to be *the* politically significant unit. It was overlain by giant state forms which lacked the attributes of strongly political societies and which, when judged by the canons of classical political thought, appeared monstrous aberrations.”²⁵ Here, the emergence of the Macedonian and Roman empires challenged the hegemony of the *polis* and its idealization in classical political thought. The ascendance of large-scale imperial forms displaced the *polis* as the locus of political attachment. Questions of public action and common good adopted multiple geographic frames as the *polis* entered into complex relations with emergent spatial forms.

²⁴ Mogens Herman Hansen begins to illustrate this ambiguity and its importance: “*Polis* is the ancient Greek word for ‘city’, ‘state’ and the combination of city and state, the ‘city-state’. It has often, quite rightly, been said that the *polis*, as a form of state and society, was the basis of the whole of Greek civilization” (Herman Hansen, 1). Mogens Herman Hansen, *Polis: An Introduction to the Ancient Greek City-State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²⁵ Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 64.

Wolin directs attention to the ways in which transformations of political scale fundamentally alter what constitutes the political. Changes in structures of political spatiality lead to the inclusion of seemingly nonpolitical elements of life. As new spatial arrangements emerge they may initially appear gigantic, aberrant, and monstrous. These scalar shifts call into question not only the traditional territorial boundaries of political geography but also the modes of perception and sensation constitutive of political experience. The decline of the *polis*, for instance, brought with it a transition from visual politics, in which encounters between citizens occurred face-to-face, to “‘abstract politics,’ politics from a distance” that catalyzed new symbols of authority and practices of control exercised over dispersed populations.²⁶ New modes of political connectedness and encounter soon appear alongside the emergence of scales of politics that challenged the hegemony of the *polis* as a political form.

Although the *polis* as a spatio-political form has largely disappeared, neither its legacy for political thought, nor its numerous contradictions, have faded. The contemporary state-centric political imaginary continues to be influenced by the idealizations and simplifications of territoriality that shaped the understanding of the *polis* in classic political thought. R.B.J. Walker observes “most debates about our collective futures remain in thrall to ... some vaguely remembered and creatively reimagined ideal of the polis.”²⁷ For Walker, the legacy of the *polis* was inherited by the “nation-state” with absolute sovereignty, settled territorial boundaries, and a regulated populous of citizens striving to be a nation. This understanding of the state, as a

²⁶ Wolin, 70.

²⁷ R.B.J. Walker, “Polis, Cosmopolis, Politics,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 28 (2003): 267.

territorially expanded *polis*, first effaces social and political complexity and then strives to fold that complexity into this container.

I follow Walker's call to confront the problem "that whatever its merits or necessities, the modern polis can no longer be our political home—or at least our only political home . . . this home has brought us interstate wars and is the source of many of our most intractable problems."²⁸ The shortcomings of the *polis* are both concrete and abstract. Imagining the political world as one of contending *poleis*-become-nation-states has produced the system of state sovereignty in which interstate wars continue to grow and intensify. The critique of the *polis* must also convey the inability of any single scale to account for the complexities of power, for the nation-state is not the only spatial form to reproduce the problems of the *polis*. Cosmopolitan thought and utopian invocations of "globalization" often seek to expand the walls of the *polis* to the entirety of the globe. These ethical and political projects privilege the global scale and efface the multiplicity of asymmetrical scales of politics that disrupt each other as they enter into dissonant intersections.²⁹ The idealization of the cosmopolis envisions a concentric world at which questions of collective good come into focus through a series of nested circles. Adopting the cosmopolis as either an ethical project or an analytic frame for politics imposes restrictions on political spatiality similar to those of state-centrism. The spatial frame of the cosmopolis is tied to predetermined constituencies and either flattened or nested understandings of power and sovereign authority. Neither the polis nor its expanded,

²⁸ Walker, 268.

²⁹ While Fraser differs from the identified targets of Walker's critique, she nonetheless seems prone to this tendency.

homologous variant, the cosmopolis, suffices to comprehend the socio-spatial domains of politics:

It is a great mistake to assume that our futures lie either with the polis or with the cosmopolis. We confront, rather, ongoing struggles to resituate and politicize sites of political authority. We already know that the old distinctions between global and local or urban and rural or north, south, east, and west are being renegotiated very rapidly. These negotiations imply the need to renegotiate our understandings of both the polis and the cosmopolis.³⁰

Both polis and cosmopolis prove inadequate for a world of inequalities and conflicts tied to the curvatures and entanglements of political space. The construction of a cosmopolis will not simply transcend the conceptual and political limitations of the polis by expanding the geometric space under consideration. Instead, it flattens the understanding of power and submerges emergent sites of politics.

Although received by contemporary theory as either national state or global polity, the *polis* also contains within it a potentiality unexplored by either of these trajectories. The *polis*, understood as a city, constitutes an indispensable line of political analysis neglected by contemporary thought. The city rarely appears as an autonomous, fully-realized, or sovereign political body. Instead, it embodies a complex assemblage of constituent parts moving at multiple rhythms in close proximity. Casting aside the figure of the city neglects contemporary formations of power in which fortified built environments of steel and concrete dot deindustrializing urban landscapes and create disparities of territorial access and spatial mobility. The city has also become the site for struggles articulating alternative political worlds. The rallying cry of a right to the city echoes through movements that contest the routines of neoliberal capitalism. My analysis thus focuses on the city as a strategic point of departure in order to ask how diverse scales

³⁰ Walker, 284.

interweave, how shifts at one scale reverberate through politics elsewhere, and how these relations are in turn reflected in the material and social composition of cities.

I turn to the urban scale as the starting point for an inquiry into the ethics and politics of a globalizing world. It offers an opening through which to map the impingement of cities upon territorial politics, global processes, and planetary systems. Such an approach draws intellectual sustenance from Henri Lefebvre's notion of the urban. Lefebvre distinguishes between the urban and the city; the city denotes "a clearly distinguished, definitive object," whereas the urban refers to a process of reorganizing social space.³¹ The city, in Lefebvre's terms, forms a relatively coherent social body. In contrast, urban process stretches built environments, power relations, and modes of production formerly associated with cities across a larger social field. This urban process produces "growths of dubious value: suburbs, residential conglomerations and industrial complexes, satellite cities that differ ... little from urbanized towns. Small and midsize cities ... [become] dependencies, partial colonies of the metropolis."³² Highways, oil fields, supermarkets, strip malls, and vacation homes contort and stretch the urban fabric into a web varying in thickness and density that covers the surface of the globe.

The urban scale, or mixed level as Lefebvre prefers, embodies the intersection of private and global levels, his terms for micro- and macro- processes.³³ The global level includes state exercises of power and broader political strategies of supra- and multi-

³¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 16.

³² Lefebvre, *Urban Revolution*, 4.

³³ Neil Brenner identifies the importance of two terms within Lefebvre's lexicon that speak to the scale question: *niveau* (level) and *échelle* (scale). Neil Brenner, "The Urban Question as Scale Question: Reflections on Henri Lefebvre, Urban Theory and the Politics of Scale," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24.2 (2000): 368.

national bodies. Its expressions in the built environment include “buildings, monuments, large-scale urban projects, new towns” as well as the management of circulations through transportation within and beyond the city.³⁴ The private level appears in the built environment as all forms of housing. The private level is both the space of human habitats and what Lefebvre calls “habiting,” the dynamic qualities of lived experience that vastly exceed attempts from the global level to constrain vital forces of individual and collective bodies.³⁵ The mixed level refers to the city or the “specifically urban.”³⁶ Its projection into the built environment appears as “streets, squares, avenues, public buildings such as city halls, parish churches, schools, and so on.”³⁷ Here, the urban constitutes a unique political terrain. It is an intersection between micropolitics and macropolitics and an interface between bodies and society. The urban embodies the condensation of power and resistance in built form. Consequently, one sees in the shape of the built environment “a veritable urban civil war ... in the ‘global North’ as well as the ‘global South,’ inside the outside as well as outside the inside; it is a war of walls and ramparts, of bankers and *banlieues*.”³⁸ Inequality and marginalization within built environments become weapons of war by other means. Gated enclaves of the wealthy replace fortresses of former sovereigns. High-rise developments tower over adjacent *favelas*. Former manufacturing cities become postindustrial zones of sociopolitical abandonment.

³⁴ Lefebvre, *Urban Revolution*, 79.

³⁵ Lefebvre, *Urban Revolution*, 80 – 81.

³⁶ Lefebvre, *Urban Revolution*, 80.

³⁷ Lefebvre, *Urban Revolution*, 80.

³⁸ Andy Merrifield, *The New Urban Question* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), xiii.

Inspired by the work of Lefebvre on the urban level, contemporary urban theorists have envisioned the city as a multiscalar space. For instance, Warren Magnusson calls attention to self-organizing and non-linear properties of urban order in which politics functions through “a multiplicity of authorities operating in different registers and at different scales.”³⁹ Magnusson begins to cultivate attunements to different spatial domains, thereby altering the coordinates of political perception. In place of state-centrism, he appeals to political scientists to “see like a city,” honing our sensitivity to the forms of social complexity at work in cities while situating the urban scale in its entanglements with other scales of political life.

This dissertation pursues similar tendencies in thinkers less frequently noted for their writings on cities. Niccolò Machiavelli, Michel Foucault, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri reflect on the urban as a site at which a people, a multiplicity, or a multitude is organized in a world in which processes at multiple scales intersect. Tracking this undercurrent through readings of Machiavelli, Foucault, Hardt, and Negri, I render explicit a theory of scale that has remained at the margins of work on each of these thinkers. I then connect it to contemporary thought on political space within the work of David Harvey and Manuel De Landa. I find each thinker responding to the complexities of social and political life with rich imaginings of spatiality. These readings of a tendency in each find multiple scales – the body, local, urban, national, regional, global, and planetary – agitating political life as they also form intersections. This approach draws on the ambiguity of the *polis* as a term naming both the material cityscape and a scale of

³⁹ Warren Magnusson “Seeing Like a City: How to Urbanize Political Science” in *Critical Urban Studies: New Directions*, eds. Jonathan S. Davies and David L. Imbroscio (Albany: SUNY Press: 2011), 44.

politics. Whereas Fraser seeks to envision transnational institutions that embody the contestation of state-centric politics, I reveal a patchwork of political possibilities that emerge from a long-standing politics of the city intersecting with other scales. This approach examines the impact of urban complexity on the state, globe, and planet while also extending the domain of the political in order to account for flows moving over, under, and through the urban milieu.

The aim, here, is not only to proliferate the number of spatial domains available for political action. I also wish to suggest that an approach to political geography carries with it dispositions to sensation, perception, and thinking. Through attention to the relation between scales I seek to cultivate sensitivities to subtle forms of creativity and interconnectedness deemed ephemeral and irrelevant by the spatial analytics of state-centrism and cosmopolitanism. Multiscalar political geography provides a glimpse of what Bruno Latour calls a “hidden geography” in which “objects – taken as so many issues – bind all of us in ways that map out a public space profoundly different from what is usually recognized under the label of “the political.””⁴⁰ This otherwise hidden geography temporarily brings into view incipient political forces, ad hoc networks, unrealized solidarities, and unexplored potentialities. It enables political thought to venture beyond the narrow constraints imposed by the present. It uncovers the possibility of political experiments on the self, across the city, within national constituencies, as global movements, and in relation to planetary ecologies.

Outline of the Study

⁴⁰ Bruno Latour, “From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik, or How to Make Things Public” in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 15.

In chapter one, “Machiavelli’s Cityscapes,” I examine how Machiavelli, while never explicitly employing the term scale, considers relations between bodies, city-states, the region, and the cosmos as dissonant, overlapping scales. By reading Machiavelli as an urbanist, a layered geography comes into focus within his thought in which he attempts to marshal the forces of *virtù* within a well-organized city-state against the powers of *Fortuna* and end the cycle of civil war in Italy. Whereas Machiavelli’s work is often received as a reflection on state sovereignty in its protean, if not full-fledged, form, I find in his thought a rich imagining of political geography that begins from reflections on power and freedom in the city. This reading of Machiavelli uproots familiar narratives about the centrality of the state and begins to provide an adaptive political orientation for times of systemic transformation.

Chapter two, “Scale, Power, and Neoliberal Urbanism,” explores how the concept of scale takes on an important, albeit neglected, role in the work of Foucault. I read Foucault on disciplinary power and biopolitics as an elaboration of the relations between the scales of bodies, cities, societies, populations, and the globe. The chapter complicates Eurocentric visions of the state and globalization by bringing into focus the multiple scales traversing these entities. It thereby reveals the contingent formation of “national state” and “globe” within Euro-American political discourses. Drawing on the examination of discipline and biopolitics, I trace the figure of the city through Foucault’s thought. I note its disappearance from his later reflections on neoliberalism and consider how the insights of his earlier work can contribute to understanding the contemporary neoliberal city and its relations to other scales of politics.

In chapter three, “Global War and Planetary Democracy,” I think through the political phenomena named in the title by turning to Hardt and Negri’s conceptualization of Empire, as global war, and the Multitude, as planetary democracy. The chapter reads *Empire* and *Multitude* as what Timothy Morton calls “hyperobjects,” political formations set on a scale so massive that they challenge the capacities of human perception and necessitate new concepts of spatial connection.⁴¹ By working through the ways in which Empire and Multitude operate at local, urban, national, and global scales, I propose a multiscale geography of global war and begin to develop the nonlinear and non-Euclidean dimensions of planetary democracy. In this geography the city embodies a decisive battleground. It faces the siege conditions of global war yet also serves as an indispensable site of political organization for planetary democracy.

Chapter four, “The Urban Question and the Scales of Politics,” theorizes the relations between urban politics and larger geopolitical conditions by returning to what Marxist geographers have called the urban question, the relation between cities and capitalist society. By staging a conversation between urban theories of David Harvey and Manuel De Landa, it draws De Landa’s sensitivity to diverse forms of political agency into Harvey’s attention to scale in projects for social justice. The relations between micro- and macro- processes, as they shape contemporary cities, come into focus. This chapter concludes the project by considering the ways in which democratic politics are spatialized in an era of global urbanization. It reflects on the ecological sensitivities and forms of interconnectedness disclosed by a multiscale political geography.

⁴¹ Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

1 | Machiavelli's Cityscapes

In *The Art of War* Machiavelli instructs military commanders in the practice and importance of map making:

The first thing he ought to do is get an exact map of the whole country ... so that he may have perfect knowledge of all the towns and their distance from each other, and of all the roads, mountains, rivers, woods, swamps, and their particular location and nature. For this purpose, it is necessary to procure by various means several persons who are from different parts and who are well acquainted with those places; he should question them closely and compare their accounts ... In addition to doing this, he should send out cavalry parties under experienced commanders not only to discover the enemy, but to observe the quality of the terrain and to see whether it agrees with his map and the information he has received.¹

Machiavelli's "exact map," granting its user "perfect knowledge," emerges from the assembly of fragmentary parts that have to be questioned, verified, and compared. This practice aims to gather the various perspectives of multiple reports into one complex. The insistence upon repeated observation and cross-reference treats the terrain of military maneuver as a dynamic space that calls for constant remapping as it shifts, rises, and folds. Machiavelli thus recommends a cartographic process adapted to an evolving world. In this chapter I suggest that a similar cartographic sensibility animates Machiavelli's political work. Rather than establishing a definitive model of politics, he lays out practices of mapping political life that accommodate turbulent processes traversing the political landscape. In particular, Machiavelli drafts political maps at multiple scales that capture the composition of cities, the organization of bodies, and the movements of planetary and cosmic forces. For Machiavelli, everyday spaces and practices confront transformations at not just local, but also system-wide and planetary scales. A variety of

¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, ed. Neal Wood, trans. Ellis Farnsworth (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1965), 143 – 144.

forces, ranging from the architecture of fortresses to the tempest of *fortuna*, influence the dispositions of a people and the survival of a polity. Tectonic shifts in politics bring about the need to periodically splice, revise, and rescale maps of political life. He provides maps at embodied, urban, and planetary scales that overlap and interweave in ways that defy concentric nesting.

Machiavelli begins mapping the contours of political life from the formation of cities. His vision of the city draws together relations between the people, the political order of the city-state (either principality or republic), architectural forms composing the built environment of the city, and grand cosmic forces that traverse the urban milieu. His account positions the city at the intersection of the everyday practices of civic life, its “fortresses,” “laws” and “armies;” the city-state’s caution in relation to other cities; the systemic transformations of nearby empires; and the sway of forces that exceed human mastery, namely the heavens and *fortuna*. For Machiavelli, the city represents a space of aleatory encounters, the political outcomes are never fully predictable, even to those with the greatest *virtù*. Specifically, the cityscapes of Florence and Rome imprint Machiavelli’s thought and provide differing modes of relating to the aleatory events of political life. The political antiquity of Rome serves as a guide for cities navigating the flux of politics, whereas Florence, under the leadership of Piero Soderini, provides Machiavelli with a tale of tragedy in which its inability to adapt brought its defeat and conquest.

Machiavelli’s urbanism, and its connection to his implicit political geography of scale, has been largely overshadowed by the debate over his fidelity to republican

politics.² His attention to the aleatory encounters of the city and the relations of power that govern them has been all but lost in the dispute, primarily regarding the reading of *The Prince*, over Machiavelli's commitments to monarchy, republicanism, and the emergence of the national state.³ I wish to set aside this line of questioning in order to make space for reading Machiavelli as an urbanist, an approach that harmonizes many of the seeming conflicts in his texts. Indeed, *The Prince* and *The Discourses* are united in their emphasis on the political life of cities. As Quentin Skinner argues "it would be a mistake to infer that the *Discourses* are exclusively concerned with republics as opposed to principalities ... Machiavelli stresses ... his interest lies not in republics as such, but rather in the *government of cities*."⁴ Here, care should be taken to distinguish Machiavelli's "government of cities" from the "arts of government" as described by Michel Foucault, in which restrictive practices of governing everyday conduct proliferate.⁵ Machiavelli's urbanism operates not primarily by policing or constraining

² I have, as of yet, found no one who reads Machiavelli as an urbanist. Discussions of space and spatiality drawing on Machiavelli appear most frequently within International Relations. His influence for the discipline pertains to discussions of territoriality and state formation. See R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Chapter 2.

³ For one of the most influential studies of Machiavelli's republican thought see J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). Gramsci's essay, translated to English as "The Modern Prince," has been influential for strong monarchical-statist readings of Machiavelli. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 123 – 205.

⁴ Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 57. My emphasis.

⁵ "Arts of government" receive more extensive discussion in chapter 3. See also Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977 – 1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). For an excellent examination of Machiavelli's role as a "negative touchstone" in the formulation of the arts of government. See Robyn Marasco, "Machiavelli Contra Governmentality," *Contemporary Political Theory* (2011): 339 – 361.

change, flow, and accident, but rather by affirming them. I argue that his account of cities governed by *virtù* offers us ways to counter the reign of private interests by assembling the spaces of cities and the bodies of their citizens into thriving, durable publics. These publics provide valuable points of contrast with the political institutions and spaces of neoliberalism. The chapter considers Machiavelli's writings on fortresses as envisioning urban spaces at odds the contemporary proliferation of gated communities and fortified enclaves that characterizes neoliberal urban development. Furthermore, his insistence on the public practice of raising an army, and his resulting aversion to mercenaries, serves as a critique of the privatization and outsourcing of war. I find in his thought publics with the dynamism and flexibility necessary to survive the pressures exerted upon them by turbulent eddies and flows of political life.

The Genesis of Urban Politics

The city plays a central role in Machiavelli's thought, yet it remains neglected in considerations of Machiavelli's relevance to contemporary politics. The city serves as his site through which to consider questions of contingency and duration in politics and the ways in which human freedom can endure. His narrative of social and political origins involves cities forming out of multiplicities condensing in particular places. Various types of cities appear with differing relationships between territory and political order. In Machiavelli's typology, these urban territorialities include cities built by natives of a place, either under the control of a central authority, such as Athens under Theseus, or ruled by laws determined by their collective needs for survival, such as Venice. Migrant groups settling from foreign lands found other cities in this typology. Some cities are impractically built as tributes to the glory of princes, Alexandria being the foremost

example. Others are built as cities of free people, where Machiavelli judges the ability of the builder by two criteria: “the first is in his selection of a site; and the other is in his organization of the laws.”⁶ As Machiavelli continues, it becomes apparent that the *site* of the city’s founding and its *organization* cannot be separated. Great fertility in the land and “richness of the site” can produce “idle men unfit for any useful activity.”⁷ These spaces require strict regulations, drilling, and training to cultivate subjects of the requisite skill and ability.

Machiavelli’s emphasis on the site of a city has sometimes been read as part of his politics of necessity in which natural conditions rigidly dictate the production of socio-political order. But Vickie Sullivan, in reading this passage of *Discourses* on cities and sites, pushes the reading of Machiavelli beyond a unidirectional politics of necessity into a more intricate relationship between nature and culture: “Nature’s beneficence actually comes to view through its provision of infertile places, for the existence of scarcity gives human beings the opportunity to subdue their own nature – to subdue their passions. In this manner the city, through its laws and with nature’s help, struggles against the passions imposed by human nature.”⁸ Here, natural scarcity produces hardship that inclines citizens toward empowering martial and political pursuits. The space of the city and the place of the site influence the conditions of urban citizenship. Effective practices of governing a city emerge to fill in for the resources, either of materials or *virtù*, that the site does not provide. Urban political life emerges from these imbrications between

⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Julia Conway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 20.

⁷ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 21. Gendered language in original.

⁸ Vickie B. Sullivan, *Machiavelli's Three Romes: Religion, Human Liberty, and Politics Reformed* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 183.

human and nonhuman domains. As organizational practices of human design sediment into the strata of geological sites, they form a political landscape composed of human subjects and physical terrain.

In a brief discussion in *The Prince*, the “free city” appears as a figure of resiliency capable of confounding every power of a prince:

A city accustomed to living in freedom is more easily maintained through the means of its own citizens than in any other way ... Anyone who becomes master of a city accustomed to living in liberty and does not destroy it may expect to be destroyed by it, because such a city always has as a refuge in any rebellion the name of liberty and its ancient institutions, neither of which is ever forgotten either because of the passing of time or because of the bestowal of benefits.⁹

Here, freedom denotes the condition of living under one’s own laws and outside the rule of oligarchs or princes. The freedom of a city cannot be secured through the establishment of a definitive, unshakeable order. Instead, Machiavelli affirms a city that has become accustomed to “living in freedom,” where freedom is an effect of a certain politics of productive encounter with *fortuna*. The free city is not without distinct forms of authority and power relations. However, distinctive organization, history, and the kind of power specific to urban citizens and spaces make it resistant to the control of princes.

Much of the free city’s ability to resist the sovereign powers of a prince rests on its enduring memories of freedom. In Machiavelli’s judgment a prudent prince should prefer to conquer a city “accustomed to obedience,” in which the rule of a prince has grown familiar.¹⁰ In such a city, the people will not cling to powerful memories of civic life prior to the imposition of the prince’s new ruling order. The memory of its practices and institutions in a free city creates an insurmountable obstacle to the maintenance of the

⁹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Trans. Peter Bondanella, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 19.

¹⁰ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 20.

prince's rule. Such practices reverberate beyond the walls of the city allowing free cities to endure under the pressure of princes, empire, and *fortuna*. Machiavelli writes *The Prince* not simply to demonize the subjugation of these cities but to articulate how other cities, without histories of a republican tradition, might live in conditions of relative freedom. *The Prince* provides a practical politics for urban-planetary life in which principalities will neither crumble under every shift of politics at other scales, nor default to conditions of complete domination under the prince.

Among the cities of which Machiavelli speaks, Florence and Rome stand out, albeit for different reasons. Machiavelli's frustrations, regrets, and personal investments come through in his melancholic discussion of Florence. From its founding Florence faced spatial and territorial challenges – "it could not in its beginnings undergo any growth except that which the generosity of its prince allowed it."¹¹ While a city's origins present unique challenges, Machiavelli also notes the political pitfalls leading to its conquest. In the case of Florence these pitfalls include the events that led to his expulsion from public life. Piero Soderini, by allowing Florence to be recaptured and the republic abolished, was guilty of "failing to realize that wickedness is not subdued by time nor appeased by any gift."¹² Florence of Machiavelli's time represents a city that experimented with practices of *virtù* only to fall into political idleness. Machiavelli's words of guidance are intended as fragments of practical wisdom drawn from the history of his home city.

¹¹ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 20.

¹² Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 253.

Rome, on the contrary, serves as an exemplar of adept political practice that functions as a synecdoche for all of political antiquity.¹³ “Rome” names that combination of effective urban government, skillful martial practices, and collaboration with nonhuman nature. It stands as the model in which “the fertility of the site, the convenience of the sea, the frequent victories, and the great size of its empire were unable to corrupt it for centuries, and these laws kept it full of as much exceptional ability as ever adorned any other city or republic.”¹⁴ The Roman republic embodies *virtù* and its capacities.

In order to elucidate Rome’s exceptional character, Machiavelli sketches the image of a cyclical political history, in which republics move from principalities to tyranny to aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, anarchy, and back to principalities.¹⁵ Principality, aristocracy, and democracy rapidly deform into tyranny, oligarchy and anarchy. The republic’s ability to endure emerges as the criteria for judging states. A more durable republic could only be formed by citizens who “avoided each of these forms by itself alone and chose a form of government that combined all ... for when in the same city there is a principality, an aristocracy, and a democracy, one keeps watch

¹³ Sullivan finds three distinct figures that Machiavelli refers to as Rome: Christian Rome, Pagan Rome, and his ideal-political Rome. She says, “each distinct Rome exists in a state of war with the others, as each, informed by its own divergent worldview, threatens to vanquish its rivals; at other times they coexist in surprising harmony” (Sullivan, *Machiavelli's Three Romes*, 3). My discussion comes closest to Sullivan’s third Rome, the one of Machiavelli’s political aspiration. However, I differ greatly from Sullivan in that she sees Machiavelli writing first and foremost in opposition to the tyranny of Christianity. Furthermore, she sees Machiavelli as having many of his own tyrannical aspirations. I generally try to avoid the debates over Machiavelli’s primary political aim, those questions that include: Is he a republican or a monarchist? An “immoralist” or secretly a Christian? Instead, I seek to elucidate the fugitive political sensitivities, his urbanism in particular, that have been occluded as a result of pursuing these questions.

¹⁴ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 22.

¹⁵ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 24. In this slippage of one regime into the next: “The principality easily becomes tyrannical; aristocracy quite easily becomes the government of the few; and democracy without difficulty turns into anarchy.”

over the other.”¹⁶ Rome appears as this republic. However, it does not acquire all that it needs to survive through its founding alone. Instead, “so many special circumstances nevertheless arose from the conflict that existed between the plebeians and the senate that what a founder had not done was brought about by *chance*.”¹⁷ *Fortuna* smiled on the *virtù* of the Roman citizenry, allowing it to realize a durable state amidst the chaotic circumstances from which the polity emerged. The founding moment of Rome represents a good encounter between *virtù* and *fortuna*. Rome, the prototype of free cities-to-come and the break from the cyclical movement of rising and falling regimes, forms in part by chance. This founding is an accident but nonetheless a transformative event that changes political life irrevocably.

Louis Althusser emphasizes the importance of Rome as exemplar of political practice in Machiavelli. By Althusser's assessment, “Rome” in Machiavelli refers to the city, to the republic, and, most importantly, to antiquity in general. Although “Rome is admired in ... literature, the arts, jurisprudence, and even medicine,” it is not, says Althusser, acknowledged as an exemplar of politics.¹⁸ But Machiavelli does speak of Roman politics as an organization of a city that breaks from the cyclical rise and fall of regimes. This move separates him from Renaissance humanists who invoke Rome as a moral exemplar:

Far from subscribing to the religious, moral, philosophical, or aesthetic myth fostered by humanism in respect of the ancients and Rome, to the *universal* ideological celebration of antiquity, Machiavelli vehemently denounces the *discrimination* imposed on it by its official eulogists and priests. He declares that his own antiquity is precisely the one sacrificed, forgotten, repressed: the antiquity of *politics* ... that of concrete history and practice of politics.¹⁹

¹⁶ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 26.

¹⁷ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 27.

¹⁸ Louis Althusser, *Machiavelli and Us*, trans. Gregory Elliot (London: Verso, 1999), 45.

¹⁹ Althusser, 45. Emphasis in original.

Here, political antiquity is suppressed as a *consequence* of moral and religious antiquity. Machiavelli's politics of *virtù* stands in contrast to moral virtue. *Virtù* denotes skill, adeptness, or virtuosity. Citizens and republics that espouse moral virtue, brought about in Renaissance humanism through reference to moral antiquity, hold political antiquity in contempt and remain incapable of realizing the coordinates of a political life inhabited by *virtù*: “[i]f they have contempt for antiquity, it is because their practice is *contemptible*.”²⁰

Rome provides, in Althusser's reading of Machiavelli, evidence for a state that *endures* and the coordinates to realize this project in Italy: “the fundamental problem of the state, which haunts Machiavelli in his recasting of the classical typology, is its duration. Machiavelli is interested in only one form of government: that which enables a state to endure.”²¹ Althusser reframes the question of Machiavelli's political project. Rather than inquiring into the sincerity of Machiavelli's republicanism, he subordinates the discussion of the relative merits of republics and monarchies to the aim of formulating a government that will persist in the face of forces that threaten its survival.²² Thus Rome provides the model for Italy's liberation: “Rome is par excellence the

²⁰ Althusser, 46. Emphasis in original.

²¹ Althusser, 40.

²² Elsewhere in *Machiavelli and Us* Althusser indicates that, following Gramsci, he sees Machiavelli as a monarchist. While committed to a position in the debate between monarchist and republican, Althusser sets aside the centrality of this debate in favor of an emphasis on the durability of the republic. The passages quoted above indicate that his focus on monarchy stems from a desire to produce *a government that will survive*. Furthermore, his description of Rome coincides with Machiavelli's depiction of it as a *composite government* in which principality, aristocracy, and democracy coincide: “*This centre is Rome, a state that endured. The centre of Rome resides in its beginnings. The beginning of this republic was to have been a monarchy, endowing Rome with a government conducive to the state's durability – a composite government that persisted under the guise of the republic*” (Althusser, 48).

observable objective experience of the foundation of a state that endured, and endured for specific reasons pertaining on the one hand to its foundation by *kings*, and on the other to the laws given it by these rulers. Rome is thus the formulation of a problem resolved: the very problem of Italy for Machiavelli.”²³

Machiavelli's turn to Rome as political exemplar might seem a conservative or melancholic move attached to “returning to tradition” or simply repeating the past. It appears, at first, as nostalgia for a previous way of political life, and a return to the traditions of antiquity. But for Althusser, Rome's exemplary status as an enduring state is not for Machiavelli a fixed or final model for all states. Its status as exemplar does not demand that it be reproduced exactly; rather, its historical actuality demonstrates that an enduring state is one capable of navigating *fortuna's* currents.

Second, Althusser defends the novelty of Machiavelli's political vision by contrasting it with the adoption of Roman political discourse by bourgeois revolutionaries in France:

without these mythical examples of the Roman accomplishment of liberty, equality and fraternity, without the ideology of Roman political virtue, the leaders and protagonists of the bourgeois revolution would not have been able to mobilize the masses, *would not have been able to mobilize themselves* ... they needed the *excess* of the past relative to the present, in order to disguise the *narrowness* of the *actual content* of the bourgeois revolution.²⁴

The invocation of Rome pulls the past into the present, not as an enervating force trying to repeat the past, but as “*excess*” capable of reconstituting the present. In the case of bourgeois revolution, the excess of the past produces the pretense for an otherwise conservative political act. Whereas both Machiavelli and bourgeois revolutionaries

²³ Althusser, 48.

²⁴ Althusser, 50. Emphasis in original.

invoke Rome as an “illusion of utopia,” the Roman utopia invoked in the French revolution serves moral ideology rather than politics.²⁵ Bourgeois revolution, “is a struggle for state power *between two equally exploitative classes* ... [E]xploited classes ... mobilized under a utopian ideology [act] in service of the class struggle of the new exploiting class.”²⁶ The excess of the past, in the form of Roman (moral) utopia, grants the bourgeoisie the capacities to pass off new conditions of exploitation as an act of liberation. For Althusser, class positions are secured not only through material conditions, but also by a politics of intensities moving through history and temporality. The figure of Rome provides an excess to be wielded either for the entrenchment of class domination, or following Machiavelli, to energize new modes of political practice.

Machiavelli turns to Rome as exemplar in order to “subordinate morality to politics. He seeks not *virtue*, but *virtù*, which has nothing moral about it, for it exclusively designates the exceptional political ability and intellectual *power* of the Prince.”²⁷ Machiavelli deploys Rome as a utopia in the service of exceptional political skill rather than morality. In order to halt recurrent internal conquests that subordinate the region to its neighbors, the cities of Italy must cultivate productive encounters between *virtù* and *fortuna*. The invocation of the figure of Rome binds the necessary task of uniting Italy to the seemingly impossible task of defining the contours of *virtù* and *fortuna* that make unification possible. Machiavelli’s Rome brings the excess of the past to bear on present. In contrast to the language of bourgeois revolution, this invocation of political Rome grants, through the excess of its utopian character, the possibility for past

²⁵ Althusser, 49.

²⁶ Althusser, 49.

²⁷ Althusser, 51.

to overflow the necessity of the present. The excess of Roman political practice realized in Renaissance Italian life gives way to a new durable politics undefined by either historical moment.

This unique relation to temporality, expressed through Machiavelli's invocation of Rome as political exemplar, sets Machiavelli apart from thinkers of antiquity unable to imagine transformative political action. In a philosophical crowd divided into "premodern," "renaissance," and "modern" thinkers, Machiavelli stands alone. Althusser adeptly notes Machiavelli's novelty for political thought, his "solitude":

This is perhaps the ultimate point in Machiavelli's solitude: the fact that he occupied a unique and precarious place in the history of political thought between a long moralizing, religious and idealist tradition of political thought, which he radically rejected, and the new tradition of the political philosophy of natural law, which was to submerge everything and in which the rising bourgeoisie found its self-image.²⁸

Machiavelli resists the moralism of extant religious traditions while pursuing a politics distinct from the fledgling capitalism of the emerging bourgeoisie. Here, a homology appears between Machiavelli's relation to the figure of Rome and Althusser's relation to the figure of Machiavelli. Whereas the historical existence of Rome guaranteed the possibility of a unified state for Machiavelli, the figure of Machiavelli guarantees the possibility of thinking social revolution for Althusser. Just as Machiavelli invoked Rome to think against the conditions of a politically fractured Italy caught in stagnating moralism, Althusser invokes Machiavelli to think against predatory forms of capitalism. The excess that Machiavelli brings to bear on his present by invoking Rome parallels the excess that Althusser brings to bear on his present by invoking Machiavelli. Each

²⁸ Althusser, 124. On Machiavelli's solitude more generally see Althusser, 115 – 130.

transcends the contemporary political idiom by resisting the inclinations and determinations for the future set by the existing socio-political order.

While Althusser effectively highlights Machiavelli's political novelty in his relationship to the exemplar of Rome, he underestimates the significance of the city as a political form in Machiavelli's thought. To Althusser, Machiavelli aims to make "*a clean sweep of existing feudal forms as incompatible with the objective of Italian unity.*"²⁹ He reads Machiavelli's exhortation to unify Italy at the close of *The Prince* as a call for the creation of the national state. Machiavelli concludes the exhortation doubtless that a move for Italian unity would benefit the country:

Nor can I express with what love he will be received in all those territories that have suffered through these foreign floods; with what thirst for revenge, with what stubborn loyalty, with what devotion, with what tears ... Therefore may Your Illustrious House take up this task with the spirit and the hope with which just enterprises are begun, so that under your banner this country may be ennobled.³⁰

Althusser, however, reads this exhortation as a call for politics that emanate from a single scale in which the dictates of the national state drive political transformation. Such a concentric image of politics, focused on the national state, displaces other scales of political action. In dismissing the city-state as a mere "*urban form of feudalism,*" Althusser elides the urban scale from a political future.³¹ He sees urban spaces as "incapable of the economic transformations and expansion, and political conversion, that would make them suitable for the task of unifying the national state."³² I find two problems with this claim. The first resides in its reading of Machiavelli and the second in

²⁹ Althusser, 70.

³⁰ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 90.

³¹ Althusser, 71.

³² Althusser, 71

its imagination of the possibilities of economic transformation. First, Althusser neglects Machiavelli's location of the origin of *political* history within the city. More specifically, the Roman republic forms "by chance" out of the urban place, space, and practices upon which the city is founded. The urban scale of political life provides many of the conditions for the formation of a national state. Although Machiavelli's exhortation for the liberation of Italy outlines contours of an emerging nation-state, it represents only one of the scales around which political life was organized in the late Renaissance. In contrast to Althusser's state-centric understanding, I find in Machiavelli a textured account of political life traversed by multiple scales within and beyond the national state.

Althusser also underestimates the potential for political and economic transformation that exists within the urban form. The relationships between the urban scale and political-economic life are numerous. Transformations of global capitalism coalesce in the form of the post-industrial city. David Harvey suggests that capitalism proceeds through the reinvestment of surplus into the process of urbanization, a claim investigated at great length in chapter four.³³ Furthermore, contests over urban space often coincide with the contestation of neoliberal economics and government.³⁴ Those displaced or dispossessed by global capitalism have sought new ways to inhabit cities in defiance of the police orders that so often deny them.³⁵ Additionally, the poles over the

³³ David Harvey, "Right to the City" *New Left Review* (2008): 23 – 40.

³⁴ Seattle in 1999, the Toronto G8/G20 Protests, London Student Protests, and #BlackLivesMatter have occupied cities and urban infrastructure in ways that intervened in the everyday workings in cities in order to challenge neoliberalism and white supremacy. Informal economies and practices often defy police orders in cities in ways that are less visible but no less significant. I address the significance of informality in chapter 4.

³⁵ The Occupy Movement has clearly received the most discussion of this but the (re)occupation of urban spaces in opposition to gentrification and systemic racism in housing takes numerous forms. For an excellent account of one such land struggle see Max Rameau, *Take Back the Land: Land, Gentrification and the Umoja Village Shantytown* (Miami: Nia Press, 2008).

future of political-economic constellations often take on the name of two cities: Porto Alegre and Davos.³⁶ Finally, the urban scale will frame the process through which ecological crises of neoliberal capitalism are negotiated. Mike Davis explains their importance at length:

Cities in the abstract are the solution to the global environmental crisis: urban density can translate into great efficiencies in land, energy, and resource use, while democratic public spaces and cultural institutions likewise provide qualitatively higher standards of enjoyment than individualized consumption and commodified leisure. However, as urban theorists ... have long recognized, both environmental efficiency and public affluence require the preservation of a green matrix of intact ecosystems, open spaces, and natural services: cities need an alliance with Nature in order to recycle their waste products into usable inputs for farming, gardening, and energy production. Sustainable urbanism presupposes the preservation of surrounding wetlands and agriculture.³⁷

Machiavelli does not speak to these issues directly, nor should we expect him to. He does, however, leave space for the role of urban politics in coming formations of capitalism. He attends to the intricacies of political life, the urban scale in particular, with more subtlety than Althusser discerns. For Machiavelli, politics emerges from multiple scales irreducible to an image of the state as container in which cities and urban citizens are deposited.³⁸ In the next section I pursue the complexity and intricacy that Machiavelli

³⁶ Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), chapter 5.

³⁷ Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 134. Davis is not hopeful that we will soon realize the ecological promise of cities. Nonetheless, he powerfully states this promise and sees cities as an indispensable lens through which to comprehend contemporary environmental crisis.

³⁸ I borrow the reference to the state as a container from Peter Taylor, "The State as Container: Territoriality in the Modern World-System," *Progress in Human Geography* 18 (1994): 151 – 162. Taylor argues that conceptualizing the state as a container conceals its permeability by flows of wealth and power. I concur with this point but also wish to emphasize the way in which a cartographic sensibility focused on the state views the politics of cities as subordinate to national state action.

ascribes to the city and political life within it. I turn now to his account of the built environment of the city and its political effects.

Fortresses and the Fortification of Publics

In his treatment of the construction of fortresses, Machiavelli parses the significance of architecture for the power relations within a political order. Scholars of Machiavelli often overlook his attention to fortresses or mention it in passing as part of his concern with military affairs. However, I suggest that Machiavelli's discussion of fortresses contains a careful theorization of public space and power as it emerges through built environments. He helps us to think through the ways in which built environments enable certain conditions of freedom. Elucidating this relationship between the built environment and freedom reveals a more complex spatial politics than the concentric model often attributed to Machiavelli.

In the title of his passage on fortresses in *The Prince*, "Of whether fortresses and many things that princes employ every day are useful or harmful," Machiavelli points to a temporality of the everyday that produces political effects.³⁹ By singling out the construction of fortresses he ascribes special power to spatial practices, those practices of defining spaces and constructing environments that affect subjects inhabiting them. These spatial practices represent one of many practices of governing newly conquered cities:

Some princes have disarmed their subjects in order to hold the state securely. Others have kept their conquered lands divided. Some have encouraged hostilities against themselves. Others have turned to winning the support of those were suspect at the beginning of their rule. *Some have built fortresses; others have torn them down and destroyed them.* And although one cannot render a precise judgement concerning these matters without knowing the particular

³⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 72.

details of those states where some similar decision had to be taken, nevertheless I shall speak in as broad a manner as the subject-matter will allow.⁴⁰

I see Machiavelli's discussion of the construction and destruction of fortresses as part of his interest in practices of governing that include arming or disarming new subjects, dividing conquered lands, and inciting or easing hostilities. Machiavelli's resistance to universalize condemnation has two effects. First, it develops his pragmatism by sinking into the textured political life of the states in which a set of practices take hold. He suggests a politics that resists strict rules of statecraft, leaving room instead for uncertainty, accidents, and chance. This politics attends to the specificity of power relations at work in a particular urban milieu. The second effect of his refusal to dismiss any of these practices outright works more subtly. Machiavelli continues to appreciate the concept of fortification while beginning to evacuate the terms of its existing meanings. He prepares the concept of fortification for resignification taking this familiar term for Renaissance princes and applying it to new political ends. This allows him to capture the affects invested in fortification and to bring them into the service of *virtù*. Consequently, his answer to the fortress question emphasizes the special character of the city into which they are inserted, while carving out a new role for the concept of the fortress:

[P]rinces have been accustomed to erect fortresses that may serve as the bridle and bit for those who might plot an attack against them, and to have a secure shelter from sudden attack. I praise this method, because it has been employed since ancient times ... Fortresses, then, are either useful or not, depending upon the times: if they benefit you in a way, they injure you in another. This argument may be dealt with as follows: the prince who is more afraid of his people than of foreigners should build fortresses, but one who is more afraid of foreigners than of his people should do without them ... *[T]he best fortress that exists is not to be hated by the people*. Although you may have fortresses, they will not save you if the people hate you, for once the people have taken up arms, they never lack for foreigners who will assist them ... Considering all these matters, then, I shall praise both those princes who construct fortresses and those who do not. And I

⁴⁰ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 72.

shall reproach any prince who, trusting in fortresses, considers the hatred of the people to be of little importance.⁴¹

Here, Machiavelli begins to distinguish the function of the figure of the fortress from the fortress's effects on the built environment of the city. He focuses not on the specific location of particular fortresses or whether he considers them defensible. Instead, he emphasizes the process of building and destroying fortresses. He directs his concern toward the spatial practice of fortification in which built environments have political effects on the relations between citizens and a polity. The physical structure of the fortress denotes a distrust of the citizenry. The destruction of a fortress may prove a more fruitful endeavor by reinforcing the bond between prince and people.

While Machiavelli wavers on the desirability of fortresses, the concept of a fortress and fortification, as a metaphor for the practice of freedom, remains indispensable. By deeming the condition of not being hated by the people as the best possible fortress, Machiavelli formulates the relation between prince and people differently than theories of contract or divine right. He sees the relation between governors and governed as a process of fortification that is at once political, martial, and spatial. Here, fortification does not mean the construction of walls, barracks, and garrisons. It also refers to the process of building political infrastructure necessary for a city to endure without being sacked and, furthermore, for that city to provide for the relative flourishing of its citizenry. This process of fortification taps the dynamic energies of the people, allowing cities to navigate the flux of politics. Such a process of fortification does so without the construction of fortresses that produce a built environment inclined towards domination, sovereign violence, and cruelty.

⁴¹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 75.

Machiavelli reserves his more seething criticism of fortresses and their violent propensities for the *Discourses*. The construction of fortresses produces both a predatory politics and military vulnerability. Fortresses prove strategically inadequate in times of war while at the same time prompting rulers to become overconfident and abusive toward their subjects:

If you build fortresses, they will be useless in peacetime, because they make you more inclined to mistreat your subjects, but in times of war are completely useless, because they are assaulted both by the enemy and by your subjects ... they are especially so in our own times against artillery, the destructive power of which makes small locations ... impossible to defend.⁴²

The construction of fortresses inserts a space of domination into the built environment of the city and intervenes in its affective milieu, thereby altering citizens' dispositions, rewriting bonds of trust, and stoking fears of the people. Stated bluntly, fortresses "make you more bold and violent toward your subjects, and then they fail to give you security within, which you were convinced would exist."⁴³

Furthermore, the fortress serves as the physical expression of the separation between the politics of late Renaissance Florence and political antiquity: "if the Romans had been made like these Florentines they would have thought about building fortresses, but because they possessed *a different kind of ability, a different kind of judgement, and a different kind of power*, they did not build them."⁴⁴ The built environment of the city embodies the difference between the political apparatus of antiquity and that of late Renaissance Florence. Distinct understandings of ability, judgment, and power animate

⁴² Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Julia Conway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 221.

⁴³ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 220. However, even in the *Discourses* he refrains from universal condemnation referring to fortresses as "*generally* much more harmful than useful" (Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 219, my emphasis).

⁴⁴ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 220.

each political order and produce cityscapes inflected by these concepts. Florentine government adopted spatial practices of domination, martial practices that deny powers to the citizenry, and an understanding of human ability walled in by rigid boundaries.

Political antiquity proceeds otherwise. It pursues *virtù*, self-sufficiency, and builds no fortresses. It relies, instead, on the fortification of the people. Furthermore, in antiquity “the Spartans not only abstained from doing so [building fortresses] but also *did not permit their city to have walls*, because they wanted the exceptional ability of the individual man, and no other typed of defence, to protect them.”⁴⁵ The contrast between the cityscapes of Florence and those of Rome and Sparta brings into focus the differences between politics and territory in each polity. The political philosophy of Florence understands power, ability, and judgment as capacities to be enclosed, constrained, and sheltered. It translates this emphasis on enclosure into its fortification of territory. The walled-in territory of a fortified city reflects bodies, forces, and subjectivities organized around enervating conceptions of power, ability, and judgment. Within the fortified city, subjects live in an affective milieu of fear and mistrust. This city, encircled by its earthworks and stones walls, confines its subjects and their political capacities within those walls. By contrast, Rome and Sparta mobilize power, ability, and judgment as flexible forces in need of exercise, honing, and enhancement. Accordingly, they take up a relatively fluid relation to the enclosure of territory. In defiance of domination, the territory of the city is enclosed not by walls but by the force of skillful political and martial practice.

⁴⁵ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 225

Furthermore, the exemplarity of a city without walls contests spatial practices of the princely and noble classes. Fortresses represented private defenses, reserved for kings and ecclesiastical authorities. Walls were more public in their function, providing some protection to the people, but remaining entirely within the order of feudal power relations between prince and subjects.⁴⁶ By celebrating Sparta, a city entirely without walls, Machiavelli endorses a radical constitution of public space in which the protection of the polity resides in the collective power of the people, the capacities that they derive from the organization of their city, and their encounters with *fortuna*. This collection of citizens, built environments, and forces of nonhuman nature resembles Jane Bennett's formulation of the public:

A public is a cluster of bodies harmed by the actions of others or even by actions born from their own actions as these trans-act; harmed bodies draw near each other and seek to engage in new acts that will restore their power, protect against future harm, or compensate for damage done – in *that* consists their political action, which, fortunately or unfortunately, will also become conjoint action with a chain of indirect, unpredictable consequences.⁴⁷

The formation of a public gathers the bodies of its citizens and the spaces of its cityscape in a common response to threat or harm. In a city without walls, power circulates openly among the bodies of the citizenry. The defense of the city tests their capacities of political and military resiliency and inclines them toward *virtù*. Open urban spaces fortify this public against the centralization of power and consolidation of the capacities of violence

⁴⁶ The fortress or “castle ... represented simultaneously the status, wealth, power and defensive needs of the landowning classes...in essence, ‘private’ forms of defence, under an umbrella of imperial, royal or princely authority” (Oliver Creighton and Robert Higham, *Medieval Town Walls: An Archaeology and Social History of Urban Defence* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005), 21). Walls were marginally more communal,. They served as defenses for the entire town rather than protecting the landowning classes.

⁴⁷ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 101. Emphasis in original.

represented by the prince shut within his castle. Cities without walls require their citizens to form into a force of *virtù* or face being conquered.

Machiavelli's work on built environments resonates with studies of architecture and radical democracy in political theory. In particular, built environments utilized by socialist and democratic organizations in early twentieth century Italy have received substantial theorization for their ability to question existing power relations.⁴⁸ These “houses of the people” enabled more equitable forms of worker organization and municipal government.⁴⁹ As “an important intervention in the symbolic landscapes,” a house of the people “was part of a polemical challenge to the authority and dominance of the church, the state, and private capital.”⁵⁰ These features of the built environment created political possibilities that exceeded concentric ordering of structures in which they were embedded.⁵¹ In similar fashion, Machiavelli sees the built environment as an essential part of a free city. A city without fortresses exhibits dynamic power relations and defies domination by a prince. Fortification of the public, as an assembly of bodies acting in response to harm, enables an active urban citizenry and displaces fortresses that embody private wealth.

This vision of a radically engaged public bears closer consideration in our neoliberal moment. Machiavelli opposes the privatization of politics that he sees spreading across Florence. Privatization for Machiavelli represents not only the pursuit of personal interest, but also the condition of being, as Hanna Pitkin suggests, “absorbed in

⁴⁸ Margaret Kohn, *Radical Space: Building the House of the People* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁴⁹ Kohn, 87.

⁵⁰ Kohn, 96.

⁵¹ Kohn, 91. Kohn views the house of the people as a “heterotopia of resistance,” folding a number of alternative socialist and democratic visions into a single place (Kohn, 91).

... immediate and direct relationships, unable to perceive the larger whole.”⁵² It involves an enclosure of both space and the political imaginary, restricting one’s vision of concern to the horizon of the self. This form of privatization resembles the neoliberal assault on public spaces as embodiments of collective, social life. In built environments of cities, privatization appears as gated communities, high rise condominiums, and fortified enclaves. Such contemporary fortresses represent an assault on “living structure[s] of relationships among citizens.”⁵³ They serve as spatial barriers between citizens and social barriers committed to individualistic politics.

This assault on collective life arises from an ontological commitment to security and predictability. In his reading of Machiavelli, Sheldon Wolin argues that the built environments of fortresses reflect an ethos of political life committed to fighting tooth and nail against mobile, shifting forces in the world. For Wolin:

the symbol of man’s illusions was the armed fortress. The fortress, in all of its seeming solidity, dramatized *the false hope that there could be points of fixity, an unchanging basis of political and military security in a restless world*. But there is a further lesson to the symbol. Deceived by the impressive exterior of his fortress, the ruler comes to believe himself invincible and is tempted into cruel and extreme acts. The illusion of security thus releases the psychological springs of ambition and domination. This example gives point to one of the principles of the new science: vice, in a political sense, is often the function of illusion, virtue the product of clear-sightedness.⁵⁴

⁵² Hanna F. Pitkin, *Fortune Is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 48. Pitkin traces the masculine dimensions of public life in Machiavelli’s thought, arguing that his notion of privatization entails a sense of attack on the manliness of civic life. I do not endorse Machiavelli’s version of public life without reservation. Rather, I wish to excavate in conversation with contemporary work on the formation of publics as a resource for thinking about the emergence of publics at multiple scales.

⁵³ Pitkin, 48.

⁵⁴ Wolin, 191. My emphasis. Gendered language in original.

The fortress provides an illusion of fixity in a world replete with dynamism. Deluded by fantasies of invulnerability, rulers engage in acts of cruelty against their citizens. Fortified urban architecture leads a ruler to neglect the process of securing the dynamic energies of the city's populace, the lone fortress capable of navigating the turbulence of politics. A prince or governor must shift their practices from the construction of fortresses to the *fortification of urban publics*. The first militarizes urban space, eliminates powers of the citizenry, and consolidates the capacities for violence solely in the hands of the prince or governor. The latter constructs built environments and establishes civic practices that cultivate the mobile forces of bodies and the lost conceptualizations of power, ability, and judgment. Fortified urban publics nourish *virtù* rather than suffocate it through enclosure. The spaces and practices of a fortified urban public overcome the proliferation of private interests and harmonize political skill and adeptness with formulations of the common good.

Wolin observes the difficulty of this transition: "Men find it difficult, Machiavelli noted, to accept *a world of becoming*; they hunger for constants."⁵⁵ Indeed, the Florentines and other city-states of Italy had lost sight of a politics of *virtù* capable of navigating a turbulent world of becoming. Spatial practices represent one of many techniques for altering the ethos of political life. In elaborating on the creation of fortified urban publics Machiavelli also turns to the somatic scale of political life that organizes bodies and their dispositions.

Organizing Bodies for Politics and War

⁵⁵ Wolin, 190. Gendered language in original.

Machiavelli emphasizes the somatic scale at which bodies are organized as necessarily involved in the acquisition of adequate political knowledge and effective political practice. He engages the relation of citizen activism and embodiment through his notion of *virtù*. This gendered concept “raises the problem of the relationship of republican, activist politics not merely to fascism, but also to misogyny and what we now call *machismo*.”⁵⁶ The aim in a close consideration of *virtù* and embodiment is not an unqualified endorsement of Machiavelli’s masculine formation of citizenship, but an engagement with the ways in which passion, interest, and cultivated skill enable political action. Through his discussion of the body and *virtù*, Machiavelli provides a starting point from which to think about the dispositions of citizens, collective compositions of bodies within cities, and their relationship to the expansion of empire and perpetual war.

The healthy organization of the human body serves as Machiavelli’s metaphor for a strong body politic. He sees the body politic accumulating the equivalent of choler, phlegm, or black bile that must be released through the practice of public indictments. Here, the theory of a body inhabited by multiple humours that must be kept in balance informs his understanding of the body politic. The indictment of citizens “provides a release for those humours that arise within cities . . . the variability of those humours that agitate the republic has a means of release that is instituted by the laws.”⁵⁷ Similarly, Machiavelli ranks parts of the body politic through a metaphor of the human body. When considering the parts of the republic vital to its defense, “the heart and vital organs of the body, not its extremities, have to be kept armed, since without the latter the body is alive, but if the former are harmed it dies; and these states keep the heart disarmed while

⁵⁶ Pitkin, 5.

⁵⁷ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 38.

arming the hands and feet.”⁵⁸ Human anatomy and physiology contributes to an understanding of the form and function of the body politic. In this metaphor the human body serves an important epistemological function; it proves indispensable in the acquisition of knowledge about politics at other scales.

In addition to the metaphor of the body as the structure of the body politic, bodies are also included in Machiavelli's metaphors of politics as mapping landscape and traversing terrain. Embodiment is both a feature in this political landscape and a vehicle through which politics occurs. Machiavelli's prince “must always be out hunting and *accustom his body to hardships*.”⁵⁹ In an effort to rekindle *virtù* the prince must condition his body for effective political practice. Through this appeal Machiavelli rebuts a central tenant of Renaissance humanism by bringing the body of the human ruler to the forefront of politics. His emphasis on the capacities of the body positions him distinctively in a cosmological debate about the relations of the body, mind, and soul.

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola takes the position favoring the primacy of mind and soul over the body when he contends: “Nothing is greater on earth than humans, nothing is greater in humans than their mind and soul; if you scale their heights, you will transcend the heavens; if you incline towards the body and only just look up at the heavens, you will only see yourself as a moth indeed even something less than that.”⁶⁰ Pico constructs an anthropocentrism that rests on transcendent capacities of human reason and soul. His existential claim insists on the powers of the soul and the mind in order to shore up the significance of the human in a cosmos that vastly exceeds it. This

⁵⁸ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 238.

⁵⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 51. My emphasis.

⁶⁰ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Opera Omnia* (Turin, 1572), 519. Quoted in Anthony Parel, *The Machiavellian Cosmos* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 21.

cosmos is, by Pico's account, so vast as to render the human meaningless at large enough scales should one approach it from the perspective of the "merely" material body. For Pico the body appears as a dull, inert substance subordinate to the viewpoint of the heavens.

Machiavelli proceeds otherwise. He constructs a schema of cosmological forces in which *virtù* encompasses dimensions of what a different theoretical idiom would call reason, mind, and body. Machiavelli ascribes a role to bodily practices in the constitution of *virtù*. Bodily practices retain their significance as they enter into relays with thought. Machiavelli insists that the skillful prince expose his body to hardships so that he may rely on it in politics and war. However, the prince's practice of hunting and physical hardship also serves as the basis for his knowledge of the surrounding political landscape: "He should, therefore never take his *mind* from this exercise of war ... he must *learn* the nature of terrains."⁶¹ By attending to the somatic dimension of political life, Machiavelli's prince lays the groundwork for his political knowledge.

In particular, the prince's conditioning of body and mind must focus on military practice. He advises, "A prince, therefore, must not have any other object nor any other thought, nor must he adopt anything as his art but war, its institutions, and its discipline; because that is the only art befitting one who commands."⁶² The arts of politics and war coincide entirely for Machiavelli's prince, and the conditioning of bodies proves critical for both domains. Effective martial practice requires connecting thought, study, and knowledge to bodily discipline. It relies on the embodied conditions of thought and thought conditions of embodiment. As Machiavelli advises, "the prince must read

⁶¹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 51. My emphasis.

⁶² Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 50.

histories and in them consider the deeds of excellent men. He must see how they conducted themselves in wars.”⁶³ The prince must study war in order to bring about new conduct, and train his body through hardship in order to cement the lessons of his studies.⁶⁴ War must be the prince’s only thought and only art, but also his only institution and discipline. Martial culture, for Machiavelli, requires the full mobilization of knowledge, thought, aesthetics, organizing practices, and bodily powers.

The overlap between political and military organization appears most clearly in Machiavelli’s assessment of state foundations in which, “the principal foundations of all states ... are good laws and good armies. Since good laws cannot exist where there are no good armies, and where good armies exist there must be good laws, I shall leave side the arguments about laws and shall discuss the armed forces.”⁶⁵ Machiavelli sees the army as an integral political institution, with its practices contributing to the formation of civic life. Accordingly, his meditations on military organization serve also as political statements for organizing a polity of citizen-soldiers committed to the maintenance of freedom in a state that may endure.

Machiavelli’s condemnation of mercenaries follows from this vision of good laws and good armies. Mercenaries prove costly and unwilling to fight in dire circumstances, “[t]hey love being your soldiers when you are not waging war, but when war comes, they either flee or desert.”⁶⁶ Likewise, mercenary captains prove equally untrustworthy. They “are either excellent men or they are not. If they are, you cannot trust them, since they

⁶³ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 52.

⁶⁴ My use of the masculine pronoun to convey Machiavelli’s insistence on the masculinity of the prince and *virtù* is deliberate. I retain it to highlight the problematic dimension of masculine citizenship in Machiavelli’s thought.

⁶⁵ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 42 – 43.

⁶⁶ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 43.

will always aspire to their own greatness, either by oppressing you, who are their masters, or by oppressing others against your intent; but if the captain is without ability, he usually ruins you.”⁶⁷ For Machiavelli, the prevalence of mercenary armies threatens the integrity of the entire region and undermines the establishment of a unified Italy. He says of their captains, “these *condottieri* have conducted Italy into slavery and disgrace.”⁶⁸

A prince or polity should instead rely on their own arms; “the weapons of others slide off your back, weigh you down, or tie you up.”⁶⁹ By weapons, Machiavelli means not only weapons carried by infantry, cavalry, and artillery, but also the political weapon of embodied *virtù* brought about through the “hardships of military service.”⁷⁰ A prince with his own arms wields an army of disciplined citizen soldiers that contribute to the strength and depth of military and civic life. They form a thriving city-state composed of regiments of bodies organized for war, accustomed to bodily hardship, well studied in the art, and organized for the protection of the common good.

Machiavelli's *Art of War* conveys the importance of a city-state fortified by the bodily capacities of its citizens. *Art of War* tends to be overlooked in considerations of Machiavelli's politics. While Machiavelli expresses clear interest in the conduct of violence, I also see *Art of War* as an extended meditation on the creation of effective political weapons committed to the defense of a free city. I find in the text, particularly those passages voiced by Fabrizio, valuable elaborations on the conditions of embodiment, urban politics, and public life.

⁶⁷ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 43.

⁶⁸ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 46.

⁶⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 49.

⁷⁰ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 51.

The body of the soldier, and its disciplining, drilling, and training plays a prominent role in Machiavelli's guide to warfare. Speaking through the voice of his narrator and veteran soldier Fabrizio, Machiavelli marvels, "See with what *virtù* our men charge. The expertness they have acquired by long drilling and discipline inspires them with confidence."⁷¹ Likewise, Fabrizio praises the carefully constructed formations of the ancient Romans and the phalanx of the ancient Greeks. He recounts with admiration the way that these formations positioned the bodies of their soldiers, recommending that armies carefully manage the space between every body. Fabrizio specifies the spacing of velites, pikemen, men-at-arms, cavalry, and artillery down to the foot.⁷² While this rigid control of space seemingly seeks to produce an army of perfectly obedient subjects, Machiavelli turns this aim on its head with the concluding remark by Fabrizio to "always suit my order of battle to the nature of my ground and the quality and number of the enemy."⁷³ Although specific in his initial diagramming of formations, Machiavelli provides this diagram as one possible example of the kind of army that must ultimately prove flexible should unforeseen events arise. He explains further, "I recommended this order not only as the best, which it certainly is, but as a rule to direct and assist you in forming others – every art has its general rules and principles upon which it is founded."⁷⁴ The careful spacing suggested by Fabrizio represents but one way to incline the bodies of the army toward the expert skill of *virtù* brought to battle. Drilling and training are not simply enforced to produce obedient subjects. Instead, the drilling of soldiers aims to coordinate individual bodies into the larger composition of a *virtù*-ous

⁷¹ Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 93.

⁷² Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 88 – 96.

⁷³ Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 102.

⁷⁴ Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 102.

army with the collective ability to maneuver and battle with the same *virtù* as an individual soldier.

Machiavelli sees the practice of constituting and training an army as both a military and political endeavor. The politics of raising an army appears clearly in Machiavelli's critique of mercenary troops first undertaken in *The Prince*. Through the voice of Fabrizio, Machiavelli continues and expands his argument against those who would make war their profession. Fabrizio warns:

War will not maintain them in time of peace, and thus they are under a necessity either of endeavoring to prevent a peace or of taking all means to make such provisions for themselves in time of war so that they may not lack sustenance when it is over. But neither of these courses is consistent with the *common good*; whoever resolves to amass enough in time of war to support him forever must be guilty of robbery, murder, and many other acts of violence toward his friends as well as his enemies; and in endeavoring to prevent a peace, commanders must have recourse to many mean tricks and artifices to deceive those who employ them. But if these commanders fail in their designs, and find they cannot prevent a peace, it often happens that, once their pay is stopped and they can no longer make a living they illegally set themselves up as soldiers of fortune and have no scruples about plundering a whole province unmercifully.⁷⁵

Mercenaries will either pursue profit by continually instigating war or commit acts of extreme violence during war in order to secure riches for peacetime. Such predations undermine the common good through the continuous threat of violence between mercenaries and citizens of the polity. Furthermore, mercenaries unable to constantly acquire wealth may plunder the polity of their employer. Fabrizio's commentary expresses two objects of concern; first, the acts of cruelty and violence conducted by mercenaries and, secondly, the threat that mercenaries pose to the common good in public life. With regard to the first, mercenaries threaten to extend the conduct of war and to commit extreme violence both inside and outside of warfare. Fabrizio suggests that

⁷⁵ Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 15. My emphasis.

mercenary warfare inclines toward cruelty: “Such evils are caused by men who make mercenary warfare their sole occupation.”⁷⁶ With regard to the second concern, the threat posed by mercenaries to the common good undermines the establishment of a public. Mercenaries embody private interest *par excellence*. They rapaciously fight for their own gain, holding only loyalties that further their accumulation of wealth. As Fabrizio suggests they “do not themselves have sufficient *virtù* to suffer honorably in poverty and obscurity.”⁷⁷ They are not citizens engaged in civic life, but private citizens, “ministers of tyranny” threatening violence that would unravel the fortifications of the public and “bridle the people.”⁷⁸

Through the voice of Fabrizio, Machiavelli recommends establishing a militia formed from the citizens of a city wherein they will return to peacetime occupations at the conclusion of war. Here, Machiavelli invokes the ancient practice of *delectus* – the choosing of soldiers – as an important military and political task. *Delectus* refers to the practice of conscription, but Machiavelli emphasizes the practice of *choosing* and the *founding decision* made in that choice as important acts for the vitality of a republic. He advises in Fabrizio’s voice “A prince should *choose* his army from his own subjects, and *exert his authority in such a choice*.”⁷⁹ Here, the exertion of authority does not simply signify the sovereignty of the prince; it regularly reenacts the founding of the city-state. This decision or choice is one of unifying private interests into a public with a citizen militia embodying the common good. The *delectus* brings citizens into close proximity to the violence that founds and sustains their polity. The practice of raising armies becomes

⁷⁶ Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 16.

⁷⁷ Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 16.

⁷⁸ Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 19, 20.

⁷⁹ Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 26.

an exercise in civic life rather than an institution of private violence at odds with the formation of a public. The *delectus* is the act of composing public institutions inclined toward *virtù* out of a mass of disorganized bodies moved by innumerable private passions and interests.

In Machiavelli's critique of mercenary warfare, I find resonances with contemporary debates about warfare and citizenship. His concept of mercenary warfare entails more than just violence waged by soldiers of fortune; it refers to the anti-social organization of violence within a polity. It entails private interest expressed through violence and directed against the fabric of civic life. His emphasis on citizen-soldiers who will return to peacetime occupations also poses the question of demobilization. Public engagement and reflection on the distribution of violence motivates his discussions of war. It is precisely such engagements and reflections that have been neglected in the contemporary study of citizenship and military service and to which Machiavelli can contribute.

The clearest embodiment of contemporary mercenary warfare appears in the form of private military contractors, privatized armies that resemble the *condottieri* of Machiavelli's time.⁸⁰ However, these corporately organized soldiers do not exhaust the meaning of "mercenary warfare" for Machiavelli. Privatized military forces exist on a longer historical trajectory in which the citizen-soldier was replaced with permanent

⁸⁰ For an excellent account of the reach and influence of private military contractors see Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army* (New York: Nation Books, 2007). For a thoughtful account of how private military contractors and companies have altered the dynamics of sovereignty and political sacrifice see Mateo Taussig-Rubbo, "Outsourcing Sacrifice: The Labor of Private Military Contractors," *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities* 21 (2009): 101 – 164.

armies and an “All-Volunteer Force” at the end of conscription in the United States.⁸¹

The more extensive understanding of mercenary warfare advanced by Machiavelli also describes these standing armies, particularly those formed on a volunteer basis. Deborah Cowen’s genealogy of neoliberal citizenship and military service traces the ways in which the elimination of conscription, while a significant achievement of the anti-war movement, also served as an incipient moment in the formation of neoliberal policy and governmentality. As Cowen observes:

The anti-authoritarianism of [Vietnam War] protesters found curious common ground with the anti-statism of the neoliberals ... Conscription was ... one of the earliest and most important problems through which the economists of the Chicago school and more populist libertarians practiced and defined neoliberal notions of freedom and models of political belonging.⁸²

The voluntarist logic advanced by neoliberal critics of the draft did not seek to reign in the reach of the military apparatus. Instead, it aimed primarily at protecting the private interests of an economic subject. Against this image of volunteer soldiers, and the racial and economic disparities in military service that it has created, the figure of the citizen-soldier serves as symbol of “a more serious and thoughtful mass engagement with the politics and sacrifices of war.”⁸³ Machiavelli was aware of this need for thoughtful mass engagement with the politics of war and sought to build it directly into the organization of the city-state.

In Machiavelli’s terms, the raising of an army signifies the *virtù* of a republic that helps one to ward off the harm of *fortuna*: “without having one’s own soldiers no

⁸¹ Taussig-Rubbo, 106.

⁸² Deborah E, Cowen, “Fighting for ‘Freedom’: the End of Conscription in the United States and the Neoliberal Project of Citizenship,” *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2006): 169.

⁸³ Cowen, 168. I explore the significance of scale for thinking about the politics of contemporary war at greater length in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

principality is safe ... it is completely subject to Fortune, not having the virtue that defends it faithfully in adverse times.”⁸⁴ The floodwaters of *fortuna* turn elsewhere when they see a polity that has prepared itself through the raising of its own troops. In this instance, *fortuna* might be seen as the consolidation of a military-industrial complex and its seemingly inescapable influence on the politics of war. Organizing bodies within city-state for more direct and thoughtful mass engagement with their relation to violence resists forces inclined toward perpetual war and makes demobilization a possibility.

In addition to opposing the private exercise of violence in his outline of political-military relations, Machiavelli also seeks to guarantee that a city-state may endure. By raising an army a prince or governor aims to “use every means to put himself in a position of facing his enemy in the field and, beating him there if possible.”⁸⁵ Machiavelli echoes this sentiment in *The Prince* where he argues that political strength should be measured by the ability to raise, organize, and bring an army to battle one’s enemies:

I judge those princes self-sufficient who, either through abundance of troops or of money, are capable of gathering together a suitable army and of fighting a battle against whoever might attack them. I consider men who always need the protection of others to be those who cannot meet their enemy in the field, but must seek refuge behind their city walls and defend them.⁸⁶

A strong prince may not win every battle, but he is capable of meeting enemies in the field rather than at the city walls where siege and urban war may irreparably harm a polity. Machiavelli’s effective prince or governor establishes military practices in which martial culture contributes to the civic life of the city while creating a military capable of

⁸⁴ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 50.

⁸⁵ Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 24.

⁸⁶ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 38.

keeping the destructive capacities of battle outside of the city walls. The occurrence of urban warfare represents a failure of government.

Should a prince or governor fail to meet the enemy in the field, he will be confronted with the task of turning away a siege, the subject of the seventh and final book of Machiavelli's *The Art of War*. Seemingly at odds with Machiavelli's harsh criticism of fortresses, Fabrizio outlines plans for a defensible fortress. The mere act of confronting a siege signals a failure of leadership in Machiavelli's judgment. In the *Discourses* he indicates that "by withdrawing with your army into a city, you necessarily come under siege, and very soon suffer hunger and eventually surrender."⁸⁷ While he remains dubious of the success of confronting a siege, he nonetheless offers guidelines should a governor or prince face such a contingency.

Through Fabrizio, Machiavelli provides a set of spatial practices for imparting *virtù* to the defenders of a town. As with his discussion of regiment formation and the organization of bodies, Fabrizio provides highly specific advice on the spatial construction of towns and fortifications. The architecture of Fabrizio's fortified town would include a high wall with a ditch inside it. The construction of houses should be "so low that the governor, in the middle, seeing every part of the walls at one glance, might know where to send relief immediately when necessary, and the garrison might be convinced that when the walls and ditch were lost, they had no other refuge left."⁸⁸ Similarly, the city's fortifications should be designed with limited places for retreat. Fabrizio says, "I would advise those building fortresses not to make any place of retreat in them where the besieged may retire when the walls are either beaten down or

⁸⁷ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 284.

⁸⁸ Machiavelli, *Art of War*, 187.

possessed by the enemy.”⁸⁹ The layout of the city cultivates *virtù*. The militia must hold the walls, for they can readily see that they are left with nowhere to retreat.

Unlike the fortresses of cruel princes, Fabrizio’s blueprint of fortification does not attempt to suspend the motion of political life entirely. Rather, it limits the motions of some citizens in order to evoke vitality from urban spaces and to aid in the mobility of the city’s defenses. The spaces of a carefully built city come alive in times of emergency to aid in repelling those who would lay siege to it. Through Fabrizio, Machiavelli diagrams urban spaces that work upon the citizenry, enabling the mobility of the city’s defenses and inclining them toward *virtù*. I see such designs not as authoritarian attempts to maintain power relations and stop the flow of time. Instead, they affirm the political capacities that remain available to the body politic. They are defenses of public space that differ in kind from the feudal castle ramparts of private rulers. These walls and trenches are fortifications of the urban public against the *virtù* of its enemies and the currents of *fortuna*. While I have explored the conditions through which *virtù* comes into being, *fortuna* and Machiavelli’s other cosmological concepts require further elaboration in order to discern the connections between bodies, cities, and nonhuman forces.

A Turbulent Cosmos

Machiavelli’s cosmology inflects his understanding of urban life and of the relations between the scales of politics. This is a dynamic cosmos in which multiple forces that exceed human mastery produce the turbulent conditions of daily political life.

⁸⁹ Machiavelli, *Art of War*, 185.

Machiavelli's depiction of *fortuna* as a raging river captures this turbulent motion.

Fortuna resembles:

one of those destructive rivers that, when they become enraged, flood the plains, ruin the trees and buildings, raising the earth from one spot and dropping it into another. Everyone flees before it; everyone yields to its impetus, unable to oppose it in any way. But although rivers are like this, it does not mean that we cannot take precautions with dikes and dams when the weather is calm, so that when they rise up again either the waters will be channeled off or their force will be neither so damaging nor so out of control. The same things occur where Fortune is concerned. She shows her power where there is no well-ordered virtue to resist her, and therefore turns her impetus toward where she knows no dikes and dams have been constructed to hold her in.⁹⁰

Fortuna possesses the power of “destructive rivers” moving along paths of least resistance and overpowering even the greatest of human attempts to confront it directly.⁹¹

Although *fortuna* is an “uncertain and unstable” force, its effects are not chaotic and entirely random.⁹² Preparations may be made to redirect it or even to move with its current. The flows of *fortuna* may at times be harnessed through careful intervention and astute timing. Its turbulence grants ways of passage, often propelling the capacities of those who coordinate with it effectively. City-states, religions, and empires rise and fall according to their organization, skillfulness, and discipline; i.e. their *virtù*, in relation to

⁹⁰ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 84.

⁹¹ The concept *fortuna* evolves from the belief in *Fortuna*, the goddess governing chance events. *Fortuna* was not connected to chance until the Romans attributed this quality to her. Previously she represented that which was inherited or brought. As Hanna Pitkin notes: “etymologically, fortune is that which is brought, and Fortuna is she who brings it. In its origins, the term was neutral concerning the manner in which she brings what is brought; the idea that fortune is capricious, variable, or unpredictable was an addition made in late Roman times” (Pitkin, 138). In addition to describing *fortuna* as a rushing river, Machiavelli also famously, and problematically, refers to *fortuna* as a woman: “Fortune is a woman, and if you want to keep her under it is necessary to beat her and force her down. It is clear that she more often allows herself to be won over by impetuous men than by those who proceed coldly. And so, like a woman, Fortune is always the friend of young men, for they are less cautious, more ferocious, and command her with more audacity” (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 87). Pitkin offers a powerful critique of Machiavelli's misogyny while also acknowledging Machiavelli's thought as a valuable medium through which to consider questions of autonomy and human liberation (Pitkin, 5).

⁹² Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 24.

fortuna. Likewise, individuals attain power and fall into disrepute by the tests of *fortuna*. Consequently, *fortuna* exhibits unique scalar relations. It does not manifest spatially as the largest sphere in which individuals, cities, and empires are contained. Instead, its powers appear through localized relations working at each of these scales simultaneously.

Fortuna does not proscribe a single end, definite outcome, a single formulation of the good, or correct course of action with transcendental authorization. The ends it encourages are provisional and constantly shifting. Accordingly, law-like moral codes of proper action face extensive challenges navigating the complexity of *fortuna*. Machiavelli observes:

men proceed in different ways: one with caution, another with impetuosity; one with violence, another with astuteness; one with patience, another with its opposite ... two men prosper equally employing two different means ... This occurs from nothing other than from the quality of the times, that either match or do not match their procedures.⁹³

Navigating *fortuna* requires the skill and savvy of *virtù*-staged encounters with it. Good encounters between *virtù* and *fortuna* facilitate *harmonization*: “since Fortune varies and men remain obstinate in their ways, men prosper when the two are *in harmony* and fail to prosper when they are not in accord.”⁹⁴ Harmonizing encounters produce events and orders that exceed the capacities of *virtù* or *fortuna* alone. In dissonance these encounters amplify the destructive capacities of *fortuna*'s current, turning princes and citizens into unwitting agents in the annihilation of their polities.

Machiavelli's formulation of *fortuna* constrains human freedom without eliminating it entirely. It exercises control over half of human life, leaving just less than the other half to human action: “in order not to wipe out our free will, I consider it to be

⁹³ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 85. Gendered language in original.

⁹⁴ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 86. Gendered language in original.

true that Fortune is the arbiter of one half of our actions, but that she still leaves the control of the other half, or almost that, to us.”⁹⁵ Accordingly, human political life exceeds its formulation under strong concepts of human autonomy. As Anthony Parel suggests, “The empires of heaven and Fortune set a limit to what human autonomy can accomplish.”⁹⁶ Human reason alone proves insufficient to the task of attaining political aspirations. Political life becomes a matter of adaptation, adjustment, and navigation: “the prince who relies completely upon Fortune will come to ruin as soon as she changes ... the man who adapts his method of procedure to the nature of the times will prosper, and likewise, ... the man who establishes his procedures out of tune with the times will come to grief.”⁹⁷ Thriving comes about by adapting “methods and procedures,” practices, to the nature of the times. The nature of the times shifts thereby confounding rigid or law-like formulations of political action. Politics requires maneuverability and dynamism to adjust to the powers that exceed individual or collective existence.

Working in concert with *fortuna*, the heavens exert power over political beings. The heavens in Machiavelli’s cosmos differ from the Christian understanding of an afterlife that transcends human experience. The concept refers instead to a series of forces with diffuse causal properties that enter into daily human life. In astrological terms, “[t]echnically, ‘heavens’ were the seven ‘spheres’ in which the seven planets moved. But in the common usage of the times, ‘heavens’ meant either one planet or all the planets taken as a whole.”⁹⁸ The concept of the heavens, drawn from astrology, marks those forces of causation emanating from the planets and their relative positions. Similarly,

⁹⁵ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 84.

⁹⁶ Parel, 63.

⁹⁷ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 85

⁹⁸ Parel, 41.

“according to pre-modern physics, heaven is an eternal principle of motion.”⁹⁹ These forces affect the motion of mixed bodies. Heaven guarantees the perpetuity of motion in the cosmos and interacts with specific motions at the scale of human bodies and political institutions.

For Machiavelli, the heavens possess both constructive and destructive capacities. While all composite bodies eventually disintegrate, favor of the heavens may extend the duration that certain compositions hold together. The heavens may suspend the cosmological principle of dissolving motion in which, “all the things of this world have a limited existence, but those which go through the entire cycle of life ordained for them by heaven are generally those which do not allow their bodies to fall into disorder but maintain them in an orderly way.”¹⁰⁰ The heavens, as a regularizing force, set out the order of things that may be interrupted by *fortuna*. Parel suggests that in the Machiavellian cosmos, “Heaven[s] give it its order, power, and motion, and the basis for regularity and predictability. Fortune accounts for the occurrence of chance events within it.”¹⁰¹

Although the heavens represent a power of regularity, their effects are not providential. They work without regard for human well-being. Catastrophic events emanate from the heavens: “As for the causes that originate in [the] heaven[s], those are the ones which destroy the human race and reduce the inhabitants in one region to a bare

⁹⁹ Parel, 28.

¹⁰⁰ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 246.

¹⁰¹ Parel, 43. Parel resists the distinction between “heaven” and “the heavens”: “in our view, he uses the two forms interchangeably to convey the same philosophical or astrological meaning” (Parel, 41). In the passages from which I draw, Parel emphasizes the powers of nonhuman forces in the world within Machiavelli’s cosmology. My aim is to understand these forces through Machiavelli rather than discern the differences between astrological and Christian historical trajectories in his thought.

few, and this occurs either because of pestilence, famine, or flood.”¹⁰² The heavens have the power to uproot entire peoples and erase cities from the map thereby redefining the political landscape.

Machiavelli escapes from the usual theodicy in explaining these events. He neither tries to reclaim them as the designs of a providential God nor to reduce them to mere chance resulting from *fortuna*. Instead, he posits a balance of humours within the collective body of humanity:

just as in a simple body, when too much superfluous material accumulates, nature herself moves it on many occasions and effects a purgation which restores it to health, so this also occurs in the mixed body of the human race, for when all the provinces are full of inhabitants ... and when human cunning and wickedness have increased as much as they can, the world of necessity must purge itself in one of three ways, so that men, having been reduced in number and vanquished, will live more comfortably and become better.¹⁰³

In this cosmos the heavens call in flood, famine, and pestilence to restore the health of the composite or “mixed body” of the human species. This process of expelling “superfluous material” parallels the theory of balancing the body’s humours popular in medieval medicine. Just as the humours of the body were thought to balance through the elimination of bile, so too did Machiavelli suggest that the heavens would periodically purge the bile of human wickedness. Accordingly, argues Parel, “heaven contributes its share to the successes and/or failures of human achievements.”¹⁰⁴ Intermittently erupting into political life, the floods, famines, and other catastrophic events of the heavens leave an indelible mark on history. However, the heavens are not without capacities for ordering and regularity that may prove conducive to human flourishing. The heavens

¹⁰² Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 168 – 169.

¹⁰³ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 169.

¹⁰⁴ Parel, 40.

represent a different order of power, neither intrinsically beneficent nor hostile to humanity. As Parel suggests, “history is a product of the joint activity of heaven and humans.”¹⁰⁵

While the cosmos periodically threatens human well-being, not all of Machiavelli’s non-human forces endanger human life. Machiavelli suggests, with more than a hint of mysticism, “that the *air is filled with intelligences*, who by means of natural abilities foresee future events and, having compassion for men, warn them with similar signs so that they can prepare their defences.”¹⁰⁶ These “intelligences” whisper to those who cultivate sensitivities to subtle processes outside the human domain. They resemble vague sensations emanating from the heavens and *fortuna* and providing a brief glimpse into grand natural processes. These intelligences embody the incipient tendencies of politics. Their localization defies concentric nesting, as these seemingly small traces grant insight into the manifestation of massive systems in politics.

The relation between these intelligences and the workings of the heavens and *fortuna* is one of entanglement. Separated by great distance, they nonetheless exhibit correlated changes in properties. Shifts in the vast workings of the heavens or *fortuna* signal certain shifts in the intelligences in the air. Actions based on these intelligences may subsequently alter the influence of the heavens and *fortuna* on politics. Subjects who have trained to hear these intelligences and incipient tendencies in politics will be ready for coming transformations at larger scales. Attunement to these small shifts signifying

¹⁰⁵ Parel 42.

¹⁰⁶ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 139. My emphasis.

systemic change allows individuals and collectives to prepare for the heavens and *fortuna*, even finding ways to productively embrace these cosmological forces.¹⁰⁷

Machiavelli thus inserts familiar astrological terms into his open political system in ways that modify these concepts while resisting the emerging concepts of a unified, transcendental God or Mind.¹⁰⁸ While limiting the efficacy of human reason and action, he nonetheless leaves nearly half of human life ungoverned. Providence does not determine the fate of cities or the outcome of human action. The other half (or slightly more than half) of human life is shaped by nonhuman forces and systemic conditions, represented by the heavens and *fortuna*. These concepts extend the domain of political life to include unforeseen events, either as the result of the unintended consequences of collective human action or as natural processes emerging at the periphery of perception. Flood, famine, plague, climatic, geological, and evolutionary shifts enter the social and political fabric of urban life. Urban politics involves multiple tiers of causation and scales of motion.

Within this cosmology, the cosmos does not appear as the largest sphere of being in which other scales are concentrically nested. Instead, cosmological forces – *fortuna*, the heavens, intelligences in the air – refer to forces that intervene in the power relations of everyday life. They manifest as what we would call climatic, geological, and biological systems, operating on spatial scales that overlap but do not coincide with politics. Such forces are entangled with the politics of bodies and cities, yet irreducible to these scales. Machiavelli's cosmology makes a place for such nonhuman forces in the study of politics without marking them forces to be mastered and dominated.

¹⁰⁷ I return to the discussion of entanglement as a scalar relation in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

¹⁰⁸ Parel, 37.

Machiavelli's Political Topography

Through his writings on cities, bodies, and the cosmos, Machiavelli provides a non-concentric image of politics. This image appears explicitly in his depiction of political life as a landscape with topographic features that represent the workings of power. In the dedicatory letter from *The Prince*, Machiavelli drafts a multi-tiered and perspectival map of the relation between prince and people. He describes the dual nature his work as a reference for both prince and people in which different facets of politics appear from the position of each:

For just as those who paint landscapes place themselves in a low position on the plain in order to consider the nature of the mountains and the heights, and place themselves high on top of mountains in order to study the plain, in like manner to know the nature of the people well one must be a prince, and to know the nature of princes well one must be of the people.¹⁰⁹

For Machiavelli, the vision of the polity captured from the summit of sovereignty differs greatly from the plains in which the lived experience of the citizenry unfolds. The view from the royal court provides a collective understanding of the life of the people while remaining oblivious to political practices within the city. Conversely, the people may have a better sense of the affective milieu in which love, respect, fear, resentment, and hatred point toward the prince. However, their milieu renders them largely unaware of possible political alliances that could contest princely power. Atop the mountain of sovereignty, a prince might suddenly be struck with vertigo, unable to distinguish direction or track movements occurring below. Furthermore, from the “summit” a prince

¹⁰⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 6. While I examine this position for the purpose of outlining Machiavelli's ‘topography,’ it is worth noting that this passage captures the importance of the people for Machiavelli reaffirming his claim that “the best fortress that exists is not to be hated by the people” (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 75). The polity of a Prince despised by the people will come to know only civil war.

periodically encounters orographic obstructions (of sovereignty), the clouds that gather around a peak and obscure the vision of what lies below. A prince may not see the cliff edge over which he is about to plunge. Machiavelli provides an analysis of sovereignty in terms of the relations between governors and governed, that is, how a series of forces secure the power of the prince. This relational understanding of power leads Michel Foucault to describe Machiavelli as “among the few ... who conceived the power of the Prince in terms of force relationships.”¹¹⁰

The metaphor of government as landscape painting outlines a political topography from which power relations emerge. Space, elevation, distance and perspective bring previously obscured relations of power into focus. Certain features of a political landscape only come into view from particular positions and at specific distances. Effective political practice requires the mobility to move between diverse scales so that one may comprehend the disposition of bodies, natural processes that can wipe away polities, and scalar-specific political formations.

Machiavelli's meditations on terrain can be read in light of his political topography. The discussion of terrain paints a textured political landscape in which one's position may fluctuate suddenly and rapidly. A prince “must also learn the nature of the terrains and how mountains rise, how valleys open, how plains lie, and understand the nature of rivers and swamps; and he should devote a great deal of attention to such activities.”¹¹¹ On its face, the practice of coming to know terrain seems to be practical military advice. A prince must know the physical contours of the earth to successfully

¹¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 97.

¹¹¹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 51.

conduct war in defense of his principality. However, the navigation of political life also requires continuous study of the contours and features of power, that is to say, the *terrain* of the political landscape. Politics includes interactions with terrain as non-human nature; it also resembles traversing terrain, the strata of forces that constitute the domain of the political. Bodies, cities, regions, and planetary processes layer upon one another producing a political topography with numerous sites and crossings.

Machiavelli provides us with an appreciation for the complexities and possibilities that result from multiple scales of politics. Adopting a multiscale approach brings previously obscure aspects of politics into focus. Citizen and governor alike acquire political knowledge through the general viewing of a wider scene and through a focus on locality: “Among the other things necessary to a commander of armies is the knowledge of *localities* and countries, because without such general and particular knowledge, a commander of armies cannot undertake any action.”¹¹² Familiarization with the multiple scales of political life renders one far more prepared to adapt to circumstances or overcome them, as the case may warrant: “anyone who has this experience knows, in the blink of an eye, how that plain lies, how that mountain rises, where that valley goes, and all other similar things, of which in the past he has gained a solid understanding.”¹¹³

Sheldon Wolin evokes this topography admirably in his account of the “levels” of motion in Machiavelli’s turbulent cosmos:

[W]hile the sources of the endless movements of events lay partly in man’s own deficiencies, some of which might be remedied by knowledge, there were other causes which could not be eradicated but only eased. First, capricious *Fortuna* constantly threatened the best laid calculations of art. Secondly, there was the instability which flowed from the intersection of human ambitions. At the level of the city the struggle for competitive advantage took the form of factional

¹¹² Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 346. Emphasis Mine

¹¹³ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 347.

strife; throughout the peninsula it was the contest for mastery between princes, popes, and foreign rulers; on the international plane rival rulers ceaselessly probed each other's strengths and sought to exploit every show of weakness.¹¹⁴

By Wolin's estimate, Machiavelli sees a world of abundant complexity that proceeds along multiple scales. The urban scale gives life to factions that enter into the regional rivalries between princes. Meanwhile, an international scale begins to have effects on political life while simultaneously being shaped by turmoil internal to Italy. Finally, the caprice of *fortuna* intervenes at a planetary scale in which accident and chance affect the city-states of Italy and the international scale.

I have argued that Machiavelli helps to map political life constituted on multiple scales: the somatic, urban, and planetary. The cosmic forces of *fortuna* and the heavens provide opportunity for human political endeavors while periodically threatening human well-being. On the urban scale publics assemble through open built environments, the particularities of the founding site, and the collective political philosophy that inflects and is inflected by the site and environs of the city. The built environment of the city further provides a physical medium for the confrontations between fortresses of domination and collective resistance. It organizes bodies and cultivates dispositions that incline toward freedom. It provides a space through which to pursue the fortification of publics that will endure the predatory practices of political opponents and the chance events of non-human nature.

In contrast to state-centric approaches to politics, which often characterize Machiavelli as a thinker of national unity, I see Machiavelli envisioning mobile spaces that affirm the intersecting forces of political life. In this spatiality the city is not a

¹¹⁴ Wolin, 191. Gendered language in original.

territorial unit that fits neatly within a container state. Instead, the city plays an active role in geopolitics. It is capable of influencing regional and international power relations.

Among its transnational political potentials, the city is a site at which geological, biological, and climatic forces manifest in political life, thereby enabling new forms of ecological reflection and action. Encounters within and between cities facilitate lines of ethical connection and the formation of political assemblages irreducible to national maps.

2 | Scale, Power, and Neoliberal Urbanism

In the previous chapter I surveyed Machiavelli's political geography and the numerous scales of political life ranging from the composition of forces within human bodies to the turbulent movements of *Fortuna*. It is a geography of politics and power distinct from feudalism and monarchy yet also resisting incipient capitalist and liberal political formations. Machiavelli's political thought is not just a playbook for a Prince to secure his claim to territory through force and fraud, but also a world of layered complexity constituted by forces that intersect and interact in the spaces of the city-state. Michel Foucault's mapping of political life captures a similar complexity of space produced by the relations between micro and macro processes. This chapter's meditation on Foucault's understanding of spatiality is intended to deepen and extend the relational understandings of scale that the previous chapter finds in Machiavelli's political work. As Foucault notes in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, while "Machiavelli was among the few who conceived the power of the Prince in terms of force relationships, perhaps we need to go one step further, do without the persona of the Prince, and decipher power mechanisms on the basis of a strategy that is immanent in force relationships."¹ Whereas Machiavelli, at least by Foucault's account, saw the power of the Prince as the spatial relations between numerous forces, a mode of analysis that I refer to as Machiavelli's political geography, Foucault proposes a cartographic practice

¹ Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 97. Much of the conversation regarding the convergence between Machiavelli and Foucault has focused on their thinking on temporality. As Robyn Marasco observes, many contemporary Foucault-inspired theorists have followed "in a tradition of reading Machiavelli, from Gramsci and Althusser through Merleau-Ponty, Lefort and Negri, which turns on the primacy of the event" (Marasco, 358). While my reading of both thinkers is influenced by the tradition of reading Machiavelli and Foucault as thinkers of the event, my focus in this project seeks to put the two into conversation on issues of spatiality rather than temporality.

that extends beyond the authority of the Prince and to the diffuse operations of power broadly conceived.²

The concept of scale has been a point of significant controversy in examinations of Foucault's spatial thought. Some theorists interested in scale seem to have overlooked the presence of the concept in Foucault's thought.³ In other cases, Foucault's work on governmentality and biopolitics has been thought to convey a spatiality that moves beyond a concept of scale and into the mapping of topologies. According to these readings, topology names an understanding of space in which distinct political phenomena connect through networks that operate without regard to proximity and distance.⁴ In this approach governmentality refers to "networks of spatial connectivity governing 'action at a distance.'"⁵ This line of thought sees spatial understandings drawing on scale as conceptually at odds with mapping network topologies. For example, Ash Amin sees spatialities that emphasize scale closing off relational

² Robyn Marasco argues that the anti-Machiavellian discourse identified by Foucault serves as a "negative touchstone for the construction of a nascent discourse of the art of government" (Marasco, 3). Foucault "would like to consider this anti-Machiavelli literature as a *positive genre*, with its specific object, concepts, and strategy" (Marasco, 341). Foucault refuses to dismiss the anti-Machiavellians simply as errant readers of Machiavelli to be placed on the side of falsity by the judgment of History and dismissed from an account of the formation of governing. Instead, the anti-Machiavellians constitute, through their (often misled) negation/critique of Machiavelli, a new articulation of politics as *government*.

³ Nancy Fraser contends that Foucault lacks an explicit reference to scale and implicitly emphasizes the national frame. For instance, she says "[a]lthough Foucault did not explicitly thematize the question of scale, his account assumed that disciplinary ordering was nationally bounded" (Fraser, 121). My project will not only identify points at which Foucault explicitly invokes the term "scale," but it will also seek to show how Foucault constantly complicates and contests state-centric geographies.

⁴ In his book on Foucault, Gilles Deleuze sees Foucault as a thinker of topologies. See Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988). I do not wish to entirely deny this claim, but show that Foucault also relies heavily on the concept of scale in his understanding of space. I treat the text at length later in the chapter.

⁵ Keil and Mahon, "Introduction," 17.

understandings of space. Amin sees the concept of scale as too rigid to describe the numerous forms of interconnection brought about in a globalizing world:

My worry ... has to do with the possibility that the very ontology of place and territoriality itself is becoming altered by the rise of world-scale processes and transnational connectivity. The language of spatial change remains that of assuming organization along scalar and territorial lines: reterritorialisation follows deterritorialisation, and spatial scales are relativized under globalization. Sites such as cities and nations continue to exist as territorial units, now with different external orientations ... and different scalar involvement.⁶

For Amin, scale refers to an understanding of space inherently tied to antiquated forms of territoriality. He proposes that we instead think of the geography of globalization in terms of “a topological sense of space and place ... constituted through folds, undulations, and overlaps that natural and social practices normally assume, without any a priori assumption of geographies of relations nested in territorial or geometric space.”⁷ Amin would do away with scale in a postglobal landscape. This is a cartography that discards distinctions between the local, urban, national, and global in favor of the relations of specific spaces brought into immediate contact through networks.

This chapter argues that Foucault provides a dynamic, relational conception of scale. Rather than dispense with the concept of scale in favor of network topology, he demonstrates the ways in which scale plays an important role in understanding spatial practices that emphasize proximity, distance, segmentation, separation, and circulation. Foucault employs a concept of scale distinct from a concentric set of nested territorial bodies. His concept of scale is one in which the organization of bodies and populations

⁶ Ash Amin, “Spatialities of Globalisation,” *Environment and Planning A*, 34 (2002): 385 – 399, 387.

⁷ Amin, “Spatialities of Globalisation,” 389.

within a space influence the formation of political subjectivity. I argue that this relational understanding of scale better captures the contemporary shifts in spatiality, such as those identified by Amin, while acknowledging the real effects of scale at work in operations of power and resistance. The resulting cartography is no longer committed to a concentric image of territory. It represents a move toward thinking about political space made up of non-concentric scales through which political beings move, experience, imagine, think, and act.

In addition to deepening the theorization of a relational conception of scale, this chapter draws on Foucault in order to expand the alternative genealogies of the nation-state and globalization. The chapter's focus on the city in Foucault's thought reveals the pivotal role of urban life in the formation of modern government. Central roles of the state, such as exercising force and regulating commerce, first appear in the practices of punishment and management developed for the governance of cities. Furthermore, the emerging interconnections between cities point to early globalizing tendencies that predate neoliberal globalization. The interaction of multiple scales in urban space contests the framing of "the global" and globalization as totalities that overwrite other political scales. It reorients our understanding of these concepts to the abundant scales that influence the formation of political space.

A relational understanding of scale does not dismiss the scales of politics previously understood as nested territorial spaces. Instead, scales such as locality, city, state, and globe come to be understood as milieus in which political beings encounter and contest disciplinary and biopolitical practices. This chapter will argue that discipline and biopower also exhibit distinct relations between scales. Discipline and biopolitics bring

with them different sets of spatial relations. Discipline emphasizes practices of enclosure, separation, and partition. Biopower focuses on facilitating circulation and maintaining distributions. The shift in emphasis from discipline and punishment to the management and regulation of populations involves a reworking of the connections between the local, national, and global scale. These shifting relations appear most sharply in the spaces of the city.

I continue my focus on the space of the city in this chapter in order to unpack this multiscalar geography. Throughout Foucault's work, the city appears as an important space for the exercise of spatial practices and the transformation of mechanisms of power. The figure of the city resides at the center of his account of disciplinary society and early biopolitics.⁸ The disciplinary city of strictly enforced segmentation and enclosure evolves into a biopolitical urban space designed for effective and regular forms of circulation. By "evolution" I do not intend to suggest teleological historic processes that bring about the complete replacement of disciplinary power with biopolitics. Rather, I wish to suggest that disciplinary practices (and the built environment created using discipline as a model) facilitate the emergence of biopolitics. While discipline gives ground to biopolitics as the most prominent exercise of power, it often reappears in the biopolitical city. This resurgence of disciplinary tactics appears all too clearly in the policing of protests in urban spaces. For instance, responses to contemporary urban protest often employ tactics of enclosure, separation, and partition characteristic of disciplinary procedures. These police practices are frequently enabled by the disciplinary

⁸ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) and Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, henceforth *STP*. Both will receive more extended textual engagement later in the chapter.

approaches that informed urban planning and design.⁹ The disciplining of bodies continues to shape the ways in which biopolitics regulates and manages populations.

I focus on Foucault's approach to the city for two reasons. First, for reasons similar to my examination of urbanism in Machiavelli's political thought, the city provides a point at which processes at multiple scales fold into a single space. I find numerous points at which Foucault evokes this quality of multiple overlapping spatialities through a focus on the city. Second, I find in Foucault a sustained discussion of the city through discipline and early biopolitics that ends abruptly with his move into neoliberalism and the contemporary era. The significance of his work on neoliberal governmentality for urban thought has remained largely underdeveloped. Through my engagement with spatiality and cities in Foucault's work, I hope to expand on his potential contributions to the analysis of urban governance under neoliberalism. In particular I want to trace the role that neoliberal urbanism has played in producing power relations of the existing global order – that is, how cities infused by neoliberal understandings of government have shaped and influenced the contemporary global scale.

Scale, Discipline, and Biopower

“Shift the object and change the scale.”¹⁰ These are Foucault's guiding words for understanding the emergence of discipline in the eighteenth century. They describe both the transformation of power and the method for writing its genealogy. Spatial controls

⁹ For an extensive account of how disciplinary practices play a continuous role in the governance of cities see Joe Soss, Richard C. Fording, and Sanford F. Schram, *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 89.

would target a newly defined object of power, the body. As Foucault describes it, this was a matter of “[d]efin[ing] new tactics in order to reach a target that is now more subtle but also more widely spread in the social body.”¹¹ Here, the paradoxical spatial formation of an object more subtle yet more widely spread refers to the interaction and mutual constitution of the scales of society and the body. Discipline ties the capacities of bodies to the scale of society. The approach to discipline that I provide here evokes the scalar dimensions of this productive power focused on the training of bodies. I aim to bring scale, lingering in the background of Foucault’s analysis, to the forefront of our understanding of discipline.¹²

In the formation of disciplinary power, the change in scale is two-fold. First, discipline alters the understanding of the body’s internal composition. In taking the body as its object, discipline treats it not as the corporeal power of a feudal peasantry but as a machine constructed of optimized parts. Discipline seeks to coordinate the movements of the body’s various parts and forces. As Foucault explains in greater detail:

there was the scale of the control: it was a question not of treating the body, *en masse*, ‘wholesale’, as if it were an indissociable unity, but of working it ‘retail’, individually; of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself – movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body.¹³

Here, the scale of the body takes on new qualities. Bodies were no longer treated in their aggregate form, as the mass or the multitude, but taken up as “individuals.” Discipline

¹¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 89.

¹² Stuart Elden persuasively suggests that *Discipline and Punish* is part of a larger project running through Foucault’s work that examines the “policing of society.” Stuart Elden, *Mapping the Present: Heidegger, Foucault and the Project of a Spatial History* (London: Continuum, 2001), 134. Elden argues that the focus on the figures of the prison and the panopticon has led much of political theory to overlook the larger sociospatial dimensions of *Discipline and Punish*. My project seeks to add scale to the political vocabulary of spatial relations found in Foucault’s thought.

¹³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 137.

sought to impose specific qualities and intervals on the parts of bodies in order to shape fit these pieces together into an “individual.”

The redefinition of the body as “individual” brought with it shifts in the operation of institutions. In particular, sites of production focused on dividing and managing time and space in new ways. The time-table temporally monitored movements of bodies. Postures and gestures served as central targets for the assessment and reform of bodily activities.¹⁴ Tactics of enclosure sought out proper distributions of bodies across space. The factory divided multiplicities into neatly partitioned and easily governed individuals.

the works or factories proper ... was a change of scale, but it was also a new type of control. The factory was explicitly compared with the monastery, the fortress, a walled town ... The aim is to derive the maximum advantages and to neutralize the inconveniences ... as the forces of production become more concentrated.¹⁵

The factory provided both an institutional setting and a built environment that minimized the cost, so to speak, of exercising power. It differed from the more cumbersome built environments characteristic of sovereign power, such as the fortress. As I argue in chapter one, the fortress became the object of the people’s hatred and no longer held sway as a practice of governing. Where the fortress relied on the creation of a spatial barrier between the sovereign and the people, the factory worked by dividing multiplicities of bodies into neatly partitioned and easily governed individuals. In place of the fortress, the factory offered streamlined exercises of power through which the bodies of “individuals” could be inserted into the process of industrialized production with a minimum of resistance.

¹⁴ See Foucault’s discussion in *Discipline and Punish* of the “Art of Distributions,” 141 – 149 and “Control of Activity,” 149 – 156.

¹⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 142.

In addition to the new relation between the body and institutions, a rescaling of the body occurs in relation to social and political order. The body is no longer that of the subject confronted by the sovereign. Instead, discipline connects the body of the individual to the entirety of the social order; political subjectivity comes into relation with society as a whole. Monitoring, judgment, and punishment are distributed across the entire social milieu. Under this scalar shift, in which power is distributed across society, “[t]he right to punish has been shifted from the vengeance of the sovereign to the *defence of society*.”¹⁶ Here, new tactics may focus on the operations of the body but always extend beyond its domain and into the ordering of society more broadly. These practices constitute both “the individual” and “society” by redefining bodies and bringing them into relation with the aggregate.

This double movement occurs in a context in which industrialization, production, and capital investment reached unprecedented size and scope while mechanisms of control used to preserve their functioning became more specific, local, and intense. Foucault finds diffuse sets of controls growing out of this unprecedented economic scale: “The way in which wealth tended to be invested, on a much larger scale than ever before, in commodities and machines presupposed a systemic, armed intolerance of illegality.”¹⁷ This intolerance of illegality focused on innumerable small acts of training and instilling

¹⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 90. My emphasis. Foucault seems to already be formulating certain biopolitical tendencies. The impulse that would become the title of his lectures “*Society Must Be Defended*” and a key principle of biopower serves as an implicit part of his thinking in *Discipline and Punish*. See Michel Foucault, “*Society Must Be Defended*”: *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975 – 1976*, eds. Mauro Bertani, Alessandro Fontana, and Arnold I. Davidson, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003).

¹⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 85.

self-discipline that could secure expanded capitalist production. The disciplines attended to this need as they:

seem to extend the general forms defined by law to the infinitesimal level of individual lives; or they appear as methods of training that enable individuals to become integrated into these general demands. They seem to constitute the same type of law on a different scale.¹⁸

The “different scale” invoked here denotes both the infinitesimal scale of the body and the general scale of society. The management of “society” calls upon a political technology functioning in the closest possible proximity to the bodies it regulates.

Discipline functions by working on the body, but as Foucault observes “these relations go right down into the depths of society ... they are not localized in the relations between the state and its citizens.”¹⁹ This criticism of “localization,” and the implicit alternative of spatial relationality, is thus at the heart of Foucault’s well-known skepticism regarding political analyses that start from the level of the state. Discipline works through a “political technology of the body,” one that:

cannot be localized in a particular type of institution or state apparatus. For they have recourse to it; they use, select or impose certain of its methods. But, in its mechanisms and its effects, it is situated at a *quite different level*. What the apparatuses and institutions operate is, in a sense, a micro-physics of power, whose field of validity is situated in a sense between these *great functionings* and the *bodies themselves* with their materiality and their forces.²⁰

Discipline works through local practices and operations but cannot be localized in a particular institutional entity. The micro-operations of discipline produce political effects that we call the state, yet these diffuse practices remain irreducible to a statist political vocabulary. Discipline functions both locally and globally – it works at the scales of body and society but cannot be localized in either. Discipline must maintain the particular

¹⁸ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 222.

¹⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 27.

²⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 26. My emphasis.

relation between these two scales in order to fuel bodies, conceptualized as machines, and drive society, conceptualized in mechanistic terms.

The significance of scale for Foucault extends beyond the disciplines to the formation of biopower. Biopolitics has been studied as a shift in object, in which the life of the “population” is managed and regulated so as to amplify its efficiency and productive capacity. The study of this dimension of biopower has produced an ample literature on the concept of life and its connection to contemporary politics in which the work of Giorgio Agamben, and more recently Roberto Esposito, have been highly influential.²¹ However, the treatment of biopolitics as a change in scale, that is to say, as a sociospatial formation, remains underdeveloped. The bounding of a space to be governed represents one of the cornerstones of biopolitics.

Foucault sees the spatial apparatus of biopolitics developing through multiple interwoven parts: “Western man was gradually learning what it meant to be a living species in a living world, to have a body, conditions of existence, probabilities of life, an individual and collective welfare, forces that could be modified, and a *space* in which they could be distributed in an optimal manner.”²² Here, the practices of regulating a population and studying its probabilities of risk works through particular spaces in which these optimized distributions are realized. Biopower takes on a distinctly scalar form: “power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population.”²³ Both “life” and “population” take on spatial qualities

²¹ See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998) and Roberto Esposito, *Bíos: Biopolitics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

²² Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 142. My emphasis. Gendered language in original.

²³ Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 137.

as levels and scales. Biopower comes into being and takes hold through the crystallization of the population as a key *object* and *scale* of politics.

The geographic dimension central to the workings of biopower becomes even more prominent as Foucault connects the formation of this new technique of power to the development of capitalism. Capitalism required the concerted efforts of disciplinary power and bio-power to maintain “the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes.”²⁴ These “productive” forms of power, focused on securing forms of life and optimizing the body, sought out operations that were thought to function more smoothly than sovereign power. In place of unwieldy acts of repression, discipline and biopolitics created coordinates of power in which the individual worked under the conditions of her own self-discipline and for the survival of the population (or even the species). However, this conceptual development, like its legitimating force for early capitalism, was closely tied to geographic transformations:

The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit, were made possible in part by the exercise of bio-power in its many forms and modes of application. The investment of the body, its valorization, and the distributive management of its forces were at the time indispensable.²⁵

Biopower emerges as a way of tying creative processes to the unprecedented scale of the population. “Population” gives a name to this scale and produces the object of a politics committed to the impersonal management and regulation of life. Capital begins to move across this extended scale and tap into the productive forces mobilized by biopower.

²⁴ Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 141.

²⁵ Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 141. Gendered language in original.

The Global Scale and Eurocentric “Globalization”

The interactions of biopower, capitalism, and scale come into focus in Foucault’s lecture from 24 January 1979 published as part of *The Birth of Biopolitics*. In the lecture Foucault sifts through a historical archive on government and political economy to uncover a global scale distinct from the scales of “the body,” “society,” and “the population.” It is here that a nuanced, layered geography underpinning Foucault’s thought comes most clearly into focus. With the dissolution of mercantilism in Europe and the transition toward liberal governmentality, a geographic scale appears in liberal thought that stretches across the surface of the globe and reconfigures the quest for infinite economic expansion. Foucault suggests that at this particular moment “we have the start of a new type of global calculation in European governmental practice ... a new form of global rationality, of a new calculation on *the scale of the world*.”²⁶ The introduction of a global scale of liberal governmentality defines a new political space, a “worldwide space,” and brings about new forms of political and economic order intended to stretch across the entire globe.²⁷ Although the scale of society, expansive as it might be, stretches beyond national territorial boundaries (and beyond the conceptual threshold of the state), it remains more geographically limited than the global. The global scale, for

²⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978 – 1979*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 56. My emphasis.

²⁷ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 56. Foucault’s point here is not that political and economic interactions across the globe are radically new at this moment, but rather that “the global” first appears in an understanding and practice of government. The globe becomes an object and scale of politics in an explicit way. Tarak Barkawi has undertaken a persuasive study of the numerous forms of global exchange and interaction that predate much of what is currently understood as globalization. See Tarak Barkawi, *Globalization and War* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

Foucault, entails uniquely international qualities that would alter the *telos* of the state and redefine the nature of interactions between states.

The global scale enters liberal governmental rationality through discourses on political economy and perpetual peace. Under mercantilism, interstate relations and economic pursuits were conceptualized through a geographic imaginary of spatial fragmentation and competition. Consequently, states pursued economic expansion in a zero sum game. Likewise, projects for peace envisioned a balancing of forces between states acting in a global environment of mutual tension. However, liberal governmental rationality, expanded across a worldwide space, brought with it an understanding “mutual enrichment” in which states could benefit one another through economic expansion.²⁸ Liberal governmentality viewed the expansion of markets across global space as not only economically desirable but natural, and even integral to the amelioration of hostilities between states. It provided a conception of nature that “intended the entire world, the whole of its surface, to be given over to the economic activity of production and exchange.”²⁹ The project of perpetual peace that emerged in this governmental rationality, exemplified by Kant, rested on the notion of a universal, unified, and global human nature expressed through the aspirations and desires of a liberal political-economic subject. Within the conception of nature at work in global liberal governmentality, “[p]erpetual peace is guaranteed by nature and this guarantee is

²⁸ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 54.

²⁹ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 57. Under neoliberal governmentality Foucault finds a different relationship between market expansion and nature, one in which market conditions have to be secured, at least initially, by selective interventions of the state. However, the origins of a global scale and unlimited commercial globalization rest on a conception of economic expansion as a natural process. While the relationship between economics and nature change in the formation of neoliberal government, the significance of a global scale and worldwide space of economic production and exchange will prove important to the formation of neoliberalism.

manifested in the population of the entire world and in the commercial relationships stretching across the whole world. The guarantee of perpetual peace is therefore actually commercial globalization.”³⁰

Foucault’s excavation of a global scale has significant implications for the contemporary understanding of globalization. First, he shows how forms of global connection substantially predate the proliferation of communications technologies and neoliberal markets in the 1990s. Discourses of a global, unified political space emerge at least as early as the eighteenth century.³¹ The geography of globalization involves a longer genealogy with extensive connections to empire and colonialism. Our understanding of globalizing processes must attend to these continuities with colonial expansion and the reorganization of colonizing acts into new pernicious forms.

Second, Foucault begins to elucidate the Eurocentric biases at the origins of many of the institutions of “globalization.” The particular understanding of global space under examination by Foucault appears at roughly the same time that a unified “Europe” takes hold as a prominent concept and scale of politics. The prospect of “mutual enrichment” between European states brought about the idea of collective European progress. “Europe” named a collectivity organized around a spatial extension of political life. It provided the geographic origin for the program of commercial globalization that would be extended across the newly governable worldwide space. The project of “global” government brought with it “a juridification of the world,” a process that subjected

³⁰ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 58

³¹ Foucault is not suggesting that this is the definitive origin of anything that might be called globalization. Without doubt, forms of global connection appear long before this. See for instance Tarak Barkawi, *Globalization and War*, 1 – 26.

territories across the globe to European legal concepts and political order.³² Antony Anghie persuasively argues that liberal global government was constructed upon, and frequently exacerbates, nonegalitarian and asymmetric power relations originating from the colonial encounter. As Anghie suggests, the expansion of global trade and extension of European law across global space “must contend with ... a history in which international law continuously disempowers the non-European world, even while sanctioning intervention within it.”³³ Foucault demonstrates the scalar relations between “Europe” and “the globe” in the discourse of liberal government. The contemporaneous formations of the two scales facilitated their conflation into a profoundly Eurocentric “global” order.

The consolidation of a global scale in political thought demonstrates how relations *between* scales played an important role in the formation of disciplinary power and bio-power. The governmental rationality connected to a global scale fundamentally altered the relationship between politics, economics, and nature. However, it did not simply overwrite the complex layering of political spaces with “the global.” Foucault suggests:

when I say that a new form of political calculation on an international scale emerges in the thought of the physiocrats, Adam Smith, of Kant too, and of the eighteenth century jurists, I do not in any way mean that every other form of reflection, calculation, and analysis, that every other governmental practice disappears.³⁴

He finds instead an elaborate intertwining of scales in which the imperatives of global economic exchange form in the midst of disciplinary society. The shift is a matter of

³² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 56.

³³ Anghie, 312.

³⁴ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 58.

emphasis. Spaces of enclosure and the disciplining of bodies do not disappear with the rise of liberal government. Questions of governing shift their focus to matters of the population and global life, but tactics targeting bodies continue, albeit in less visible ways. Foucault's study of this process continues to "shift the object and change the scale" revealing multiple scales at which power is at work. For instance, the global scale of commercial expansion produces effects at other scales of politics. It sees states as the universal political subunit within the field of the global economy. The formation of international law used to secure power relations within the global economic order requires the affirmation of the state form to guarantee conditions of reciprocity and mutual benefit between populations.³⁵ These numerous levels accumulate into a genealogical account in which discipline and biopower interact in a non-teleological, mutual evolution. Within liberal governmentality, political life constituted at multiple scales – the body, the state, society, Europe, and the globe – begins to come into focus.

Scale and Topology

Gilles Deleuze says Foucault provides a map of political spaces in which power relations work through vast diffusions, interweaving clusters, and subtle connections. Deleuze's account invokes the figures of the body, society, the state, and other spaces but proceeds without an invocation of scales or levels. Although Deleuze neglects an explicit engagement with the concept of scale in Foucault, he provides a careful consideration of Foucault's spatiality that depicts the relational qualities of space. Deleuze sees *Discipline and Punish* as a practice in cartography in which "[a]nalysis and illustration go hand in

³⁵ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 57 – 58.

hand, offering us a microphysics of power and a political investment of the body. These illustrations are coloured in on a *minutely drawn map*.³⁶ Foucault's project, for Deleuze, starts from the politics of the body and seeks to draw maps that relate space to power. It slowly and carefully traces micro-processes moving from the training of "individual" bodies to the organization and regimentation of the social body. This is a non-concentric spatiality of political relations. Although Deleuze wants to suggest that Foucault is a cartographer of networks and topologies, a subtle language of scale works its way back into his account of the "diagram" in Foucault's thought.

Deleuze sees Foucault's concept of the diagram as an important device for mapping social relations. Foucault describes the Panopticon as a diagram: "the Panopticon ... is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use."³⁷ Considered as a diagram, the Panopticon serves as a flexible, abstract model for the operation of power or, as Deleuze would call it, an abstract machine: "The *diagram* is no longer an auditory or visual archive but a map, a cartography that is coextensive with the whole social field. It is an abstract machine ... a machine that is almost blind and mute, even though it makes others see and speak."³⁸ The Panopticon functions as a map for the workings of power relations beyond the confines of the penal system. In its abstract function it extends across a society of panopticism into numerous domains including education, industrial production, military

³⁶ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 22. My emphasis.

³⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 205.

³⁸ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 30.

training, urban planning, and social welfare. In his writings with Félix Guattari, Deleuze focuses on the “nonformal elements” and “composition” at work in and through abstract machines.³⁹ However, in his turn to Foucault, Deleuze extends his spatial idioms and begins to formulate an explicitly spatial understanding of power in which a diagram charts spatial distributions and divisions that inflect power relations across a number of domains.

Deleuze and Foucault both wish to distinguish a diagram from a set of rigid logics or structures that operate uniformly across social domains.⁴⁰ In contrast to a hermetically sealed structure, the diagram forms in and through tensions between its constituent elements. When clarifying this point, Deleuze slightly revises the relation between a diagram and a map: “a diagram is a map, or rather several superimposed maps. And from one diagram to the next new maps are drawn.”⁴¹ The formation of the diagram occurs through maps drawn at different scales that are then overlaid and interwoven. In Deleuze’s qualification of the diagram, here, the concept breaks down into multiple maps drafted at different scales. Each scale names a particular spatial field in which the diagram operates. Scale no longer refers to an essence captured by “the local” and “the global” but to plural and heterogeneous spaces defining and defined by power-relations.

Deleuze finds in Foucault’s thought a redefinition of “the local”: “‘local’ has two very different meanings: power is local because it is never global, but it is not local or

³⁹ See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 255.

⁴⁰ Deleuze and Foucault both seem to be seeking out a conception of power distinct from orthodox Marxism as it was embodied by the PCF. For an excellent account of Foucault’s dissatisfaction with French Marxism see Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 50 – 58, 136 – 138.

⁴¹ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 37.

localized because it is diffuse.”⁴² Deleuze and Foucault endorse the first understanding of “the local” but frequently note the tension between this notion of it (that it is not global) and the local that is localizable as a specific point at which an essence can be located.⁴³ The first sense of the local, which Deleuze and Foucault use to describe the functioning of power, refers to the numerous specific sites at the most intimate, immediate, and micro-scales. These localities never become global in the sense that they never fit together into a closed system. Instead, numerous local operations of power function through a “microphysics” that dispenses with an essentialist understanding of locality premised on a concentric image of “the local” nested within a large territorial nation and seated within a larger world order. As Deleuze advises, “we must not take ‘micro’ to mean a simple miniaturization of visible and articulable forms; instead it signifies another domain, a new type of relations, a dimension of thought that is irreducible to knowledge. Micro therefore means mobile and non-localizable connections.”⁴⁴ The “microphysics of power” does not simply refer to a sovereign model of power transposed to smaller, but otherwise familiar, units of analysis. It charts new pathways of connection across society by tracing the mobile forces and tendencies often existing at the threshold of intelligibility. Power is never localized, which is to say that these local spaces never

⁴² Deleuze, *Foucault*, 24. Although Deleuze’s use of “global” and “local” often suggests a rethinking of the relations between the general and specific, I want to suggest that this reconceptualization applies to geographic thought as well.

⁴³ See for instance the conversation between Foucault and Deleuze entitled “Intellectuals and Power” wherein Deleuze suggests “a theory is always local and related to a limited field, and it is applied in another sphere, more or less distant from it.” Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, “Intellectuals and Power” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, Ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 205. Deleuze wishes to suggest the specific and non-totalizing nature of theory, that is, its contrast with globality, yet the formulation maintains the diffuse quality theory through its attachment to other distant spheres.

⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 62.

embody the *essence* of power.⁴⁵ Instead, they are infused by the abstract machine of the diagram. The local and global remain perpetually in contact with one another through the operation of abstract machines, that is, through the multiple diagrams or maps that *infuse* them with particular tendencies. Each scale is never merely set in a concentric circle. It possesses sharp edges and rough relays with the scales that exceed it.

What I call infusion, here, does not *determine* local operations of power; it folds into the specificities and contingencies of a particular milieu. As the diagram of the Panopticon moves through different domains, institutions and social collectivities get reorganized. Practices of surveillance spread across society and take on different forms as they filter into penalty, education, industrial production, and military training. However, they cumulatively produce what Foucault calls panopticism, a social field infused with the tendencies of the Panopticon. As the diagram moves through each domain, it comes into contact with other political technologies that carry their own maps for social organization. Deleuze observes:

there are as many diagrams as there are social fields in history ... for example, the Napoleonic diagram, where the disciplinary function merges with the sovereign function 'at the point of junction of the monarchical, ritual exercise of sovereignty and the hierarchical, permanent exercise of indefinite discipline'. *This is because the diagram is highly unstable or fluid, continually churning up matter and functions in a way likely to create change.*⁴⁶

Diagrams are not the simple, geometric forms that the term might seem to connote.

Rather, they contain loose ends, frictional points of contact, and inchoate qualities. These tensions are retained in the spaces and scales connected by diagrams. Localities remain

⁴⁵ Deleuze explicitly rejects an essentialist understanding of power and sees this as a cornerstone of Foucault's project, particularly in *Discipline and Punish*: "Power has no essence; it is simply operational. It is not an attribute but a relation: the power-relation is the set of possible relations between forces, which passes through the dominated forces no less that through the dominating" (Deleuze, *Foucault*, 24).

⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 30.

spaces of contest, tension, and struggle between different diagrams and the forms of parallax that emerge from multiple overlaid maps.

As Deleuze formulates scale beyond the local, “there is no *immediate global integration*. There is, rather, a multiplicity of local and partial integrations, each one entertaining an affinity with certain relations or particular points.”⁴⁷ His invocation of global and local often refers to what we might otherwise understand as the general and the specific. However, his conceptualizations also prove productive when thinking of the global scale and world space. Deleuze seeks to resist understandings of power in which a global closed system or structure becomes the locus of power. Nevertheless, there may be good reasons for retaining and rethinking some concept of “the global” even as we let go of the idea of an “immediate global integration.” Although it is possible to speak of a global map or diagram that establishes connections between local operations of power, this global map operates without imposing a unifying or centralizing totality. “The global” emerges out of the broader operations of power relations that remain partial and fragmentary. It names the numerous connections and disconnects between spaces that frequently overlap but never interlock.⁴⁸

An understanding of the global as an accumulation of heterogeneous parts without totalization parallels the conception of the State advanced by Deleuze and Foucault. In a familiar critique of the State as a universal historical form, Deleuze suggests that an analysis of power might be better served by examining the movement of numerous

⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 63.

⁴⁸ Deleuze reframes the relation between the local and the global as one of immanence in which global no longer transcends the local: “[t]he thing called power is characterized by immanence of field without transcendent unification, continuity of line without global centralization, and contiguity of parts without distinct totalization” (Deleuze, *Foucault*, 24).

domains into loose alliances and clusters, the effects of which come to be known as the State. Foucault likewise suggests:

the state does not have an essence. The state is not a universal nor in itself an autonomous source of power. The state is nothing else but the effect, the profile, the mobile shape of perpetual ... statifications ... in the sense of *incessant transactions* which modify, or move, or *drastically change*, or *insidiously shift* sources of finance, modes of investment, decision-making centers, forms and types of control, relationships between local powers, the central authority, and so on. In short, the state has no heart ... no interior. That state is nothing else but the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities.⁴⁹

The state is less a cold monster than an elaborate composition produced through the numerous operations of different diagrams. It contains a different set of relations than those confined to linear causality. It works through “statisfications,” processual incorporations into the state that bring together “incessant transactions,” “drastic changes,” and “insidious shifts.” These movements may shift the site at which power operates but do not consolidate the practices in question within a monolithic entity that *possesses* power. The State serves as an integrating force that brings multiple operations of power together. If it is vital to an analysis of power, this is because of its integrating function. As Deleuze observes, “[i]f the State-form, in our historical formations, has captured so many power relations, this is not because they are derived from it; in the contrary, it is because an operation of ‘continual state control’ ... was produced in the pedagogical, juridical, economic, familial and sexual domains which encourage global integration.”⁵⁰ This critique of the State seeks to unseat totalizing, “global” structures and make conceptual room for the numerous practices and microprocesses that compose these

⁴⁹ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 77. My emphasis.

⁵⁰ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 63 – 64.

structures. This approach does not wholly discard the State; it sees the State as contingent formation that neither unifies nor determines politics.

Deleuze's thought on topology has influenced approaches to urban studies critical of the concept of "scale."⁵¹ In particular, a tendency exists within Actor-Network Theory to affirm a "flat ontology" in which the distance between spaces can be collapsed through their connections in networks. This approach within Actor-Network Theory pursues "a relational understanding of spatial formations, which ... imagines space (and eventually scale) as fields of activity or better as attributes of certain urban assemblages."⁵²

However, the study of networks leads this approach to largely abandon the role of scale in political life: "[s]calar structuration and clustering are rejected as underlying structural processes and consequently as analytical categories for the study of cities."⁵³ This notion of spatial flatness sees any two points as being potentially connected through a network that collapses and overcomes distance. At its best, scale is seen as an epiphenomenal quality of networks emerging from a particular assemblage of constituent parts. Richard Smith goes even further to suggest that "the concept of 'scale' is ... a redundant invention for seeing the spatiality of economic relations."⁵⁴ Smith sees "scale" as a term too rigid and imposing to describe the complexities of the social and political life;

"'scale' is what ... Lyotard terms an exteriority, a concept that is imposed on events

⁵¹ See Anna Secor, "Topological City," *Urban Geography* 34 (2013): 430 – 444 and Ignacio Fariás and Thomas Bender, eds., *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-Network Theory Changes Urban Studies*, (London: Routledge, 2010).

⁵² Ignacio Fariás, "Introduction: Decentering the Object of Urban Studies" in *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-Network Theory Changes Urban Studies*, eds. Ignacio Fariás and Thomas Bender (London: Routledge, 2010), 17.

⁵³ Fariás, "Introduction," 17.

⁵⁴ Richard G. Smith, "Urban Studies without 'Scale': Localizing the Global through Singapore" in *Urban Assemblages*, eds. Ignacio Fariás and Thomas Bender (London: Routledge, 2010), 73.

before any empirical investigation has even started.”⁵⁵ Rather than describing a sociospatial formation, Smith sees scale as imposing a particular geographical bias on the study of politics and society.⁵⁶

The concept of scale in Foucault, as I have developed it so far, in many ways resembles the dynamic notion of scale endorsed by a few Actor-Network theorists still receptive to the concept. It is a relational concept “multiply enacted and assembled at concrete local sites, where concrete actors shape time-space dynamics in various ways, producing thereby different geographies of associations.”⁵⁷ However, the assembled, dynamic character of scale leads Foucault to place more, not less, emphasis on the concept. He more effectively demonstrates that the concept does have effects by treating scales as ontologically real but not transhistorical. If scales such as the body, the nation, society, and the globe inform Foucault’s study of power, this is because “empirical investigation,” or as Foucault might prefer, genealogical investigation, finds these scales at work in the discourses and practices that form particular conceptions of government.

From the Sovereign Capital to the Biopolitical City

The city provides a site where the interweaving of multiple scales appears most visibly; in this section I examine how Foucault’s relational understanding of scale offers

⁵⁵ Smith, 75.

⁵⁶ Not everyone within Actor-Network Theory has been as hostile to the concept of scale as Smith. Latham and McCormack, while still critical of the term, have suggested that Actor-Network Theory should reconsider its dismissal of the concept for three reasons: 1) scale names real effects of politics giving name to “the thickening, dilution, extension, or shortening of relations [that] alters the dynamics of how an entity functions” (67) 2) scale captures affective atmospheres with size and duration 3) scale, informed by Actor-Network theory, can help explain intensity or density as well as extension. Alan Latham and Derek P. McCormack, “Globalizations Big and Small: Notes on Urban Studies, Actor-Network Theory, and Geographical Scale,” in *Urban Assemblages*, 67.

⁵⁷ Fariás, “Introduction,” 6.

its own transformative suggestions for the study of contemporary cities. Throughout his work, but particularly in his writing from the mid- to late-1970s, Foucault frequently returns to the figure of the city in order to illustrate the functioning of emergent forms of power. He invokes the figure of the city to unpack the evolution of two overlapping but distinct political phenomena: punishment (and its connection to discipline) and territoriality. In each case the focus on particular dimensions of the city differs but the two lines of inquiry connect in the larger genealogy of government.

The unique multiscalar approach alters key concepts for the analysis of contemporary cities. In particular, Foucault approaches urban form as a constellation of bodies, spaces, and practices that compose power relations. Architectural design and discourses of government blend together as transformations of built environments accompany the shift between differing mechanics of power. The city forms a palimpsest in which built environments leave behind tangible, material imprints of the operations of disciplinary power and biopolitics. The spatializations of disciplinary and bio-power organize cities in distinct ways. I examine how the transfiguration of the city through shifting regimes of power defines, and is defined by, relations between scales. I then turn to Foucault's account of neoliberal governmentality, where a discussion of the city remains absent, in order to sketch the forms of spatiality and urbanism at work in neoliberalism today.

A number of urban forms mark Foucault's genealogy of punishment. For instance, the often neglected urban form of the plague-stricken town provides a foil for Foucault's elaboration of panopticism. In the plague town strict spatial separations render the populace immobile thereby guaranteeing their complete visibility. The plague town

was governed by “an omnipresent and omniscient power that subdivides itself in a regular, uninterrupted way.”⁵⁸ The result was an “enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded.”⁵⁹ The spatiality of the plague town organized crowds and masses into atomistic individuals through segmented spaces, enclosures, constant surveillance, and overt regulations of minute details. In its historical moment, the plague town represented meticulous urban control through design. With the realization of absolute control came total immobility: “The plague-stricken town, traversed throughout with hierarchy, surveillance, observation, writing; the town immobilized by the functioning of an extensive power that bears in a distinct way over all individual bodies – this is the utopia of the perfectly governed city.”⁶⁰ This model grew out of an extreme event, a crisis such as a plague, that could allow for the reorganization of urban space into gridded, closed off segments. In this early form of discipline, “there is an exceptional situation: against an extraordinary evil, power is mobilized ... it constructs ... a *counter city*.”⁶¹ The utopian city, imperfectly enacted at moments of emergency, represented the highest urban form and yet, it also embodied its opposite. This “counter city” represented the antithesis of the city; it lacked movement, sociality, and the general conditions of everyday life.

A number of flexible, distributed forms of punishment adapted to everyday life and working through spaces of circulation rather than enclosure would come to replace the practices and built environments used in the governance of the plague town. These

⁵⁸ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 197.

⁵⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 197.

⁶⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 198.

⁶¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 205.

new architectures no longer resembled fortresses and the material constructs of martial law but were more attuned to the circulations of bodies and things.

no more bars, no more chains, no more heavy locks; all that was needed was that the separations should be clear and the openings well arranged. The heaviness of the old ‘houses of security’, with their fortress-like architecture, could be replaced by the simple, economic geometry of a ‘house of certainty.’⁶²

Built environments no longer required the heavy fortifications of the plague town. These new dynamic urban forms worked instead through precise interventions that distributed punishment across society:

While, on the one hand, the disciplinary establishments increase, their mechanisms have a certain tendency to become ‘de-institutionalized’, to emerge from the closed fortresses in which they once functioned and to circulate in a ‘free’ state; the massive, compact disciplines are broken down into flexible methods of control, which may be transferred and adapted.⁶³

The turn away from architectures of enforced enclosure brought about urban spaces conducive to flexible regulations with generalized effects across society. Power exceeded the walls of the fortress and moved through the numerous institutions and apparatuses at work across the city.

Two urban forms, the “punitive city” and the “carceral city,” adopted this flexible approach to discipline. The punitive city appears as one of Foucault’s first suggestions for what follows the architecture of power in which the violence of the scaffold secured the power of the sovereign. The practices of public torture had inadvertently brought about a widespread fascination with the “great criminal” that animated public consciousness and populated literature. New practices were required to presumptively discredit the criminal by transforming the relationship between crime and society. Here, “the crime can no

⁶² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 202.

⁶³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 211.

longer appear as anything but a misfortune and the criminal as an enemy who must be re-educated into social life.”⁶⁴ These tactics came with a spatialization that reconfigured the distribution of punishment across society, and brought with them the urban form of the punitive city:

This, then, is how one must imagine the punitive city. At the crossroads, in the gardens, at the side of roads being repaired or bridges built, in workshops open to all, in the depths of mines that may be visited, will be hundreds of tiny theatres of punishment. Each crime will have its law; each criminal his punishment ... Scenery, perspectives, optical effects, *trompe-l'oeil* sometimes magnify the scene, making it more fearful than it is, but also clearer ... But the essential point, in all these real or magnified severities, is that they should all, according to a strict economy, teach a lesson: that each punishment should be a fable.⁶⁵

Operations of punishment proliferated within the punitive city. Punishment occurred through any number of small theaters in which operations on the body were designed to resonate throughout society and move through the educative apparatus of the family, public discourse between citizens, poetry, and literature of the time. The spatialization of punishment worked through a number of heterogeneous sites from which it then spreads across multiple geographic scales.

In Foucault’s account, the punitive city, and its geography for educating against crime through theater and spectacle, was one among many political technologies vying for prominence during the crisis of governmentality faced by the regime of the scaffold. The model of the punitive city had to contend with the distinct spatiality of “coercive institutions” that would give birth to the modern prison. Both the punitive city and coercive institutions exercised punishment in the name of society as a whole “but they are

⁶⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 112.

⁶⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 113.

very different from one another at the level of the mechanisms they envisage.”⁶⁶ As

Foucault describes at length:

the divergence is the following: punitive city or coercive institution? On the one hand [we have the model of the punitive city], a functioning of penal power, distributed throughout the social space; present everywhere as scene, spectacle, sign, discourse; legible like an open book; operating by a permanent recodification of the mind of the citizens; ... acting invisibly and uselessly on the ‘soft fibres of the brain’, as Servan put it. A power to punish that ran the whole length of the social network would act at each of its points, and in the end would no longer be perceived as a power of certain individuals over others, but as an immediate reaction of all in relation to the individual.⁶⁷

The geography of punishment envisioned in a punitive city allowed subjects to witness punishment and assist in the circulation of the spectacle throughout the citizenry. By contrast, the institution of the prison would function by directly training and regimenting bodies. Yet through the figure of the punitive city, Foucault does more than simply review an understanding of punishment rapidly eclipsed by the turn toward enclosure and confinement; he excavates a key dimension of the flexible and productive dimensions in power. Elden sees the figure of the punitive city serving an indispensable role in Foucault’s spatial thought. This particular urban form begins the inquiry into discipline that takes the entirety of society as its object. Furthermore, as Elden suggests, “[t]he key question in *Discipline and Punish* is not so much why the sovereign and his force was replaced, but ... [w]hy did the administrative apparatus replace the social body, the enclosed place of reform get chosen over the punitive city?”⁶⁸ For Elden, the turn away from the punitive city’s distribution of power across urban space forms the central tension animating Foucault’s thought in *Discipline and Punish*. I would also suggest that

⁶⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 130.

⁶⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 129 – 130.

⁶⁸ Elden, *Mapping the Present*, 138.

the punitive city lays the groundwork for the regulation of the social body, that is to say, the coordination of the scales of the body and society. Although the model of the punitive city would never fully ascend to primacy as a strategy of administering punishment, it nonetheless set down important exemplars for later political technologies that would draw on the geography of the city interwoven with other scales of politics.

The urban form Foucault names the “carceral city” followed coercive institutions and would seek out new diffuse tactics of administering punishment in order to regulate the social body. The carceral city modified the socially distributed forms of regulation characteristic of the punitive city through the addition of mechanisms salvaged from the political laboratory of the modern prison. For Foucault, “the carceral” names a complex, even paradoxical, set of spatial and geographic forms connecting confinement, punishment, and discipline. Foucault finds important forms of continuity and separation in its functioning, describing the carceral as both a “system” and an “archipelago.”⁶⁹ It functions by creating links between the penal system and social, political, economic, and religious domains: “The frontiers between confinement, judicial punishment and institutions of discipline ... tended to disappear and constitute a great carceral continuum that diffused penitentiary techniques into the most innocent disciplines.”⁷⁰ As the political technology of the prison inflected social and political institutions more broadly, the smallest operations of power served a vital role in defining normality and delinquency. The carceral brought about continuity between domains of the social field, but it operated through geographic discontinuities. For Foucault, the carceral city exercised punishment

⁶⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 293, 297.

⁷⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 297.

in a number of disparate, connected geographic spaces, shuttling bodies from one point to the next in its archipelago of disciplinary practices.

The carceral apparatus inhabits urban space and reconstitutes power relations within the city. Foucault provides a sketch of the workings of the carceral city at the close of *Discipline and Punish*:

The carceral city, with its imaginary ‘geo-politics’, is governed by quite different principles ... at the center of this city ... there is not the ‘centre of power’, not a network of forces, but a multiple network of diverse elements – walls, space, institution, rules, discourse; that the model of the carceral city is not, therefore, the body of the king, with the powers that emanate from it, nor the contractual meeting of wills from which a body that was both individual and collective was born, but a strategic distribution of elements of different natures and levels.⁷¹

Here, Foucault identifies the emergence of political space irreducible to the body of the king or the sovereignty of mutually contracting subjects. In the political space of the carceral city, power works through interconnected levels or scales that resonate together to different degrees. The body, the built environment of the city, penal institutions, and society intersect in and constitute the carceral city. This is an urban geopolitics constituted from below, above, and within the city. In the final pages of *Discipline and Punish* Foucault’s line of questioning has turned from the distribution of punishment to an inquiry into spatial distributions and the scales of politics.

The figure of the carceral city begins to pose the question of urbanism and its relation to government. This question is treated explicitly in the lectures *Security, Territory, Population* wherein Foucault frames his study of governmentality. He provides a detailed account of the emergence of towns and cities as political entities. In particular, his examination of the evolving relation between city and territory brings into focus the

⁷¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 307.

shifting relations between scales that defined, and were redefined by, the city's role in politics. I reconstruct Foucault's genealogy of the city in order to shed light on the evolution of regimes of power and, especially, to highlight the implicit role of scalar emphasis in defining distinct modalities of power.

Early in Foucault's project on governmentality, he frames the question of government as a relation between town and territory. Foucault begins his account of urbanism in the seventeenth century when "the town still had a particular legal and administrative definition that isolated it and marked it out quite specifically in comparison with other areas and spaces of the territory ... the town was typically confined within a tight, walled space, which had much more than just a military function."⁷² The town is characterized by strict spatial divisions and laws to define the nature of these spaces. Foucault draws on Alexandre Le Maître's work, *La Métropolité*, to further theorize the spaces of the juridical town and its relation to sovereignty:

On the basis of this architectural metaphor, the territory must also comprise foundations, common parts, and noble parts. The foundations will be the countryside, and it goes without saying that all the peasants, and only peasants must live in the countryside. Second, all the artisans, and only artisans, must live in the small towns. Finally, the sovereign, his officers, and those artisans and tradesmen who are indispensable to the functioning of the court and the sovereign's entourage, must live in the capital.⁷³

The plan put forth in *La Métropolité* strictly divides spaces of peasants, artisans, and the sovereign (with his seigniorial court). The territory is composed of spatial divisions that mark class hierarchies. Yet even within this model of the city certain circulations exist between towns. These are primarily intended to be aesthetic, symbolic, and moral circulations moving from the capital to the rest of the territory. As Foucault observes:

⁷² Foucault, *STP*, 12.

⁷³ Foucault, *STP*, 13.

The capital must be the ornament of the territory ... The capital must give the example of good morals. The capital must be the place where the holy orators are the best and are best heard, and it must also be the site of academies, since they must give birth to the sciences and truth that is to be disseminated in the rest of the county. Finally, there is an economic role: the capital must be the site of luxury so that it is a point of attraction for products coming from other countries, and at the same time, through trade, it must be the distribution point of manufactured articles and products, etcetera.⁷⁴

The maintenance of a prominent capital and its position atop the hierarchy of space characterize this model of the town focused on the maintenance and preservation of sovereignty. The relation between sovereignty and territory animates the political thought of this urban order; “the primary relationship is essentially that of sovereignty to the territory, and this serves as the schema, the grid, for arriving at an understanding of what a capital city should be and how it can and should function.”⁷⁵ This regime of power and its spatial configuration seeks to produce a town as a model for the entire territory. It is a capitalizing process designed “to ensure a well ‘capitalized’ state, that is to say, a state well organized around a capital as the seat of sovereignty and the central point of political and commercial circulation.”⁷⁶ This capitalizing city embodies the claim of the sovereign over the territory. Foucault later refers to this process by which a central city comes to define the entirety of a territory as the “urbanization of territory.”⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Foucault, *STP*, 14.

⁷⁵ Foucault, *STP*, 14.

⁷⁶ Foucault, *STP*, 15.

⁷⁷ Foucault, *STP*, 336. The origins of the police as a particular form of political power is closely tied to the forms of urban organization examined by Foucault. He suggests, “When we look at the different objects thus defined as relevant to the practice, intervention, and also reflection of police, and on police, the first thing we can note is that they are all essentially what could be called urban objects. They are urban in the sense that some only exist in the town and because there is a town” (Foucault, *STP*, 335). The town provides a unique space that inaugurates new tactics for regulating the everyday encounters enabled by its built environment. Police power was further charged with the maintenance of built environments – buildings, squares, roadways – and the functioning of the market, closely relate to the town and problems of “dense coexistence” (Foucault, *STP*, 335). In Foucault’s most blunt formulation, he views the process of urbanization

Foucault contrasts the capitalizing city, characteristic of sovereign/judicial power, with a number of Northern European towns based on the form of the Roman camp. The model of the town as camp was employed to produce entirely new built environments and subjectivities adapted to the strict disciplinary norms imposed by and through the partitioning of space:

The famous form of the Roman camp is used, which, along with the military institution was being reutilized at this time as a fundamental instrument of discipline. The form of the Roman camp was revived at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, precisely in protestant countries ... along with the exercises, the subdivision of troops, and collective and individuals controls in the major undertaking of the disciplinarization of the army.⁷⁸

The shift from the capitalizing project of Le Maître to the adoption of the Roman camp as the model of the town marks a reconfiguration of the politics of space. For Le Maître the urban form was isomorphic with the state; the two spaces are meant to acquire the same political, commercial, moral, and aesthetic qualities. However, in the case of the town modeled on the Roman camp, the spatial configuration of the town and its corresponding political qualities emanate from a smaller scale. As Foucault explains:

in the previous case, Le Maître's *La Métropolitée*, the layout of the town was basically thought of in terms of the most general, overall category of the territory. One tried to think about the town through a macrocosm, since the state itself was thought of as an edifice. In short, *the interplay of macrocosm and microcosm ran through the problematic of the relationship between town, sovereignty, and territory*. In the case of towns constructed in the form of the camp, we can say that the town is not thought of on the basis of the larger territory, but on the basis of a smaller,

as essentially synonymous with the emergence of police power: "in the strong sense of these terms, to police and to urbanize is the same thing" (Foucault, *STP*, 337).

⁷⁸ Foucault, *STP*, 15 – 16. Towns based on the Roman camp were often built from scratch. In other cases, they first cleared away the construction of previous residents to build anew. Foucault focuses on the example of Richelieu that he refers to as being "built from scratch" (Foucault, *STP*, 15). The editors' footnote clarifies that "the town was built by Cardinal Richelieu, who demolished the old hovels, on the site of the patrimonial domain, in order to reconstruct it starting in 1631, on a regular plan outlined by Jacques Lemercier" (Foucault, *STP*, 26). This insistence on clearing land to build anew as a town modeled on the Roman camp emphasizes the all-too-literal *productive* dimension of disciplinary power.

geometrical figure, which is a kind of architectural module, namely the square or rectangle, which is in turn subdivided into other squares or rectangles.⁷⁹

As is now well-known to scholars of Foucault's thought, the movement from sovereign power to disciplinary power turns on the shift from a law-like relation between sovereign and subject to a system of normation exercised through models and gridded spaces that led subjects increasingly toward self-discipline. Foucault's discussion, here, reveals the neglected scalar quality of this shift. The shift from sovereignty to discipline comes about through a reconfiguration of *microcosm* and *macrocosm* – from town and territory to architecture and town. The politics of space animating urbanism shifts from an isomorphism between town and territory to a geometry of urban design. Grids, enclosures, and the general military architecture of the encampment inaugurate a scale of politics that emphasizes the movements and dispositions of the body. This move ushers in “the disciplinary treatment of multiplicities in space, that is to say, [the] constitution of an empty, closed space within which artificial multiplicities are to be constructed and organized according to the triple principle of hierarchy, precise communication of relations of power, and functional effects specific to this distribution, for example, ensuring trade, housing, and so on.”⁸⁰ Disciplinary power establishes not only new spaces of regulation but new relations to space. It produces “individuals” by dividing a seemingly chaotic multiplicity into neatly ordered and segmented parts; it separates that which deviates from the norm into “perverse” aspects of individuality.

With the advent of biopolitics, Foucault sees the town of the eighteenth century beginning to evolve a number of security apparatuses. This new town opens routes

⁷⁹ Foucault, *STP*, 16. My emphasis

⁸⁰ Foucault, *STP*, 17.

designed to facilitate hygiene, internal trade, external trade, and more generalized forms of surveillance. Here, the aim “was a matter of organizing circulation, eliminating dangerous elements, making a division between good and bad circulation, and maximizing the good circulation by diminishing the bad.”⁸¹ In the eighteenth century town circulation is not limited, constrained, or enclosed, as it was in the capitalizing city and camp town. Instead, the urban form of the eighteenth century town seeks to connect, amplify, and secure circulation. The emphasis on security is a key part of the formation of biopolitics and also a central development in the eighteenth century town. Security requires an open-ended city designed to accommodate future development. Foucault frames this as “a fairly new and fundamental question of how to integrate possible future developments within a present plan ... What must be done to meet something that is not exactly known in advance.”⁸² Security apparatuses envision a resilient urban space that can flexibly manage crises and emergencies in order to maintain “desirable” forms of circulation. This apparatus of biopolitics imagines a different kind of political space than the prison-inspired grids of discipline’s coercive institutions. It adopts multiple, flexible techniques, not unlike the diffuse practices conducted in the name of “society” by the carceral archipelago. The difference though is that the space of security is a continuous geographic space, a “*milieu*” that serves as “the target for the intervention of power.”⁸³

A milieu is a spatial-geographic frame to conceptualize and manage urban life and the forces that traverse it. It serves an indispensable role in Foucault’s mapping of biopower. The city exists within a milieu. A milieu draws nearby (and potentially distant)

⁸¹ Foucault, *STP*, 18.

⁸² Foucault, *STP*, 18 – 19.

⁸³ Foucault, *STP*, 22.

spaces and movements into the designs of urban life. It crosses the divides between nature and culture and the natural and the artificial. For Foucault the concept of milieu denotes a space defined by the *interaction* of social practices and natural features:

The milieu, then, will be that in which circulation is carried out. The milieu is a set of natural givens – rivers, marshes, hills – and a set of artificial givens – an agglomeration of individuals, of houses, etcetera. The milieu is a certain number of combined, overall effects bearing on all who live in it.⁸⁴

Populations, the “agglomerations of individuals, of houses, etc.,” appear as governable objects in relation to the milieu. The milieu is that which connects the city to the forces and processes at scales beyond the urban. The city becomes a space for managing circulations on a scale that exceeds it. Events beyond the scale of the city – climate, floods, earthquakes, and volcanoes – interact with the everyday movements of urban life. The milieu reframes politics as the management of natural (including human) forces across an expansive geographic space. In this image of politics, as it is reframed through the concept of milieu:

the sovereign is no longer someone who exercises his power over a territory on the basis of a geographical localization of his political sovereignty. The sovereign deals with a nature, or rather with the perpetual conjunction, the perpetual intrication of a geographical, climatic, and physical milieu with the human species insofar as it has a body and a soul, a physical and a moral existence; and the sovereign will be someone who will have to exercise power at that point of connection where nature, in the sense of physical elements, interferes with nature in the sense of the nature of the human species, at that point of articulation where the milieu becomes the determining factor of nature.⁸⁵

“Milieu” conveys a move beyond concentric or nested understandings of political space. In a milieu individualizing and globalizing technologies of power coexist, reinforce one another, and produce feedback. Likewise, the “human species,” as

⁸⁴ Foucault, *STP*, 21.

⁸⁵ Foucault, *STP*, 23.

an object to be secured through the management of the milieu, is both a globalizing project that rests on the aggregating notion of the population and at the same time an individualizing technology that works on a single body and soul.

Causality within a milieu is a complex looping network distinct from the deliberate or “rational action” of agents: “The milieu is a certain number of combined, overall effects bearing on all who live in it. It is an element in which a circular link is produced between effects and causes, since an effect from one point of view will be a cause from another.”⁸⁶ As it reworks the circuitry of urban spaces and their surroundings, the emergent spatial form of the milieu has real effects on the constitution of power relations and the operations of government. Security aims to produce and sustain desirable forms of circulation warding off anything viewed as potentially dangerous, pathological, or revolutionary.

Foucault’s political history of urban forms unfolds through the reconfiguration of scales: between city and territory, city and spaces for training the body, and city and milieu. Throughout this genealogy, the urban scale serves as a nexus for the interchange of micropolitics and their accumulation into macropolitical structures. The city provides a crucial set of relays in Foucault’s relational spatiality that folds multiple scales into one another. Narrating this genealogy from the starting point of the city unseats the State from its central role in political thought and opens the way for the elaborate spatial project:

to show how starting from the relatively local and microscopic analysis of those typical forms of power of the pastorate it was possible, without paradox or contradiction, to return to the general problems of the state, on condition precisely that we [do not make] the state [into] a transcendent reality whose history could be undertaken on the basis of itself. It must be possible to do the

⁸⁶ Foucault, *STP*, 21.

history of the state on the basis of men's actual practice, on the basis of what they do and how they think ... we can see that there is not a sort of break between the level of micro-power and the level of macro-power, and that talking about one [does not] exclude talking about the other. In actual fact, an analysis in terms of micropowers comes back without any difficulty to the analysis of problems like those of government and the state.⁸⁷

Foucault outlines an approach to political analysis that moves back and forth from micro scales to the macro, studying the contours of the local and specific before moving to the state, general, and global. In this approach to the evolution of power, the city serves as an important intersection in which multiple scales overlap and intersect. Foucault drafts multiscale maps of the city in which power-relations form through the confrontation between everyday habits and urban bodies, on the one hand, and the governmentalization of the state, the imperatives of society, and the movements of global circulations on the other.

Neoliberal Urban Governance

Although Foucault provides a compelling frame for approaching urban politics, he leaves the figure of the city behind when he moves into an analysis of neoliberalism. I want to suggest that his portrayal of the city in his earlier works, as a space of intersecting scales with uneven edges and loose remainders, complements his discussion of neoliberalism. It provides a rich theoretical apparatus for understanding contemporary urban governance in which cities undergo restructuring through political-economic forces while also serving as sites for the global workings of discipline and biopower.

For Foucault neoliberalism represents not only a set of policies or an ideology, but a governmentality. It connects a discourse on the nature of government to a set of

⁸⁷ Foucault, *STP*, 358. Gendered language in original.

material practices and provides a “whole way of being and thinking ... a type of relation between the governors and the governed.”⁸⁸ Foucault sees neoliberalism not as an ideology that produces false consciousness and can be resolved through demystifying critique. As a governmentality, neoliberalism infiltrates numerous institutions and permeates a subject’s understanding of her own political being. Its reach extends into practices of subjectivity, freedom, and the relation between body and society.⁸⁹ This political rationality culminates in a public policy that pursues privatization, selective regulation favoring corporate interests, and austerity.

Neoliberal governmentality envisions the subject *homo economicus* as an entrepreneur, an “entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings.”⁹⁰ *Homo economicus*, envisioned in liberal economic thought as a self-interested economic actor, becomes a being committed, in multiple venues, to mobilizing herself *as* capital. This understanding of subjectivity thus permeates multiple domains of political life. Neoliberal *homo economicus* views economic regulation, foreign policy, and social welfare as fields in which the state must intervene solely for the sake of enabling entrepreneurial endeavors. The terms of neoliberal “freedom” emerge within these

⁸⁸ Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 218.

⁸⁹ I use the term “society” loosely here since neoliberalism offers an ontology that denies the existence of society. The most famous and influential pronouncement characterizing “society” in neoliberalism is no doubt Margaret Thatcher’s claim “they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first.” Margaret Thatcher, “Interview for *Woman's Own* (‘no such thing as society’)” September 23, 1987, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689>.

⁹⁰ Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 226. Gendered language in original.

limited terms of entrepreneurial being. The drive of neoliberalism to monopolize the discourse of freedom necessitates a reconceptualization of the term:

we should not think of freedom as a universal which is gradually realized over time, or which undergoes quantitative variations, greater or lesser drastic reductions, or more or less important periods of eclipse. It is not a universal which is particularized in time and geography. Freedom is not a white surface with more or less numerous black spaces here and there and from time to time. Freedom is never anything other ... than an actual relation between governors and governed, a relation in which the measure of the “too little” existing freedom is given by the “even more” freedom demanded.⁹¹

Here, freedom is not simply the “negative liberty” of “freedom from” government intervention, the control of others, or, in general, the exercise of power understood in its sovereign/judicial sense. Instead, freedom represents a certain set of power relations and the conditions of possibility for politics that result from those relations. In the case of neoliberalism, freedom takes the form of entrepreneurialism, the idealized relation between economic subjects and government. Entrepreneurialism is not without regulation, selective/tactical intervention, and power relations. Rather, entrepreneurialism refers to the set of power relations that neoliberal governmentality ascribes to the practice of “freedom.”

Cities sit at the intersection of the transformations at work in the consolidation of neoliberal government. Numerous cities have adopted neoliberal approaches to governance by privatizing public spaces, cutting expenditures for public infrastructure, and eliminating positions for public employees. These neoliberal reforms are often characterized as part of a process of local “empowerment” in which cities exercise their supposed autonomy as collective entrepreneurial subjects and pursue neoliberal governance by choice. Closer inspection reveals that this process has been part of a

⁹¹ Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 63.

layered geography that Nancy Fraser characterizes as “a new multi-leveled structure of governmentality, a complex edifice in which the national state is but one level among others.”⁹² Numerous forces emanating from a multiple geographic scales impinge upon, constrain, or assault the supposedly “autonomous” neoliberal city.

First, changes in national policies toward cities have coincided with the emergence of transnational actors and institutions capable of exercising disproportionate and anti-democratic influence. As Jason Hackworth observes, “local governance is not an entirely local affair. The geoinstitutional context within which local decisions are made is complex and multiscale ... the neoliberal turn is ... one that is highly engineered by external institutions that have no formal governing role in any municipality.”⁹³ In the case of American cities, three prominent transformations have defined this multiscale context. First, a shift has occurred in the fundamental aim of the national economy wherein Keynesianism, drawing on a relatively egalitarian liberal tradition, has been rapidly replaced by a commitment to unlimited private wealth accumulation.⁹⁴ Second, as federal budgets for public investment continued to shrink, federal mandates on cities to expand policing and accelerate prison construction placed increased strain on local budgets. Third, bond-rating agencies have gained undue influence over city government. Cities have been placed at the mercy of bond-rating agencies and often undertake massive cuts and restructuring in order to maintain a sound rating.⁹⁵ Bond rating agencies shape

⁹² Fraser, 127. Fraser chooses the term “postfordist governmentality” but writes before Foucault’s *Birth of Biopolitics* was released in English and seems to be describing neoliberal governmentality.

⁹³ Jason R. Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 16.

⁹⁴ Hackworth, 6 – 10.

⁹⁵ In the case of Detroit, no amount of neoliberal reform would be enough to deter bond-rating agencies from downgrading the city’s rating (Hackworth, 37 – 38).

neoliberal urbanism through their ability to regulate access to capital markets. These unaccountable institutions exercise tremendous influence over a city's ability to issue debt and shape the course of development pursued by the city. As Hackworth suggests, "bond rating firms, such as Moody's Investors Service and Standard and Poor's (S&P), are perhaps the single most influential institutional force in determining the quantity, quality, and geography of local investment in the developed world."⁹⁶

In response to national and transnational pressures, many cities have begun to compete with one another for what Richard Florida calls the "creative class," a new social class that includes highly mobile residents and corporations seeking out a particular bundle of incentives provided by urban life.⁹⁷ Florida sees a reorganization of a Fordist economy into a "Creative Economy" in which markets require only that the creativity of individuals be cultivated in order to resolve socio-economic inequalities and reduce environmental destruction.⁹⁸ The formation of a new "creative society" depends on cities reorganizing urban governance in an effort to attract the "creative class."⁹⁹ Florida would have cities focus on producing a general creative milieu that seeks out technology industries, mobile "talent" (generally young and middle-class workers), and an extensive music and arts scene. Throughout his description one can easily imagine Florida stretching an image of Google offices across the urban fabric. While the accuracy of Florida's depiction of the interurban economy remains dubious, his utopian vision has

⁹⁶ Hackworth, 19.

⁹⁷ Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited* (New York: Basic Books, 2012). Florida's understanding of creativity differs immensely from the creativity that political theorists and philosophers such as William E. Connolly and Alfred North Whitehead have addressed. While Connolly and Whitehead search for numerous sources of creativity in the cosmos, Florida seems to have a highly specific, and in some ways regimented, understanding of creativity.

⁹⁸ Florida, xiv.

⁹⁹ Florida, 189 – 202.

nonetheless influenced urban restructuring. It adds another exemplar to the Foucauldian panoply.

Florida's vision of urban governance has important affinities with neoliberalism that limit its potentials for addressing socio-economic inequalities and exacerbate certain unequal power relations. As Jamie Peck observes, "the creative cities thesis has travelled so far so fast because it encodes an engaging 'economic imaginary' based on a set of principles that combines cultural libertarianism and contemporary urban design motifs with neoliberal economic imperatives."¹⁰⁰ Florida's Creative Society embraces a degree of cultural creativity as a basis for legitimating neoliberalism. It more strongly resembles an offshoot of neoliberal governmentality than a corrective to its shortcomings. For instance, the citizen of the creative city closely resembles Foucault's description of the neoliberal *homo economicus*. Peck describes this form of urban citizenship as:

Homo creativus [who] trades on an especially atomized form of human capital ("talent"), while positively thriving on relentless competition and long hours of work; s/he ostensibly favours "plug-and-play communities" in which weak social attachments prevail and where social distinction is marked out in the sphere of consumption. (Collective commitments, together with social and job security are, in this context, seriously passé.).¹⁰¹

The economic subject of Creative Society moves seamlessly between communities and evades the seeming encumbrances of collective social and political endeavors. *Homo creativus* is an entrepreneurial creature whose environment has been redesigned to grant her unfettered access to a city based on her class position. This model of citizenship encourages urban governance that focuses on the needs and interests of its creative

¹⁰⁰ Jamie Peck, "The Cult of Urban Creativity" in *Leviathan Undone?*, ed.. Roger Keil and Rianne Mahon (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 159.

¹⁰¹ Peck, 160.

citizens in order to temporarily secure their residence. This subset of the city's population is favored at the expense of other urban residents. As Peck describes this program of reform: "[t]he creative cities thesis represents a 'soft' scalar fix for this neoliberal urban conjuncture, making the case for modest and discretionary public spending on creative assets while raising a favoured bundle of middle-class lifestyles to the status of an urban development project."¹⁰² Furthermore, the presumptive dismissal of collective life in the Creative Society has the depoliticizing effect of discouraging political organization in favor of atomistic, unattached social life. It assumes that responses to social problems will emerge from individual minds within the creative class rather than through the collaboration of citizens committed to social justice in urban life.

The accuracy of the creative cities thesis for describing the conditions of cities in a new global economy is still in question. However, many cities have begun to act on this model generating a performative pressure for others to follow. The acceptance of this creative model has led to a situation in which, as Peck describes it, "cities again find themselves induced to do whatever it takes to secure mobile and scarce economic resources in a globalizing struggle against peer cities."¹⁰³ The creative cities thesis has introduced new pressures extending from global and inter-urban scales for cities to adopt a particular brand of neoliberal reform. Rather than deepening and extending local empowerment, Florida's vision of a creative society contributes to a race between cities to remake themselves as spaces of creativity tethered to a neoliberal impetus.

Through the transformations induced by neoliberal urbanism, contemporary cities have not only carved out havens for the "creative" (upper-middle) class. They have also

¹⁰² Peck, 160.

¹⁰³ Peck, 160.

set aside space for warehousing bodies deemed surplus by neoliberalism. Neoliberal urbanism has streamlined biopolitical and disciplinary mechanisms used to regulate populations and bodies that fall outside its political rationality. The geography of deprivation and punishment imposed by neoliberalism closely follows the lines of racial segregation in American cities. As Lester Spence argues, “the turn toward neoliberalism is not possible without the use of ideas about race – about racialized bodies and racialized spaces.”¹⁰⁴ Within neoliberal governmentality, racialized bodies and spaces serve as figures of exception, embodying the supposed failings of progressive policies and remaining in need of extensive disciplinary interventions.¹⁰⁵ Practices of regulating the lives of poor and nonwhite urban citizens, such as remaking the built environment of the city to the designs of a predominantly white upper class and expanding the police powers within cities, rely on the depiction of these bodies and populations as “dangerous,” “inefficient” or “corrupt.”¹⁰⁶

Within the United States the current trend focuses investment on gentrification and large commercial projects while neglecting public housing and more equitable forms of urban development. Hackworth sees this fundamentally changing urban space in the United States:

The neoliberal city is increasingly characterized by a curious combination of inner city and exurban private investment, disinvestment in the inner suburbs, the relaxation of land use controls, and the reduction of public investment that is not likely to lead to an immediate profit. If public housing and middle-class suburban housing were icons of the Keynesian managerialist city, then gentrified neighborhoods and downtown commercial mega-projects are the icons of the neoliberal city.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Lester Spence, *Stare in the Darkness: The Limits of Hip-Hop and Black Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 15.

¹⁰⁵ Spence, 15.

¹⁰⁶ Spence, 15.

¹⁰⁷ Hackworth, 78.

The pursuit of gentrified neighborhoods and commercial mega-projects only exacerbates already existing inequalities between these newly developed parts of the city and the spaces and residents overlooked by these projects. The aim here seems to be short term profit generation, often ending in capital flight, rather than the creation and maintenance of a livable city.

The construction of a built environment that intensifies surveillance and reinforces existing inequalities connects with highly disciplinary welfare programs that often have more to do with forcing the poor onto the labor market than removing them from conditions of poverty. As Soss et. al. observe:

Welfare programs today demand “work first,” while giving little serious attention to the disabilities, life problems, family needs, and resource deficits found among the poor. In the process, they actively diminish opportunities to acquire education and other forms of human capital that people need to get better jobs. Under the banner of “valuing work,” we have constructed an aggressive work-enforcement system that rides roughshod over all countervailing values and willfully ignores the conditions of labor markets and poor people’s lives.¹⁰⁸

These programs are infused with neoliberal governmentality that emphasizes self-reliance and personal responsibility as the solution to social problems. Yet, the actual outcomes of such programs prove to be primarily disciplinary. The programs aim to guarantee a secure labor market and a compliant workforce. The actual needs of those in poverty are a secondary concern and often poorly served by the programs. In the process “the values of work and responsibility are being used to justify surveillance practices, authority relations, and modes of civic positioning that are deeply anti-democratic.”¹⁰⁹ These

¹⁰⁸ Soss et. al., 15 – 16.

¹⁰⁹ Soss et. al., 16.

disciplinary welfare programs insist upon the ability for work to resolve socio-economic inequality while expanding the net of surveillance cast over poorer citizens.

While the United States has experienced a disciplinary shift in its welfare policy under neoliberalism, structural adjustment programs left even fewer social welfare programs in many states of the global South. From the mid-1970s to the 1980s the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank conditioned loans on neoliberal restructuring of the economy that rapidly eroded the quality of life in cities. As Mike Davis chronicles exhaustively, “[e]verywhere the IMF and World Bank ... offered poor countries the same poisoned chalice of devaluation, privatization, removal of import controls and food subsidies, enforced cost-recovery in health and education, and ruthless downsizing of the public sector.”¹¹⁰ The urban form of cities in the global South began to change rapidly under the weight of international economic pressures. Economic restructuring in conjunction with the near disappearance of the public sector brought about “storms of poverty and sudden explosions in slum-building.”¹¹¹ As neoliberal globalization offered the unprecedented accumulation of wealth and secured urban access for an ever smaller group of privileged citizens, it simultaneously relegated an increasing number of the planet’s population to rely upon overcrowded housing with minimal infrastructure and limited land tenure in spaces subject to frequent punitive police action.¹¹²

The willingness of states and economic institutions to pursue policies that generate slums has become a spatial practice of maintaining global inequality. Jeffrey

¹¹⁰ Davis, 153.

¹¹¹ Davis, 151.

¹¹² On the last point see Loïc Wacquant, “The Militarization of Urban Marginality: Lessons from the Brazilian Metropolis,” *International Political Sociology* 2.1 (2008): 56 – 74.

Nealon sees this neoliberal/biopolitical tactic as an intensification of power under previous disciplinary regimes: “[i]n terms of the global production of slums and the concomitant geographical and physical confinement they enforce ... market economies have proven to be much more efficient and ruthless than discipline’s company-towns ever could have dreamed.”¹¹³ Here, there seems to be a radical rescaling of the city in neoliberal urbanism. Rather than merely encountering new pressures from national policy and the changing nature of the global economy, a significant development in its own right, cities now function as a medium for the expansion of global inequality and the forms of extreme violence that accompany it. The proliferation of slums works as a form of global confinement in which entire populations are excluded from formal economic and political networks. This is a world in which relations between the scales of the body city, state, and globe are being drastically remade into what Davis calls “a grim human world largely cut off from the subsistence solidarities of the countryside as well as disconnected from the cultural and political life of the traditional city – [this] is the radical new face of inequality.”¹¹⁴

* * *

In an interview with Foucault entitled “Space, Knowledge, Power,” the topic of the conversation turns to liberty. Foucault framed liberty as a practice but made sure to qualify this statement:

If one were to find a place, and perhaps there are some, where liberty is effectively exercised, one would find that this is not owing to the order of objects, but, once again,

¹¹³ Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Foucault Beyond Foucault: Power and Its Intensifications Since 1984* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008), 69.

¹¹⁴ Davis, 201.

owing to the practice of liberty. *Which is not to say that, after all, one may as well leave people in slums, thinking that they can simply exercise their rights there.*¹¹⁵

Liberty is something to be practiced in any number of places, but slums are indicative of power-relations running roughshod over the exercise of liberty. This is not to say that there are no resistances emanating from slums; simply that the existence of these resistances should not serve as legitimation for the radical forms of inequality that slums represent. Foucault seemed to have a strong sense of the form that this impending neoliberal order would take. His prescient study of neoliberalism as a form of biopolitics begins to outline the spatial organization imposed by neoliberal governmentality while not yet connecting it to his earlier study of spatial controls in cities. In his brief mention of slums it seems that he might have been attuned to the ways that cities could be remade into places of biopolitical production. The relational conceptualization of scale that informs his genealogies of discipline and biopolitics helps uncover the sources from which this order emanates. By tracing the complex interplay between “the local” and “the global,” as well as the dynamics between “the body,” “the state,” “the city,” and “society” – Foucault constructs a multiscale map of political life as it exists under neoliberal governmentality. In this map, we might find certain possibilities for new practices of liberty.

¹¹⁵ Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 355. My emphasis.

3 | Global War and Planetary Democracy

Hardt and Negri's trilogy, *Empire*, *Multitude*, and *Commonwealth*, seeks to articulate politics at a new scale and establish coordinates for thinking about sovereignty, the social body, and the polity respectively. Hardt and Negri's work on scale in *Empire* has been characterized as a shift from the primacy of the national scale to the primacy of the global scale. Paul Passavant describes the arc of the book succinctly: "sovereignty has been rescaled from the level of the nation-state to the level of the global."¹ This characterization of their work, emphasizing the erosion of national sovereignty and its replacement by a supranational usurper, accurately captures much of Hardt and Negri's thinking in *Empire*. Its close resemblance to the dubious literature on globalization that prophesies the decline and disappearance of the state has been a source of criticism for those who, correctly by my assessment, see the state and its "internationalization" as deeply embedded in the workings of global order.² Although the predominant line of argument in *Empire* tends toward the rescaling of politics from state to globe, Hardt and Negri's thinking on scale becomes more complicated as their intellectual and political project expands and evolves. The aversion to Hardt and Negri generated in response to *Empire* has led many to neglect the reconsideration of scalar questions in their later work.

¹ Paul A. Passavant, "Introduction: Postmodern Republicanism" in *Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri*, eds. Jodi Dean and Paul Passavant (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.

² See Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes, "Representing the International: Sovereignty after Modernity?" in *Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri*, eds. Jodi Dean and Paul A. Passavant (New York: Routledge, 2004), 121 – 142. It should be noted that this criticism was formed before *Multitude* and *Commonwealth* were written. Although a sympathetic reading of certain passages and tendencies in *Empire* might mitigate their criticisms, the stakes of the project here are not to seek out "correctives" to their valid arguments. I note their work because of its keen insights into *Empire* and also to understand the aversion that seems to exist around Hardt and Negri's work as a result of the tendency to reduce it to the claims of *Empire*.

In the preface to *Multitude* Hardt and Negri identify a more elaborate problematic of politics and scale. They see substantial changes in the scale of war and an urgent need for drastic changes in the scale of democracy in order to respond to the geographic expansion of conflict.³ War becomes more pervasive as it blurs with politics and spreads across the globe as so-called “low-intensity conflicts,” “police actions,” “small wars,” and “counterinsurgency campaigns.” As war has been distributed through these new spatial formations, democracy has not always followed suit. Instead, it has remained moored to antiquated representative practices designed for a social body fitted to the state form. Hardt and Negri see global war changing the terrain of politics. Pervasive war reshapes connections between political spaces and requires new strategies and tactics for pursuing democratic, equitable life. The future of global war and global democracy is tied to matters of scale that alter the ontology of politics. This future is a matter of the wars of Empire and the democratic lives of multitudes.⁴

This chapter outlines my approach to reading Hardt and Negri on matters of scale. The reading attends to the figures and scales within their text that give texture to a politics that is at once global, national, local, and individual. To think through these spatial formations of global order, I draw on Timothy Morton’s work on *hyperobjects*,

³ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004), xi – xii.

⁴ The multitude is their concept for democracy on a global scale: “The possibility of democracy on a global scale is emerging today for the very first time. This book is about that possibility, about what we call the project of the multitude. The project of the multitude . . . not only demands and open and inclusive democratic global society, but also provides the means for achieving it” (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, xi). In some ways my engagement with Hardt and Negri can be somewhat narrow. My aim of thinking about forms of radical democracy that unite visions of egalitarianism and opposition to war falls well within the realm of their intentions. I deliberately read their central terms in somewhat restricted ways that are nonetheless important dimensions of their thought: my thoughts on Empire are mostly focused on the way it wages war, my comments on the multitude focus on it as a concept of democratic organization, and I draw on the idea of the common primarily as a set of democratic energies.

things “massively distributed in time and space relative to humans.”⁵ Morton helps us see new scales – of the globe, planet and cosmos – while reworking but not abandoning the established scales – the regional, national, urban, and local. Hyperobjects possess unique scalar qualities; they also exhibit “knotty relationships between gigantic and intimate scales.”⁶ Hyperobjects allow us to experience only a part of the object in question, a part which does not reveal the whole. They exhibit a relation to space that exceeds human experience to such a degree that they undermine the very idea of human mastery of the world. Hyperobjects stretch across great geographic distance and permeate human experience; their actuality exceeds, or at the very least, resists, totalization through human perception. Human life is immersed in hyperobjects. Perception describes the encounters with surfaces of a hyperobject, not the thing in its totality. These viscous surfaces are already here, proximate to us, around us, and part of us, but they cannot be peeled back to reveal an “outside” or “away from” the hyperobject: “[t]here is no Away on this surface, no here and no there.”⁷

For Morton, examples of hyperobjects include global warming, the solar system, the Florida Everglades, the entirety of uranium and plutonium on Earth, and “the sum of all the whirring machinery of capitalism.”⁸ Drawing inspiration from Morton’s inclusion of the last item on this list, I seek to push Morton in the direction of thinking complex global formations that more explicitly include humans. Although Morton does not

⁵ Morton, 1.

⁶ Morton, 47. “Nonlocality” is a technical term within quantum theory. While Morton engages quantum theory at length, his application of nonlocality to hyperobjects is metaphorical. This metaphor is valuable for breaking open the hegemony of Cartesian spatial thought and clarifying a relational understanding of scale.

⁷ Morton, 31.

⁸ Morton, 1.

exclude humans from hyperobjects, he deploys the term in the context of ecophilosophy that tends to deemphasize human collectivities. By reading Hardt and Negri as co-creators of a vocabulary of hyperobjects, I extend Morton's concept of hyperobjects to thinking about contemporary global war and planetary democracy. I suggest global war, Empire, the multitude, and planetary democracy as hyperobjects that facilitate thinking about human collectivities and nonhuman worlds together at a massive scale. Bringing Morton into conversation with Hardt and Negri helps to clarify how "the global" and "the planetary" can manifest other scales without overwriting the specificities of "the local." By thinking through the spatiality of hyperobjects and the "knotty relationships" between scales, I seek to provide a map of power in which the global and planetary do not overdetermine national, urban, and local politics.

The second part of the chapter brings Hardt and Negri's multiscalar geography to the corpus of global war. The geography of war that comes into focus reveals new technologies of violence – new practices and subjects of war – in late modern warfare. I draw Hardt and Negri's thought into conversation with thinkers approaching the problematic of global war. By focusing on points of contact between Hardt and Negri, Carlo Galli, and Grégoire Chamayou, I develop scales of politics shaping and shaped by global conflict.

The third part of the chapter examines the geographic concepts deployed by Hardt and Negri in relation to their democracy of the "multitude." I develop their account of political organization in which "the global" loses its monolithic status as a scale that overcodes political life. We revisit the concept of global scale and seek to elaborate the ways that "the global" has been appropriated by universalizing, Eurocentric, and

imperialist discourses. The analysis interrogates the equivalence drawn between of “neoliberal capitalism” and “globalization.” This part of the chapter seeks to redefine the cartography of globalization and to develop “the planetary” as a layered concept critical to realizing more expansive and deeper forms of egalitarian democracy. The chapter seeks to contribute to a growing literature on alter-globalization and *mondialisation*, a term that encompasses multiple forms of global connection that are collectively producing armed globalization, corporate globalization, and popular democratic forms of globalization.⁹ The aim is to formulate a dynamic understanding of “the planetary” that provides a key concept for democratic organization on the Left – one capable of understanding the sites and scales at which corporate globalization exerts itself, the multiple forms of violence used to secure its interest, and the multi-sited geography of democratic resistance to it. The placement of Hardt and Negri within this field of thought may add depth to an account of politics that has too often been understood as flattening and reductive.

The section ends with an examination of a commonly neglected political space in Hardt and Negri’s thought: the city. Hardt and Negri see the globalized metropolis as the site where new networks of transnational control clash with emerging forms of global democratic experimentation. In their terms, the contemporary metropolis provides a valuable space in which aleatory encounters and experiences of being-in-common

⁹ Jean-Luc Nancy’s work has been influential in thinking about globalization/*mondialisation* as a collaborative process not limited to its political-economic dimension. See Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Creation of the World, Or, Globalization*, trans. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). I do not engage his work explicitly. Rather, I seek to think about globalization in the way the alter-globalization movement seeks to affirm visions of global coexistence while rejecting neoliberal, corporate globalization.

amplify political capacities.¹⁰ By examining the politics of the city in their thought, I unpack the layering of multiple scales. The affairs of cities have planetary effects both in their aggregated “local” matters and through their “global” interconnection with other cities. I seek to identify diverse forms of political organization developing within cities across the globe that might provide a starting point for deeper and more expansive practices of democracy.

Reading Hardt and Negri’s Hyperobjects

Hardt and Negri’s work pushes the understanding of spatiality within political theory on two fronts. First, they contribute to thinking about politics at a massive scale that stretches the limits of political concepts such as democracy, sovereignty, and war. Second, they weave relations between familiar geographies of politics – the national, urban, and local – revealing subtle lines of connection across large distances. In order to accentuate both lines of argument, I read Hardt and Negri through Morton’s work on “hyperobjects,” those massively distributed objects with distinct spatial and scalar relations. The resulting ecological vision provides the basis for Morton’s ethics and politics tailored to the scale of the planet.

A number of conceptual options exist for thinking about politics at a massive scale: assemblages, constellations, and systems, to name a few. Each of these terms offers valuable insights into politics and spatiality. The capacities of assemblages, as the term is used by Deleuze and Guattari, have even been used to develop Hardt and Negri’s thought. For instance, William E. Connolly has suggested:

¹⁰ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 251 – 252.

Empire is an ambiguous, porous assemblage containing positive supports and possibilities as well as ugly modes of domination. It is potentially susceptible to reconfiguration through the cumulative effect of selective state actions, changes of policy by international institutions, and militant cross-state citizen action.¹¹

Connolly emphasizes the open-endedness of Empire. He notes the “global dimension” of sovereignty, its inclusion of scales beyond “the national” and operations outside of the state. Yet he wants to see how this quality connects politics across scales rather than simply replacing the national, urban, and local.¹² The body of political thought examining the qualities of assemblages in the formation of the global scale has uncovered new dimensions of political spatiality.¹³ However, Morton distinguishes hyperobjects from assemblages and other terms for rethinking scale: “Hyperobjects are not just collections, systems, or assemblages of other objects. They are objects in their own right, objects in a special sense.”¹⁴ For Morton, “object” does not refer to something subordinated to a subject. Instead, he uses “object” to denote anything with real effects. In this sense nearly everything, including what philosophy has conventionally treated as “subjects,” falls

¹¹ William E. Connolly, *Pluralism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 152.

¹² Connolly, *Pluralism*, 148.

¹³ Nicholas Tampio has also used Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of assemblages to think through Hardt and Negri’s global politics. Tampio finds a Leninist line in Hardt and Negri that shuts down the possibilities for organizing the Left opened within their more Deleuzian moments. See Nicholas Tampio, “Assemblages and the Multitude: Deleuze, Hardt, Negri, and the Postmodern Left,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 8 (2009): 383 – 400. I see more promise for the Left in Hardt and Negri’s thought and prefer Connolly’s suggestion, “Two conflicting drives govern [Hardt and Negri’s account] ... There is one drive to play up (in a Deleuzian manner) the uncertainties, porosities, and open future of Empire when it is *mapped* as an assemblage. There is another, counter drive to treat it (in a classic, Marxist way) as a more closed structure of domination when it is *appraised* as a site of potential transformation” (Connolly, *Pluralism*, 151). Saskia Sassen’s work also uses “assemblage” as a central concept, albeit in a different fashion, and has been influential in the understanding of scale. See Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

¹⁴ Morton, 2. I find more suppleness and sophistication in work by assemblage and systems theorists than Morton does. Therefore, in my terms, hyperobjects are not radically different from systems or assemblages. However, I choose to draw on hyperobjects because of the way that they emphasize the massive scale of Empire, multitude, global war, and global democracy.

under the category of “object.” This conceptual maneuver refuses anthropocentric distinctions between human agency and non-human/ “natural” passivity.¹⁵

Both departing from and drawing inspiration from those who have used assemblage theory to read and rethink Hardt and Negri’s work, I find Morton’s work on hyperobjects provides a valuable set of concepts and methods for thinking about scale in Hardt and Negri. I take up Morton because of his passionate insistence on an ontology that attends to objects so diffuse that they linger at or beyond the limits of human perception. He provides careful attention to relations between scales within hyperobjects. Scale, for Morton, is neither concentric nor determinative. Massive scales do not define, overcode, or overdetermine national, urban or local politics. His understanding of scales emphasizes entanglement and relationality, and he lays out the conceptual framework for a multiscalar geography. The particular scalar relations of hyperobjects come into focus through concepts of “viscosity,” “phasing,” and “nonlocality.” I define and examine each of these terms, providing brief examples of their relevance for thinking about scale in Hardt and Negri’s work before returning to a discussion of Empire and multitude as hyperobjects.

Viscosity

¹⁵ This is the part of Morton’s thought that is relevant for my project. However, “object” also refers to the fact that Morton subscribes to Object Oriented Ontology (OOO) which insists on the primacy of objects outside of or without regard to their relations. OOO argues that we must acknowledge and attend to the Kantian “gap between phenomenon and thing” (Morton, 12). Consequently, OOO sees objects always withdrawing because of this constitutive gap. For the purposes of this project, I use the term hyperobject because of the particular scalar dimensions that Morton associates with it, not as an endorsement of the autonomy of objects sought by OOO. OOO might take an interesting turn if, instead of building its ontology of objects on the Kantian phenomenal-noumenal gap, it instead drew upon Nietzsche’s critique of this ontology in “How the ‘Real World’ at last Became a Myth” in *Twilight of Idols*. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 50 – 51.

Like a fly stuck in tree sap, one sticks to the surface of a hyperobject suspended by its slow, emulsive flow. Morton calls this *viscosity* and refers to the viscous surfaces of hyperobjects. Viscosity conveys a processual quality of hyperobjects. “Object” does not refer to a static essence or rigid formation. Instead, it denotes the connections of seemingly disparate phenomena – forces, processes, and things – across space.

Hyperobjects involve multiple political phenomena accessible through a number of points of contact. The human experience of hyperobjects through their viscous surfaces means that one only ever encounters a part, region, or partial set of processes composing the hyperobject. Hyperobjects, by virtue of their massive scale, resist being seen or known in their entirety.¹⁶

Hardt and Negri hint at something like viscous surfaces at work in their geographies of Empire and the multitude. One moves across the surfaces of Empire on a daily basis. Empire watches through closed-circuit cameras. It patrols to the tune of police sirens heard at regular intervals. It shapes the building and development of cities. It appears in fluctuations in the value of a paycheck. It teaches subjects to think of themselves as entrepreneurs who mobilize their own being as capital. It imposes “structural adjustment” with accumulated debt. Each of these manifestations of Empire constitutes a viscous surface, a site through which humans might come into contact with a part of the hyperobject Empire yet find it difficult to point out the whole. Confronting the forms of power that work through diffuse social relations across great geographic distances may at first seem overwhelming. From any isolated surface the hyperobject Empire presents a disorienting, seemingly insurmountable obstacle to social justice and

¹⁶ Morton observes of a hyperobject, “I only see brief patches of this gigantic object as it intersects with my world” (Morton, 71).

egalitarian peace. I suspect that this disorientation drives some of the resistance to a Left discourse that relies on the figures of Empire and the multitude. An ontology of hyperobjects poses a threat to human mastery that could be seen to undermine orthodox Marxism and certain contemporary strands of Keynesian social democratic projects. As Morton observes, “The vastness of the hyperobject’s scale makes smaller beings – people, countries, even continents – seem like an illusion, or a small colored patch on a large dark surface.”¹⁷ However, an approach to political geography informed by the spatiality of hyperobjects does not seek to disempower peoples, collectives, individuals, or states. Perhaps it can provide new avenues for political organizing and action by connecting constituencies across scales. A project committed to assembling the appearances of these viscous surfaces might help render legible the illegibility of the hyperobject Empire (in its totality), and at the same time reveal new modes of political engagement.

Phasing

Phasing means “to approach, then diminish, from a certain fullness.”¹⁸ It refers to the way in which viscous surfaces enter into political life, gesture toward the existence of a hyperobject, and then resist disclosure of the hyperobject in its entirety. A hyperobject is composed of every possible state of a system, e.g. the totality of all possible states of the global climate system. Phasing describes the way in which hyperobjects, as objects

¹⁷ Morton, 32.

¹⁸ Morton, 74. “Phasing,” like “nonlocality” is a term with a highly specific meaning in the natural sciences. It refers to the characteristics of an object in phase space, the term in mathematics and physics used to describe “the set of all possible states of a system” (Morton, 71). Morton uses the term metaphorically to describe the spatiality and scalar relations of hyperobjects.

representable only through reference to higher dimensions, partially come into focus before retreating from view. Although Morton prefers to characterize this “retreat” of hyperobjects as an ontological “withdrawing” from any relation, they seem better characterized by superabundance that exceeds human perception. They exude “*invisible presence*” relative to human-scale space and time.¹⁹ The invisibility of their totality by no means limits their real effects. A hyperobject is not just an abstract “conceptual beyond in our heads or out there;” they are real and have material effects.²⁰ Phasing describes the way that hyperobjects envelope us, exerting effects even when imperceptible. Consider how human induced climate change proceeds before becoming perceptible. Species and habitats disappear gradually, often without being noticed, until certain moments when entire ecosystems undergo sudden collapse.

Empire also phases. Its parts come into view while its totality radically exceeds the human scale. The entirety of global power relations are never fully evident to us, yet they are at work in the formation of subjectivity, government, power relations that surround us locally, and in the ways that states and transnational non-state actors conduct their relations. Only a few surfaces visible at any given moment. Hardt and Negri may already draw on an ontology similar to that of Morton’s, influenced by complexity theory in the natural sciences, when they describe emerging forms of administration in Empire as *fractal*:

The difference today lies in the fact that, whereas in modern regimes of national sovereignty, administration worked toward *linear* integration of conflicts and toward a coherent apparatus that could repress them, that is, toward the rational normalization of social life with respect to both the administrative goal of

¹⁹ Morton, 76. Emphasis in original.

²⁰ Morton, 73. Furthermore, hyperobjects are not atomistic entities floating in extended space until they ricochet off of another object or hyperobject. Their viscous surfaces have encounters of mutual exchange or “interobjectivity” (Morton, 81 – 95).

equilibrium and the development of administrative reforms, in the imperial framework administration becomes *fractal* and aims to integrate conflicts not by imposing a coherent social apparatus but by controlling differences.²¹

Here, the shift from a form of sovereignty that only attempts to settle and preserve the boundaries of political order to a mode joining sovereignty to diffuse, disseminated exercises of power represents what Hardt and Negri refer to as a shift from linear to fractal administration. “Fractal” may refer to the fragmented and fractured quality of sovereignty under Empire. Fractal sovereignty works through partial, mobile interventions rather than enforcing a model of social and political coherency. The result is a collection of fragmentary powers.

There is an additional, possibly unintended meaning involved in calling sovereignty fractal. “Fractal” also refers to apparently chaotic, yet surprisingly ordered characteristics of certain attractors in phase space. These attractors often encounter radical shifts in their condition through highly specific small changes.²² Empire in its totality may exist on a scale so massive it tests the limits of human perception. However, its scale does not make it an irresistible force. Its fractal qualities mean that changes on one scale can reverberate through other scales producing dramatic system-wide effects. Thinking of Empire as a hyperobject with viscous surfaces that appear through phasing and exhibit nonlocal qualities, begins to provide us with a sense of the scalar complexities at work in Hardt and Negri’s series of hyperobjects.

²¹ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 339 – 340.

²² Fractals exhibit scalability meaning that a similarity of pattern exists between fractals when examined on any scale. I do not adopt this quality of fractals for Empire or other hyperobjects as my project is premised on scale being not only a matter of space and perception, but also a spatial quality with political effects, that is to say, an important part of political ontology.

Nonlocality

Nonlocality refers to a relational, entangled spatiality that conveys unique relations between the local and global, specific and general, surface and (hyper)object. It means that two quantum photons, once entangled and then separated, will change simultaneously at great distances from each other. It seems to be still a mystery as to how this works. Nonlocality refashions these oppositions that see the specific, local surfaces of a hyperobject as both a part of, but in tension with, the general hyperobject. Morton describes this condition through the paradox of “the general itself ... *compromised* by the particular.”²³ This spatial relation is similar to what Foucault might call, drawing on my account in chapter two, the local as nonlocalizable. Nonlocality does not imply that hyperobjects are dissolved into the less local, larger, or global, but that events at one scale have unforeseeable, non-linear, even disproportionate effects at other scales. These are what Morton calls “scalar discrepancies” or “knotty relationships between gigantic and intimate scales.”²⁴

To clarify the relations between scales to which nonlocality speaks, take for example the case of radiation in which “[t]he most spectacular *scalar discrepancies* exist between the size of an ionizing particle emitted by an isotope and the long-term effects of radiation on lifeforms and other entities.”²⁵ Within such scalar discrepancies, changes at one scale radically alter conditions on a vastly different scale. Ionizing particles produce

²³ Morton, 54, emphasis mine. “Nonlocality” is a technical term within quantum theory. While Morton engages quantum theory at length, his application of nonlocality to hyperobjects is metaphorical and not meant in precisely the same way that the term is deployed in quantum theory. This metaphor is valuable for breaking open the hegemony of Cartesian spatial thought and clarifying a dynamic understanding of scale.

²⁴ Morton, 34, 47.

²⁵ Morton, 34, emphasis mine.

effects in individuals, society, and global politics. For instance, unwanted exposure to radioactive isotopes can drastically alter the life of an individual organism. Isotopes such as cobalt-60 have shaped society's interaction with cancerous cells. Furthermore, the looming threat of an atmosphere polluted with the radioactive isotopes resulting from a nuclear detonation has shaped global politics since the invention of the atomic bomb.

Empire and the multitude exhibit nonlocality through the “spectacular scalar discrepancies” that exist between micropolitics on the one hand – the production of affects and subjectivities – and the formation of global power relations. Affect and subjectivity factor prominently into the terrain of politics on which global war and global democracy unfold. Affect has played an important role in the emergence of “immaterial production” in which value of commodities rests on their “symbolic, aesthetic, and social value.”²⁶ The production of subjectivity has been central to the organization of Empire and represents an important site of resistance. In *Declarations* Hardt and Negri trace the formation of imperial subjectivity along four axes: media, debt, security, and representation:

The triumph of neoliberalism and its crisis have ...operated a social, anthropological transformation, fabricating new figures of subjectivity. The hegemony of finance and the banks has produced *the indebted*. Control over information and communication networks has created *the mediatized*. The security regime and the generalized state of exception have constructed a figure prey to fear and yearning for protection – *the securitized*. And the corruption of democracy has forged a strange, depoliticized figure, *the represented*. These subjective figures constitute the social terrain on which – and against which – movements of resistance and rebellion must act.²⁷

²⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 132. I concur with Hardt and Negri that an analysis of contemporary capitalism necessitates the theorization of contemporary forms of production that rely on images, knowledge, and affects. However, calling this contemporary form “immaterial labor” seems to ignore the material qualities and effects of this mode of production and the commodities it produces.

²⁷ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Declaration* (New York: Argo Navis, 2012), 9.

Here, the production of subjectivity and the constitution of global order are entangled. Transnational finance capital, global communication networks, and international security apparatuses depend upon and help to produce indebted, mediatized, and securitized subjects. Mechanisms of representation that come to be equated with political subjectivity further contain democratic, constituent powers of the multitude. As the terrain of social organization and politics, these subjectivities form sites, or viscous surfaces, for producing Empire. The economic subjectivity that envisions the self as entrepreneur and permeates other domains of life, as elaborated upon in chapter two, should also appear on this list of viscous surfaces of Empire. Debt, mediatization, securitization, and entrepreneurialism make up a regime of local practices at work on the individuation of bodies. The result is a nonlocal effect, a social body of subjects resonating with the global order of Empire.

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This collection of concepts may provide a corrective to the critiques of Hardt and Negri on scale that emerged in response to *Empire* and has been echoed in later discussions. The critique in question centers on a concern with the radically deterritorialized vision of politics expressed in *Empire* and its claim that familiar political boundaries and spaces have dissipated. This critique sees Hardt and Negri's account of global rule to overemphasize the ability of the sovereignty of Empire to jettison its reliance upon national sovereignty and smaller territorial jurisdictions. This response, voiced widely across political theory and international relations theory since the publication of *Empire*, reduces Hardt and Negri's spatiality to one entirely caught up in

“smooth space” or “continuous, uniform space.”²⁸ It takes issue with the notion that Empire “is both everywhere and nowhere” and argues against the idea of “a regime that effectively encompasses the spatial totality [in which] ... [n]o territorial boundaries limit its reign.”²⁹ Such critics see Hardt and Negri enunciating a deterritorialized world.³⁰ The implication is that Hardt and Negri provide a flat geography of world power in which global capitalism now simply overwrites the operations of regional, national, and local scales.

Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes offer a succinct critique of the narrative of state decline. Laffey and Weldes see globalization as an “internationalization of the state” whereby the state, understood as “a structure of rule,” maintains property rights and de/re-regulates segments of the economy thereby securing the accelerated movement of global capital.³¹ The conceptual delinking of the state from the territorial mode of sovereignty generally ascribed to it does not uproot power from territoriality but finds multiple power relations within and alongside one another. As Laffey and Weldes suggest, “[t]his conception of the state, because it does not assume a sovereign, territorial actor, allows us to recognize the multiple forms, levels, and scales of governance and rule that overlap and are intertwined in a complex and internally contradictory internationalizing state.”³²

Rather than envisioning national boundaries as opposed to the processes of globalization, Laffey and Weldes suggest that “borders, while being transformed, remain

²⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 190, 190.

²⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 190, xiv.

³⁰ See Kevin C. Dunn, “Africa’s Ambiguous Relation to Empire and *Empire*,” in *Empire’s New Clothes*, eds. Jodi Dean and Paul A. Passavant (New York: Routledge, 2004), 151 – 152.

³¹ Laffey and Weldes, 132, 133.

³² Laffey and Weldes, 133.

significant. They are in some instances becoming thinner and in others thicker.”³³ They note that while borders have disappeared within the Schengen area, the movements of certain groups are tracked within the zone and border controls around the Schengen area have been expanded. In the US, border practices intensify around geopolitical boundaries while also extending into spaces distant from the border. For instance, at the same time that militarization accelerates along the border between the US and Mexico, police have also started to rely on tracking individuals’ movements both domestically and abroad. The continued emphasis on borders includes “borders ... being “fattened” or deepened into home territory” through the adoption of national identification papers and internal surveillance practices that reaffirm territorial boundaries while also expanding the mobile practices used to track individuals and populations.³⁴

By retaining a place for the state and borders in international relations, Laffey and Weldes also suggest that imperialism in its old form, with a center of power, has yet to disappear: “[i]mperialism today is synonymous with the internationalization of the state.”³⁵ To treat Empire as diffuse and deterritorialized neglects the history of US imperial policy that has spearheaded economic policies under the name of the “Washington Consensus” and waged imperial wars across the globe. The state, itself a set of overlapping and entangled forms of authority, represents one among many scales of power at work in the formation of Empire. The aim here is not to reify the state and state-centric imaging of global power, but to retain the state as one element in a larger global order.

³³ Laffey and Weldes, 129.

³⁴ Laffey and Weldes, 129.

³⁵ Laffey and Weldes, 135.

In the rich account provided by Laffey and Weldes, one might think of the state as what Morton calls a viscous surface. While it possesses its own historical trajectory, it also participates in larger processes. Citizens and subjects relate to the state, and through it they encounter the process of its internationalization, that is to say, the power relations of Empire and the problematic of global war and democracy. These larger processes extend beyond the scope of human perception. However, smaller, more familiar territorial forms may offer a glimpse into the hyperobjects of global politics.

Although attentive to the historical (trans)formation of the state, Laffey and Weldes may be too quick to dismiss the ambitions of *Empire*, particularly its efforts to identify and to flesh out the shape of global order. Martin Coward has suggested that the conceptual innovations of *Empire* lie not within its commentary on the state but in its larger geographic vision, in a different theoretical vocabulary, its initial effort to think of the hyperobject Empire. Coward counters the reading of *Empire* that views it as a pronouncement of state decline:

It is important not to draw from *Empire* the inference that the state is in decline and transversality has become the only political – economic dynamic. Rather it is possible to note that the territorial model of inter-state relations is naïve insofar as it fails to recognize the important dynamics of de-territorialisation at work in the present conjuncture. It is equally naïve, however, to think that the de-territorialisation effected by transversal, expansive flows, is not countered by forces of re-territorialisation. That is to say, it is naïve to think that Empire is not a dialectic between expansion on the one hand, and the redrawing of boundaries on the other.³⁶

An account of global order and its operative logics will find neither an ossified system of sovereign nation states nor unmitigated smooth space, nor a Hegelian order of semi-sovereign states mastered and ordered by one world historical state. Instead, as Hardt and

³⁶ Martin Coward, “The Globalisation of Enclosure: Interrogating the Geopolitics of Empire,” *Third World Quarterly* 26 (2005): 865.

Negri uncover and Coward is right to point out, Empire works through de- and re-territorialization. Its periodic expansions place existing boundaries in question until they are redrawn in new locations and through new practices of bordering. The strength of *Empire* lies in its attempt to think of imperialism on a massive scale. In its attempt to connect critical insights from a number of fields into a general account of global order it may disappoint those within the disciplines of political theory, philosophy, or sociology. Nonetheless, *Empire* synthesizes critical approaches to political economy and global politics, producing a theory that captures the central features of world order: its expansiveness, hierarchization, relations between government and modes of production, and the “motif of crisis.”³⁷ In another language, *Empire* provides an initial account of the surfaces and phasings of Empire as hyperobject.

An examination of the Hardt and Negri’s style of writing proves relevant to understanding the ways in which they seek to think through global war and planetary democracy, understood as hyperobjects, and devise strategies and tactics for intervening in these massive forms. Hardt and Negri embrace a way of writing appropriate to viscous, nonlocal, phasing political things. Their eclectic style seems to move in too many directions leaving loose ends and numerous tensions; however, the loose style provides a valuable method of engaging the entangled hyperobjects in question. When looking at *Empire* or *Multitude*, Hardt and Negri suggest that we will find a familiar form, that of Hobbes’s *Leviathan* or *De Cive* respectively.³⁸ In similar fashion Hardt and Negri

³⁷ Coward, “The Globalisation of Enclosure,” 857.

³⁸ “We conceive the movement from one book to the other, from *Empire* to *Multitude*, as the reverse of Hobbes’s development from his *De Cive* (published in 1642) to *Leviathan* (1651). The reverse progression speaks to the profound difference in the two historical moments” (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, xvii).

initially frame their work in *Commonwealth* within the familiar aims of political theory. They promise to seek out “institutional forms” for a democracy of the multitude relating their unconventional project to somewhat conventional procedures.³⁹ Although the thinking in *Commonwealth* ultimately moves in other directions, Hardt and Negri hint, if only for a moment, at a text envisioning a new polity or republic. As one continues to read these texts, however, they become uncanny. The object in question; sovereignty, the social body, or institutions/the polity appears too massive to come into full focus. We see fragments or, better yet, surfaces that never fully cohere.

The somewhat surreal and often disorienting movements of each text create connections between differing modes of thought and seemingly heterogeneous political programs. *Empire* takes us from debates in interwar German legal theory to the alter-globalization protests in Seattle. We hop from place to place never too certain that we will arrive at a definitive answer, uncertain whether X marks the spot. In *Multitude* the leaps come faster moving across both space and time. Stories of the Golem narrate contemporary capacities for self-destruction. Sixteenth century Italian condottieri, made famous by Machiavelli, provide a new short hand for the mercenary anti-politics of contemporary war. Readers are transported to the deliberations preceding the French revolution, to the guerilla organizing of anti-colonial and national liberation struggles, and to the networked marches against the 2003 American invasion of Iraq. Similarly, *Commonwealth* moves across the face of the globe in order to draw revolutionary inspiration from diverse sources including autonomous movements of the Zapatistas in Chiapas (and others drawing on the spirit and practice of Zapatismo), industrial workers

³⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, viii.

movements in 1970s Italy, Black Panthers in the US, and Palestinian refugees.⁴⁰ This collection provides a formation so large that it tests the limits of human perception and thinking. The concept Empire aggregates the governing forces on the planet. Likewise, the concept "the multitude" gathers multiple democratic practices undertaken in the face of global war. Their "common" names democratic energies across the planet with "commonwealth" referring to the means by which these energies are translated into social and/or political movements and practices. Empire, multitude, and common do not presuppose an independent subject. The forces, energies, and agencies in question weave together collective bodies, ideologies, governmentalities, subjectivities, *ethoi*, and practices. Cumulatively, they compose a hyperobject. In the next section I examine global war under Empire, drawing on peculiar scalar and spatial relations of Empire to understand how global war now alters the classical terrain of politics.

Global (Civil) War

Hardt and Negri's account of contemporary war describes the generalized violence at work in the existing global order. They announce, "[t]he world is at war again, but things are different this time ... War is becoming a general phenomenon, global and interminable."⁴¹ Their observation of war at a new scale adds a valuable addition to a growing body of literature rethinking the politics of war in a shifting geography. Even before the pronouncement of the United States' "Global War on Terror," reflections on the spatial transformations of war had appeared on the horizon of thought for political theorists, international relations scholars, geographers, and

⁴⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 111, 127, 356.

⁴¹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 3.

anthropologists.⁴² Many of these studies identified transformations that have remained at the margins of social and political inquiry. This body of thought finds war spatialized through transnational networks and urban and local formations of power that exceed state-centric theories of war. While this corpus of theory speaks of global war, it does not treat “the global” as a homogeneous political space to which concepts like sovereignty, power, and democracy can be transposed from nation-states. Global war brings with it a complex geography of securitization, militarization, and resistance that produces new distributions of power, violence, and exploitation. The multiple overlapping scales of Empire reconfigure global processes, national bodies, urban metabolisms, and individualized bodies into assemblages that wage violence unevenly across the face of the planet.⁴³

Borrowing from Carl Schmitt, Hardt and Negri refer to these fragmented exercises of violence across the planet as “global *civil* war.” Hardt and Negri first invoke the term to emphasize the interiority of global war to the single sovereign space of Empire. Hardt suggests in a brief reflection on sovereignty following the September 11 attacks and the US and NATO responses:

[T]here is increasingly little difference between military action (outside the space of sovereign authority) and police action (inside) ... In order for the 11

⁴² A variety of approaches exist in the discussion of global war. Some of the more important voices include Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999). Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004). Carlo Galli, *Political Spaces and Global War*, trans. Elisabeth Fay (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” *Public Culture* 15 (2005): 11 – 40. James Der Derian, *Virtuous War*. Galli’s work receives more attention later in this chapter.

⁴³ Global war is an important part of the functioning of Empire but irreducible to it as war may periodically work against the fragmentary, mobile sovereignty of empire. For my purposes here, I follow the suggestion of Hardt and Negri to focus on the ways in which Empire and global war coincide: “Empire rules over a global order that is not only fractured by internal division and hierarchies but also plagued by perpetual war. The state of war is inevitable in Empire, and war functions as an instrument of rule” (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, xiii).

September attack or the responses to it to be acts of war, there would have to be two sovereign powers confronting one another. Since there are not, then these can only be considered acts of *civil war*, that is, conflict within the space of *one single sovereignty*.⁴⁴

This formulation, which appears between the publication of *Empire* and *Multitude*, begins their shift to the term global civil war. A civil war at the global scale is contained within a single sovereign, as it blurs the lines between military and police action. A fuller account of global civil war with a stronger emphasis on spatiality and scale follows at the outset of *Multitude*:

from this perspective all of the world's current armed conflict, hot and cold – in Colombia, Sierra Leone, and Aceh, as much as in Israel-Palestine, India-Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq – should be considered imperial civil wars, even when states are involved. This does not mean that any of these conflicts mobilizes all of Empire – indeed each of these conflict is local and specific – but rather that they exist within, are conditioned by, and in turn affect the global imperial system. Each local war should not be viewed in isolation then, but seen as part of a grand constellation, linked in varying degrees both to other war zones and to areas not presently at war ... A new framework, beyond international law, would be necessary to confront this *global civil war*.⁴⁵

Hardt and Negri grapple with a conceptual vocabulary that constantly fails to disclose the entirety of the massive object in question. Global civil war takes the form of “grand constellation,” a hyperobject including the totality of wars within global space. The peculiar modes of causal relation between specific wars and global civil war takes a number of forms. Local wars “exist within,” are conditioned by,” and “in turn affect” the global scale.⁴⁶ These knotty exchanges across scales transform the spatiality of war. Now I return to Schmitt's invocation of “global civil war” and the body of related literature on global war in order to elaborate on the scalar relations of global civil war. Hardt and

⁴⁴ Michael Hardt, “Sovereignty,” *Theory and Event* 5.4 (2002).

⁴⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 4. My emphasis.

⁴⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 4.

Negri are dismissive of Schmitt's *Theory of the Partisan* yet it seems to convey a number of the spatial transformations that concern their thought.

Hardt and Negri suggest, “[i]n our present state of imperial war ... [t]here are new actors on the field of battle today and identifying them more clearly is one of the central tasks in constructing such a genealogy [of global war].”⁴⁷ For Schmitt, global civil war refers to unbounded war with indistinct lines of enmity and new combatants, i.e. “new actors on the field of battle.” Consequently, it provides a framework for Hardt and Negri’s inquiry into contemporary global war. The term appears at the end of Schmitt’s genealogy of the partisan, a concept that at the end of the eighteenth century referred to “light troops” involved in “irregular warfare” but by mid-twentieth century names a figure of war connected to new tactics, weapons, and politics of war.⁴⁸ Schmitt focuses on the expansion of partisan warfare in armed struggles on the left, but much of his description of partisans closely fits “modern” militaries based on volunteer forces that focus on the use of “special forces,” small groups of highly mobile soldiers supported by technologies such as drones and guided missiles that accelerate the pace of war. For instance, Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) seems to have embraced its own form of partisan warfare.

⁴⁷ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 38.

⁴⁸ Reference to “global civil war” appears in a discussion of Lenin and in a comment on the late days of World War I: “But Lenin, as a professional revolutionary of global civil war, went still further and turned the real enemy into an absolute enemy” (Schmitt, 93). “Real enmity arose only out of the [first World] war, when a conventional state war of European international law began, and ended with a global civil war of revolutionary class enmity (Schmitt, 95). For an extended definition of “the partisan” and debates surrounding definitions of the term see G.L. Ulmen, “Translator’s Introduction” in Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, trans. G.L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2007), ix.

The increasing prevalence of partisan warfare and its culmination in global civil war denotes a particular geography for Schmitt that exhibits four key characteristics. First, it involves a reorganization of the process of mobilization and changes in the space of the battlefield, what he calls “the spatial aspect.”⁴⁹ Second, it takes on what he calls “the global-political context,” the waging of war in a global space where sovereignty is irreducible to the state.⁵⁰ Third, global civil war accelerates the mass production of new weapons and expands research into technologies for war, “the technical-industrial aspect.”⁵¹ Finally, it reconfigures the lines between public and private space, the “destruction of social structures.”⁵² Schmitt sees these four changes as inter-involved in a way that points toward, but does not fully capture, a larger condition: “In concrete reality, these four aspects obviously cannot be isolated as independent spheres; ... only their intensive reciprocal actions, their mutually functional dependencies can provide the total picture.”⁵³ Schmitt hints that his systematized formulation of political and military change may be too clean. The “total picture,” which I want to suggest represents the hyperobject global civil war, may require a slightly different form of description and engagement. Starting from Schmitt’s sometimes narrow definitions of these transformations, I gather a series of overlapping and entangled characteristics of global civil war to reveal its scalar and spatial relations.

⁴⁹ Schmitt, 68-72.

⁵⁰ Schmitt, 74-76.

⁵¹ Schmitt, 76-80.

⁵² Schmitt, 72-74. The explicit influence of Schmitt’s *Theory of the Partisan* is evident in the reference to Grimmelhausen’s *Simplizius Simplizissimus*, the figure for whom Hardt and Negri name a chapter of *Multitude* and make reference to in discussions of war.

⁵³ Schmitt, 68.

In his analysis of the “spatial aspect,” Schmitt suggests that the partisan has opened new dimensions of the battlefield and altered the relations of space through which war can be understood:

In partisan warfare, a new, complicated, and structured sphere of action is created, because the partisan does not fight on an open battlefield, and does not fight on the same level of open fronts. He forces his enemy into another space ... he displaces the space of regular, conventional theaters of war to a different, darker dimension – a dimension of the abyss ... From an underground lair, the partisan disturbs the conventional, regular play of forces on the open stage.⁵⁴

This “structured sphere of action” constitutes a hyperobject. The partisan upends the notion of fronts in war, adding depth and shading to these fronts. Fronts become abyssal, sites from which partisans may suddenly emerge and then disappear. Partisan warfare takes on a number of gradations moving conflict to a different “level.” By becoming “darker,” warfare takes on the dimension of shading. Each gradation suggests a blurring of familiar categories - war and peace, military and police, foreign and domestic, sovereign and participatory. Existing concepts fail to encompass global civil war.

Schmitt expresses concerns that seem to go beyond the figure of the partisan and to the fundamental relations between war and society. He suggests that the transformations of spatial structures will also require new kinds of political doctrines pointing for example to the way that new communications technologies require different theories of war “from what existed in the age of ... the Magna Carta of 1215, when the lord of the manor could raise the drawbridge.”⁵⁵ Schmitt seems driven to capture the ways in which the capacities for violence have been differently distributed across society, a reorganization that proceeds through the partisan but vastly exceeds it.

⁵⁴ Schmitt, 69-70.

⁵⁵ Schmitt, 68.

Carlo Galli provides a sustained reflection on the spatiality of global war (or as he prefers “Global War”) that implicitly draws upon and expands Schmitt’s notion of global civil war. It represents both war at a new scale and war that shifts the relations between the scales of locality, the city, the state, and the region. Galli sees global war waged within the interiority of a single sovereign: “Global War is not a clash of clear and distinct differences, but a single chaos in which the opposing faces of a single system mix together; it is One locked in struggle with itself.”⁵⁶ Galli’s Global War is waged within a single system, it is by definition a global civil war.

Global civil war comes about through the reorganization of total mobilization of society for war that characterized the distribution of war-making capacities in the First and Second World War. Galli frames this transformation: “Total Mobilization was the *immediate militarization of society*, while Global War is the *global socialization of violence*.”⁵⁷ He sees in this transformation a radical reconfiguration of the relation between war, the State, and society. Galli describes total mobilization as “the convulsive gathering of all social energies under the banner of violence.”⁵⁸ Total mobilization rapidly centralizes war-making capacities through the immediate connection of war and society.

In contrast, global war “is endemic and ubiquitous.”⁵⁹ Its reach extends across society, working subtly and continuously to accumulate a wider, thinner network of war-making capacities able to spread violence diffusely across the globe. Whereas total

⁵⁶ Galli, 175.

⁵⁷ Galli, 174.

⁵⁸ Galli, 174.

⁵⁹ Galli, 174.

mobilization appeared within and in response to totalitarianism, global war has emerged within and in response to the entanglements of global economic logics and militarization:

The first declared itself under the banner of war, the second under the banner of economics. The first manifested the crisis of the State before totalitarianism, the second revealed the crisis of the State before globalization. Global War is the fact that in any moment, in any society on Earth, an armed conflict can ignite, motivated by an economic crisis in some other part of the world.⁶⁰

Contemporary economic logics infiltrate the process of military mobilization creating an image of armed conflict inflected by the social philosophy of neoliberalism.

Hardt and Negri expand on the connections between dominant modes of production and the production of militarized society. Total mobilization of society for war was premised on a model of militarism that paralleled the industrial production of the factory:

The “total mobilization” of modern warfare was really the turning of the entire society into a kind of war factory in which the project of amassing bodies in the battlefields was parallel to that of amassing bodies in the factories, the anonymous body of the mass worker corresponding to that of the mass soldier.⁶¹

Total mobilization seeks to turn all of society into a factory for disciplining bodies into soldiers and amassing weapons and materiel. It centralizes production and relies on disciplinary modes of social reproduction for war. In global civil war the factory no longer served as the model for mobilization. Whereas total mobilization took the factory

⁶⁰ Galli, 174.

⁶¹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 43. Hardt and Negri take care to acknowledge that world war has been the norm rather than the exception. However, they distinguish between epochs of conflict: “One might say that the world has not really been at peace since early in the twentieth century. The First World War (1914 – 1918), which was centered in Europe, led directly, after a tumultuous quasi-peace, to the Second (1939 – 1945). And immediately upon completion of the Second World War we entered in the cold war, a new kind of global war, in some sense a Third World War, which in turn gave way with its collapse (1989 – 1991) to our present state of imperial civil war. Our age might thus be conceived as the Fourth World War” (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 37). The emergence of global civil war, as it is experienced under Empire, begins in late cold war proxy wars and “low-intensity” conflicts.

as its model for the social organization of the means of violence, global civil war mimics the post-industrial mode of production characteristic of its era by exhibiting “many of the characteristics of what economists call post-Fordist production: it is based on both mobility and flexibility; it integrates intelligence, information, and immaterial labor; it raises power up by extending militarization to the limits of outer space, across the surface of the earth, and to the depths of the ocean.”⁶² This flexible, mobile approach to war is premised on logics of risk management and securitization that are at once economic and political.⁶³ The transition from total mobilization to global civil war parallels Foucault’s tracking of the shift in emphasis from disciplinary programs of normalizing bodies to biopolitical regulation of populations through calculations of risk and security. Global civil war not only determines when and where war is waged but also how warfare connects to society. Extensive networks of contractors and sub-contractors enable and sustain the global military-security apparatus. From highly specialized research development and weapons design to basic service provisions of food and sanitation service in warzones, the new warriors in global civil war serve as flexible mobile labor for a military apparatus that mirrors the labor practices of post-fordist production.⁶⁴

⁶² Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 40.

⁶³ For a full genealogy of the ways in which financial logic and security came to overlap see Randy Martin, *An Empire of Indifference: American War and the Financial Logic of Risk Management* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 17 – 63.

⁶⁴ Global civil war is waged by what Machiavelli would call mercenary armies. Hardt and Negri call upon Machiavelli’s critique of mercenary warfare through their invocation of the figure of the *condottiere*, the mercenary captain and harbinger of perpetual civil war. Hardt and Negri observe “[t]oday all armies are again tending to become mercenary armies” (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 49). They note the explicit ways in which armies have been made up of mercenaries through increased outsourcing to private military contractors. Additionally, “mercenary armies” includes the professionalization of national militaries made up disproportionately of poor minorities, supported by engineers tasked with maintaining complex weapons systems, and aided by the “cultural expertise” of anthropologists (such as the US Human Terrain Systems). Whereas Machiavelli suggested that a republican army would represent the *virtù* of its citizenry, that is to say the society and structures from which it was created, the mercenary armies of today reflect a

Galli's geography of political-economic connection extends beyond the neoliberal/postfordist reorganization of militarizing processes. Global war includes the pervasive, systemic violence wrought by economic policies that produce volatility for accumulation and impose "structural adjustment." As Galli extends the concept, "Global War is also the financial speculation that topples national markets, or civil conflicts stemming from the impoverishment of large population segments due to the World Bank's monetarist policies."⁶⁵ To this list of political-economic violence one might add the reduction or dissolution of state welfare programs and the program of mass incarceration that takes its most extreme form in the US carceral state. Global civil war spreads out and reorganizes the process of military mobilization while also drawing social policy into the field of war.

This new folding of violence into planetary organization comes about through a number of shifts in the relations between scales. The globality of global civil war does not manifest as a homogeneous space of unimpeded movement. As Galli describes, "Global nonspace is not ... a flat surface ... it is a stormy sea, a jumble from which Global War, the conflictual side of globalization – emerges."⁶⁶ Global civil war appears in a number of manifestations with subtle connections and entanglements across global

society of collapsing public spaces, technological fixes in the place of ethical questioning, and vast inequalities at work in society. In their discussion of outsourcing war to proxy armies and private military companies, Hardt and Negri observe "[t]his is a far cry from the tradition of republican armies that reproduced and represented the social structure of the society as a whole. There is no way to conceive of the U.S. military at this point as "the people in arms." It seems rather that in postmodern warfare, as in ancient Roman times, *mercenary armies* tend to become the primary combat forces" (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 47). Although the suggestion of "postmodern war" has been interpreted to mean deterritorialized and disembodied, Hardt and Negri want to suggest that it instead displays many continuities, at least in terms of the social organization, with an older form of war diagnosed by Machiavelli.

⁶⁵ Galli, 174.

⁶⁶ Galli, 173.

space. So-called “small wars,” “manhunts” and contemporary urban warfare represent nonlocal viscous surfaces with massive “scalar discrepancies” between individual, urban, and regional scales and global civil war.

An explicit moment of rescaling war appears in the articulation of the doctrine of “small war.” As the term was defined in its early stages, small war referred to:

operations undertaken under executive authority, wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and of such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation.⁶⁷

This definition sought to make both the territorial extension and the political dimension of war “small.” It aimed to limit the territorial extension of the use of force by directing military conflict toward the affairs of a single state deemed unfit by a number of metrics. The doctrine of small war also sought to contain the politics of war, vesting authority for conflict within the executive branch and mobilizing existing avenues of diplomatic pressure in concert with military force.

The concept “small war” secured its foothold in the theory and practice of foreign policy and military strategy. The publication of *Small Wars Journal* attests to the staying power of the concept. Within this journal, brief articles compiled from military officers and strategists address geopolitics across the globe with the intent of reframing tactics of intervention and rescaling warfare. In addition to the presence of the concept in military manuals and journals, wars in Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and those pursued under the auspices of the “war on terror” in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and

⁶⁷ *Small Wars Manual of the United States Marine Corp* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1940). Air War College Internet Gateway. <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/swm/index.htm>. This definition appears in 1940 and provides a genealogical root for the fuller explication of the concept that would follow.

elsewhere have been premised on this model. “Small war” is used interchangeably with an extensive list of related and overlapping terms including but not limited to: “brushfire wars,” “dirty wars,” “guerilla warfare,” “insurgency-counterinsurgency,” “internal wars,” “interventions,” “expeditions,” “limited war,” “little wars,” “low intensity operations/conflicts,” “political warfare,” “revolutionary warfare,” “urban guerilla warfare,” “proxy wars,” and “surrogate wars.”⁶⁸ This anodyne vocabulary implying violence limited in scope and effect fails to describe the destruction wrought by such conflict. As William Minter observes of conflicts that fall under one of the many headers of “small war”: “‘low-intensity’ is a monstrous misnomer for wars such as those in Angola and Mozambique ... [T]he cumulative toll of violence year-in and year-out, plus the fact that the victims were overwhelmingly civilian, imposed a trauma on these societies comparable with that of the Second World War on Europe.”⁶⁹

Small war envisions territorially limited conflicts but simultaneously allows imperial war to proliferate across the globe, often outside contestation by democratic publics. Aimed at limiting war to national or regional scales, small war instead ushered in pervasive global violence waged below the threshold of total war. Hardt and Negri observe this shift from the collective enmity characteristic of total mobilization to the proliferation of small wars: “war itself had begun to be transformed – less oriented toward defending against a coherent mega-threat and more focused on proliferating mini-threats; less intent on the general destruction of the enemy and more inclined toward the

⁶⁸ Roger Beaumont, “Small Wars: Definitions and Dimensions,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 541 (1995): 22.

⁶⁹ William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (London: Zed Books, 1994), 2.

transformation or even production of the enemy.”⁷⁰ Small war, a misnomer applied to wars with devastating effects on society and prone to becoming much larger than their intended scope, biopolitically manages global strategic risk. It embodies the sovereignty of Empire by applying force in “small” doses, striking “surgically,” and waging “low-intensity conflict” but alters the relationship between these “small” scales and global formations of power. As Stephen Graham suggests, “the world’s geopolitical struggles increasingly articulate around violent conflicts over very local, urban, strategic sites.”⁷¹ Global civil war unfolds through the local but nonlocalizable “small wars.”

The declarations of contemporary small wars often take the form of “manhunts,” the pursuit of a particular set of individuals using means in which military and police powers overlap. Grégoire Chamayou provides an extensive genealogy of manhunts as a philosophical concept and a technology of domination. The term finds its origins in Greek philosophy but runs through extreme forms of violence within European colonialism and the Atlantic slave trade and into the origins (and obfuscated brutalities) of modern policing.⁷² For Chamayou the practice of the manhunt has come into contact with contemporary war, what I have called the global wars of Empire, altering its conduct and organization. War modeled on the form of a duel and articulated by Clausewitz has been replaced with “cynegetic war” wherein “[t]he structure does not involve two fighters facing off, but ... a hunter who advances and a prey who flees or who hides.”⁷³ This form

⁷⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 39.

⁷¹ Stephen Graham, “Introduction: Cities, Warfare, and States of Emergency,” in *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics*, Ed. Stephen Graham (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 6.

⁷² Grégoire Chamayou, *Manhunts: A Philosophical History*, trans. Steven Rendell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

⁷³ Grégoire Chamayou, “The Manhunt Doctrine” *Radical Philosophy* 169 (September/October 2011), 2.

of war locates enmity in “dangerous” or “threatening” individuals to be pursued as prey in a hunt. It seeks out and identifies individuals not for the confrontation that characterizes Clausewitzian war, but for either capture or pure annihilation: “The ‘war’ is more like a vast campaign ... of extrajudicial executions: a strategy of targeted assassinations, of lethal manhunts, which make up the ‘rogue’ and unilateral counterpart to the manhunts carried out under the aegis of international criminal justice.”⁷⁴

War premised on hunting particular individuals produces a geography shaped by the relation between individual and global scales. By “individual” I mean in Foucault’s terms, the process by which a body is extracted from a mass, crowd, people, or multitude. It is not a preexisting “natural” being neatly divided from other individuals, as the tradition of liberal humanism might have it, but a scale involved in the production of the political world.⁷⁵ Manhunts as techniques of domination, work through the production of the individual and the subsequent reintegration of the individual into a larger mass or aggregate: “The hunt begins by scattering the group of prey in order to isolate the most vulnerable. This is a process of division: separating the individual from the group. But if this process first isolates its prey, it is only the better to massify them afterward.”⁷⁶ In manhunts the political technology of the individual and the biopolitical security apparatus converge in the capture and/or killing of the dangerous individual.

Cynegetic war founds the hunter’s claim to exemption from geopolitical boundaries through its global pursuit of targeted individuals:

The hunter’s power has no regard for borders. It allows itself the right of universal trespassing, in defiance of territorial integrity of sovereign states. It is

⁷⁴ Chamayou, “The Manhunt Doctrine,” 3

⁷⁵ Chamayou observes, “The prey’s experience is that of becoming an isolated individual, cut off from his fellows” (Chamayou, *Manhunts*, 59).

⁷⁶ Chamayou, *Manhunts*, 17.

an invasive power which, unlike the imperial manoeuvres of the past is based less on a notion of right of conquest, than of a right of pursuit.⁷⁷

The right of pursuit represents the most violent and predatory dimension of the sovereignty of Empire envisioning a loose territoriality by comparison to the model of state-centrism. Contemporary cynegetic war envisions a global space of uninhibited movement as the hunting ground of the military-security apparatus. It locates and tracks its prey by tracing it through nodes in global social networks: “The art of modern tracking proceeds by means of a cartography of the prey’s social networks that the ‘hunter-analysts’ piece together in order to succeed in tracing him back, through his friends or relatives, to his hideout.”⁷⁸ This is a geography produced through the relation between individual and global scales. The smooth network of the globe connects through nodes of individuals.

My account of Chamayou’s genealogy finds a number of deterritorializing tendencies at work in cynegetic war: it envisions a global space crossed by smooth networks without boundaries. However, this geography retains a connection to certain spaces and territory connected through the relations between the individual and global scales:

In cynegetic war, armed violence seeks to pursue the prey wherever it might be. The place of hostilities is no longer defined by the locatable space of an effective combat zone, but by the simple presence of the hunted individual who carries with him everywhere a kind of little halo denoting a personal hostility zone ... the very notion of armed conflict occurring in a distinct geographical space tends to vanish. Here, on the one hand, the combat zone tends to be reduced to the body of the enemy, which must then, according to the principle of distinction, be the only space that is targeted; but, on the other hand, it is believed that this mobile micro-space can be targeted wherever it happens to be. The paradox is

⁷⁷ Chamayou, “The Manhunt Doctrine,” 3

⁷⁸ Chamayou, “The Manhunt Doctrine,” 2.

that the principle of targeting is accompanied by a limitless virtual extension of the conflict zone: the world becomes the battlefield.⁷⁹

Global war brings the scales of the individual body and the globe into a new relations in which the individual becomes the micro-territory of war and the world becomes a battlefield.⁸⁰ In this imaginative geography the individual represents a mobile marker of danger/insecurity that moves through a mass of undifferentiated space. In cynegetic war one finds the apotheosis of small war – the ostensible isolation of war to a set of enemy bodies in which the battlespace of these bodies is somehow held apart from the geographic location and social milieu of these individuals. Yet, this ultimate realization of small war also coincides with the absolute globalization of war. This global rescaling comes about through the nonlocal effects of cynegetic war. Entangled acts of war conducted against hunted individuals in geographically distant spaces make real the possibility of war anywhere and everywhere.

This imaginative geography encounters resistances. Even as cynegetic war tries to remake the world as a smooth space for the military-security operations it finds itself tied to particular places and spaces. In the process of laying claim to the world as a battlefield it lays siege to whole cities and regions. Derek Gregory clarifies this geography of the spatial extension of American war across the globe. He finds in US military planning the

⁷⁹ Chamayou, “The Manhunt Doctrine,” 3.

⁸⁰ The idea of the world as a battlefield is not a new one. Marx notes “the commercial war of the European nations, which has the globe as its battlefield” Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1992), 915. However, colonial war of which Marx speaks was committed to what Chamayou would call the “right of conquest” rather than the “right of pursuit.” Marx’s theorization of violence has recently become a prominent theme in political thought. Jason Read draws on Marx for a fascinating discussion of primitive accumulation. That Marx might serve as a thinker of global war provides an interesting realm of additional investigation but it is beyond the scope of this chapter. See Jason Read, *The Micro-Politics of Capital: Marx and the Prehistory of the Present* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 25 – 30.

designs of a “*planetary garrison* that projects US military power ... divided into six geographically defined unified combatant commands – like US Central Command, CENTCOM – whose Areas of Responsibility cover every region on earth and which operate through a global network of bases.”⁸¹ This vision is not an abstract deterritorialized war without specific sites of death and destruction. Instead, Gregory suggests, “the everywhere war is also always somewhere.”⁸² In particular, Gregory observes the ways in which we see the localization of this “multi-scalar, multi-dimensional ‘*battlespace*’” in the militarized zone stretching across Afghanistan and Pakistan and the United States-Mexico borderlands.⁸³ Along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan heavily armed “special forces” of US Joint Special Operations Command and CIA drones wage what Jeremy Scahill calls America’s “dirty wars.”⁸⁴ The individualizing dimension of this campaign appears in the “kill lists” that compile the names of the hunted to be captured or, more frequently, assassinated. Acts of war against individuals are not without collective effects. For instance, the recurrent buzzing of drones hovering overhead terrorizes entire populations forced to live with a sound that they associate with imminent death.⁸⁵ In a fashion that mimics military operations, armed patrols roam the US-Mexico border working from “forward operating bases” under the panoptic view of surveillance drones. These battlespaces disclose the localization of

⁸¹ Derek Gregory, “The Everywhere War,” *The Geographical Journal* 177 (2011): 238. My emphasis.

⁸² Gregory, “The Everywhere War,” 239 – 240.

⁸³ Gregory, “The Everywhere War,” 239.

⁸⁴ Jeremy Scahill, *Dirty Wars: The World is a Battlefield* (Nation Books, 2013).

⁸⁵ International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic at Stanford Law School and Global Justice Clinic at NYU School Of Law, *Living Under Drones: Death, Injury, and Trauma to Civilians from US Drone Practices in Pakistan* (2012), 80 – 88.

devastation unleashed across the world as a battlefield. Cynegetic wars take the entire globe as the virtual space of conflict but always actualizes war in a particular locality.

The localization of global war also comes about through a military habitation on urban spaces. Historically, manhunts often have pursued prey through cityscapes. In the earliest forms of modern policing there existed a complete “resemblance of the police officer to an urban hunter.”⁸⁶ However, I wish to examine not only how global civil war moves through cities but how it shapes and is shaped in turn by them, that is to say, the relation between urban and global scales within global civil war.

Cities have long organized micro- and macro- processes in empires:

Cities have always been crucial to imperialism, given their natural ability to *centralise* military, political and economic activities and in so doing draw otherwise disparate social formations into hierarchical and exploitative structural relations at variously extensive spatial scales.⁸⁷

However, expanding doctrines, technologies, and military theories focused on the battle space of the city have triangulated the relationship between war, sovereignty, and the city in new ways. Graham describes this emerging theory and practice as “new military urbanism,” in which “militarized techniques of tracking and targeting must permanently colonize the city landscape and the spaces of everyday life in both the ‘homelands’ and domestic cities of the West as well as the world’s neo-colonial frontiers.”⁸⁸ This shift towards war waged in and against cities unfolds through an Orientalist lens in which megacities of the global South are represented as “barbaric” and “exotic” spaces of threat and danger. From the standpoint of global order, these cities fail to embrace the promise

⁸⁶ Chamayou, *Manhunts*, 89.

⁸⁷ Kanishka Goonewardena and Stefan Kipfer “Postcolonial Urbicide: New Imperialism, Global Cities and the Damned of the Earth,” *New Formations*, 59 (2006), 25.

⁸⁸ Graham, *Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism* (New York: Verso, 2011), xiv.

of neoliberal globalization or refuse it altogether. The focus on cities as spaces of dissonance and danger is not limited to the cities of the global South. Similar colonial tropes appear in discourses describing major urban areas, particularly those in postindustrial cities, of the global North. Such “‘inner city Orientalism’ ... relies on the widespread depiction amongst rightist security, military, and political commentators of immigrant districts within the West’s cities as ‘backwards’ zones threatening the body politic of western cities or nations.”⁸⁹ The discourse of inner city Orientalism sees urban places as perpetual threats to the status quo of social relations and political order. They are thus deemed to be in need of extensive surveillance and expansive, militarized policing.

Surveillance and warfare in urban spaces constitute urbicide, a form of political violence involving the destruction of the built environment as an assault on the heterogeneity of public life.⁹⁰ The concept of urbicide provides a frame for thinking about an array of practices targeting built environments. Eyal Weizman points to the curious practices that emerge from the expanding role played by architecture and urban planning in war within the Israeli Defense Force Operational Theory Research Institute and their practice of “walking through walls,” i.e. blowing holes through the interior spaces of buildings to move through a high-theory conceptualization of “smooth space.”⁹¹ The experimental practice drew upon an imaginative geography in which imperial governance

⁸⁹ Graham, *Cities Under Siege*, xix. For the ways in which “inner city Orientalism” draws on affective and moral economies to expand a security regime see Sally Howell and Andrew Shryock, “Cracking Down on Diaspora: Arab Detroit and America’s “War on Terror,”” *Anthropological Quarterly* 76 (2003): 443 – 462.

⁹⁰ Martin Coward, *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 54 – 55.

⁹¹ Eyal Weizman, *Hollowland* (London: Verso, 2007), 185 – 218.

moves across borders and boundaries without resistance. As this imaginary encountered the materiality of place, it carved its way through the urban landscape in a campaign designed to kill, capture, and terrorize without encountering resistance. Further cataloguing of the practices of urbicide should not overlook the role of aerial bombardment which exhibits particularly gruesome effects in densely packed urban spaces. Finally, more expansive understandings of urbicide extend to methods of policing at work in the few public spaces left within an increasingly privatized urban environment. Paul Passavant clearly suggests the violence of such policing restrictions when he observes “manifestations of democratic strength are zoned away from post-Fordist entertainment enclaves ... [T]he state frames one’s act of expression with razor wire.”⁹²

Although urbicide remains difficult to pin down as a particular set of practices, its imperial effects become clear. One acquires a sense of urbicide in the images of contemporary American imperial conflict – shift from rural spaces of Vietnam to largely urbanized visual representations of Iraq.⁹³ Goonewardena and Kipfer sidestep the definitional difficulties of urbicide by examining the concept in terms of its effects on colonized populations. War directed at cities of the colonized produces, “a mockery of their political sovereignty, a brutal destruction of their socio-spatial infrastructures of resistance to the latest manifestations of imperialism, and a cruel militarisation of their everyday life in the name of human rights, democracy and a few other inviolate ‘western values’ including tolerant, multicultural and diverse *cities*.”⁹⁴

⁹² Paul Passavant, “Policing Protest in the Post-Fordist City,” *Amsterdam Law Forum* 2 (2009): 114

⁹³ Goonewardena and Kipfer, 25-26.

⁹⁴ Goonewardena and Kipfer, 23. Emphasis in original.

Urbicide arises when global civil war stakes out the city as its terrain. Within this transformation of political spatiality, “[t]he focus of this new body of military doctrine thus blurs the traditional separation of military and civil spheres, local and global scales, and the inside and outside of nations.”⁹⁵ As new relations form between urban, national, and global scales, cities become strategic sites for the reproduction of global order, the battlegrounds of Empire in which state, local, and private exercises of violence frequently appear.⁹⁶ The “new military urbanism” envisions a geopolitics distinct from a map of states competing in a zero sum system.⁹⁷ Instead, it traces the networks and circulations upon which global capital depends and applies the use of force at key sites within a global space:

Globally, the new military urbanism is being mobilized for the securing of the strung-out commodity chains, logistics networks, and corporate enclaves that constitute the neoliberal geo-economic architecture of our planet. These key nodes, enclaves, circulations and infrastructures that together sustain the architectures of transnational urbanism tend to lie, cheek by jowl, with populations and urban places deemed likely to be sources of insurgent resistance, social mobilization, or infrastructural terrorism.⁹⁸

Military urbanism appears at the relay points of Empire applying force in new modulations. Practices for defining the integrity of nation-states change in conjunction

⁹⁵ Graham, *Cities Under Siege*, 21.

⁹⁶ “[Richard Norton, writing on “feral cities”] invokes what geographers call a process of rescaling – a reorientation from globe-spanning revolution in high-tech warfare, and towards a dominant concern with the spaces of streets, *favelas*, *medinas* and neighborhoods. This parallels the increasing preoccupation of military and security forces with the microgeographies of domestic cities” (Graham, *Cities Under Siege*, 55)

⁹⁷ For examples of the writings of military theorists embodying new military urbanism see Peter W. Huber and Mark P. Mills, “How Technology Will Defeat Terrorism,” *City Journal* Winter (2002), http://www.city-journal.org/html/12_1_how_tech.html and Ralph Peters, “The Human Terrain of Urban Operations,” *Parameter* Spring (2000): 4 – 12. <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/parameters/Articles/00spring/peters.htm>.

⁹⁸ Graham, *Cities Under Siege*, 77.

with this emerging military-security apparatus. National boundaries are maintained through mobile processes of delineating political spaces.

Ultimately, there is a point at which borders cease to be geographical lines and filters between states ... and emerge instead as increasingly interoperable assemblages of control technologies strung out across the world's infrastructures, circulations, cities, and bodies. Rather than being the simple blockading of territorial borders, the imperative is the permanent anticipation, channeling and monitoring of flows so that proper ones can be distinguished from improper ones ... Inescapably, the attempt to securitize the sustenance of transnational capitalism is *simultaneously urban and global*.⁹⁹

Practices of bordering work as mobile forms of surveillance that police political belonging and citizenship, relying on the densely packed spaces of cities to track, sort, and separate bodies and populations. The border represents a political technology reliant upon a geography at odds with the physical space of separation between nation-states. Global and urban scales are bound together in new ways through these practices of surveillance. The political technology of bordering is both closely tied to the organization of bodies in human settlements and to the global movements of capital.

Small wars, manhunts, and urbicide represent viscous surfaces of global civil war. Each exhibits nonlocality in the contacts it creates between scales. Global civil war phases through its small wars, hunts, and sieges revealing a glimpse of the massive object that exceeds the bodies, cities, and localities that it targets. The next section turns to the question of democratic organization and political practice on the terrain of global civil war.

Planetary Democracy

⁹⁹ Graham, *Cities Under Siege*, 132. My emphasis.

Global civil war traverses local, urban, national, and regional scales into the “global” through new emphases and relations. In the process of tying together the spatialities of war in new ways, it poses challenges to the survival of democratic political life. As Hardt and Negri frame this relation, “Because the current state of war is both global in scale and long lasting, with no end in sight, the suspension of democracy too becomes indefinite or even permanent. The vastly destructive enterprise of global civil war threatens to claim democratic life as one of its many victims.

Yet, global civil war has not entirely snuffed the life from democracy. It has, rather, brought about the urgent need to reconsider the theory and practice of democracy under the strains of spatial and scalar transformations. Hardt and Negri call this global or planetary democracy and find in it the greatest hopes for a just democratic future. As they observe in *Multitude*, “The global scale seems increasingly like the only imaginable horizon for change, and real democracy the only feasible solution.”¹⁰⁰

I adopt the term “planetary” democracy because it avoids the conflation of “the global” and neoliberal globalization. Furthermore, “planetary” conveys the extent to which democracy at new scales must make room for non-human animals, beings, and forces within the category of the *demos*. Hardt and Negri make way for this expansion of politics beyond the human:

A democracy of the multitude is imaginable and possible only because we all share and participate in common ... This notion of the common does not position humanity separate from nature, as either exploiter or custodian, but focuses rather on the practices of interaction, care, and cohabitation in a common world, promoting the beneficial and limiting the detrimental forms of the common. In the era of globalization ... both ecological and socioeconomic frameworks become increasingly central.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 312.

¹⁰¹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, viii.

The multitude, Hardt and Negri's concept for the social body in pursuit of democracy at new, massive scales, will involve human and non-human constituencies that stretch the concept of *demos* beyond that of "the people." Planetary democracy involves the coexistence of multiple sites and visions of politics and ontology. There may even be contending or contradictory visions, yet they coexist without reduction to a single political program or identity. The aim here is not to pin down an exact and exhaustive vision of global political order and accompanying set of specific institutions, as so many thinkers of cosmopolitanism have sought to do. Instead, planetary democracy seeks to think through the contours of a cosmopolitics without cosmopolitanism. It embraces the importance of cosmological thinking and the possibilities it holds for understanding political phenomena at massive scales without insisting on a vision of "the planetary" as a social whole reducible to a single universal cosmology. Such a process that sees politics as fragmentary and plural necessarily involves an experimental approach to political practice. Hardt and Negri provide valuable insights into democratic experimentation that confronts the multiform hierarchies, inequalities, and forms of violence at work in Empire. We can see Hardt and Negri providing an account of planetary democracy as a hyperobject – a political formation on a massive scale constituted by multiple viscous surfaces and nonlocal scalar inter-involvements. The spatiality of hyperobjects highlights the complexity of power relations involved in the emergence of planetary democracy. The array of democratic experiments represent viscous surfaces with nonlocal scalar qualities. The fragmentary, plural quality of planetary democracy exceeds human perception and resists straight-forward, totalizing description.

In their most direct discussion of scale and politics, Hardt and Negri frame the crisis of contemporary democracy: “democracy is confronted today by a leap of scale, from the nation-state to the entire globe, and thus unmoored from its traditional modern meanings and practices ... democracy must be conceived and practiced differently in this new framework and this new scale.”¹⁰² Empire and global civil war, in their expansion of politics to a massive scale, necessitate new formulations of the theory and practice of democracy. This scalar shift in politics is both spatial and ontological, that is, it changes the fundamental conditions of politics through its alteration of political geography. This transformation requires more than simply “scaling up” institutions of the nation-state to the global level; it extends beyond voting practices and representative institutions. It is “the rule of everyone by everyone,” a conception borrowed from Spinoza’s notion of *absolute* democracy.¹⁰³ Absolute democracy does not require global referenda on every political decision. Nor does it rely on the institutionalized “democracy” imposed from above. International institutions may serve a valuable alleviating extreme inequalities and minimizing the harm of Empire, but they alone cannot constitute democracy adequate to the challenges of globalized life.

¹⁰² Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 236.

¹⁰³ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 237. While their invocation of democracy is explicitly Spinozist, Hardt and Negri’s insights into planetary democracy might be nicely expanded through engagements with multiple approaches to radical democracy. These might include the thought of Jacques Rancière on democracy as a radical form of equality in which segments of society excluded from intelligibility contest the existing political order at the fundamental level of the distribution of the sensible. See *Dis-Agreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). Alternatively, Cornel West’s vision of democracy as combining Socratic questioning, prophetic justice, and a tragicomic sensibility would deepen Hardt and Negri’s project in important ways. See *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004).

Instead, absolute democracy seeks to proliferate instances of direct democracy in order to foster more equitable power relations and enable the political capacities of collectivities:

When Spinoza calls democracy absolute he assumes that democracy is really the basis of every society. The vast majority of our political, economic, affective, linguistic, and productive interactions are always based on democratic relations. At times we call these practices of social life spontaneous and at others think of them as fixed by tradition and custom, but really these are the civil processes of democratic exchange, communication, and cooperation that we develop and transform every day.¹⁰⁴

Absolute democracy draws upon the numerous democratic relations that sustain society, the elements of “living in common,” and pushes these to new levels of intensity. At the planetary scale it involves local, urban, and national political movements having access the workings of global order. In their pursuit of absolute democracy, Hardt and Negri call for forms of political engagement at a number of scales that amplify the living constituent power that flows from singularities-in-common. The greatest promise for democratic society resides not in centralized institutional designs, that is to say institutions of national and supranational governance, but in numerous social movements around the globe that express direct involvement in politics without mediation:

What the various protests make clear is that democracy cannot be made or imposed *from above* ... democracy is neither simply the political face of capitalism nor the rule of bureaucratic elites. And democracy does not result from either military intervention and regime change or from the various current models of “transition to democracy,” which have proved better at creating new oligarchies than any democratic systems ... Democracy ... can only arise *from below*. Perhaps the present crisis of the concept of democracy due to its new global scale can provide the occasion to return it to its older meaning as the rule of everyone by everyone, a democracy without qualifiers, without ifs or buts.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 311.

¹⁰⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 237. Emphasis in original

Global democracy will not be achieved as a unified, centralized project. Nor will it be brought about through neoconservative notions of “nation building” that beat the drums of war for invading armies to occupy the territories of their enemies and also keep defining internal threats to defeat. Democracy at a global scale, and with complexity that swarms around representative intermediaries, is already arising from grassroots movements confronting racism, sexism, imperialism, and economic exploitation across the globe. These numerous experiments from below differ in form and content, ranging from social movements aimed at altering local conditions to autonomous movements articulating radical forms of self-government.

The rescaling of politics and democracy is not an issue unique to contemporary globalization. Democratic revolutionaries in France, the United States, and Haiti in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries sought ways to translate democratic traditions of city-states to the emerging state form:

Advocates of democracy in early modern Europe and North America were confronted by skeptics who told them that democracy may have been possible in the confines of the Athenian polis but was unimaginable in the extended territories of the modern nation-states ... The eighteenth-century democratic revolutionaries ... did not simply repropose democracy in its ancient form. Instead their task, aimed in part at addressing the question of scale, was to reinvent the concept and create new institutional forms and practices. ... [L]ike the revolutionaries of the early modern period, we will once again have to reinvent the concept of democracy and create new institutional forms and practices appropriate to our global age.¹⁰⁶

This series of democratic experiments produced representative mechanisms that were integral to the formation of the state. New practices of democracy were constituted from heterogeneous geographic origins. In much the same way, contemporary social movements express a number of different concerns at local, city, state, and regional

¹⁰⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 238.

levels. They have adopted a number of different “forms and practices” designed to contest the sovereignty of Empire. These may take the form of new avenues for expressing discontent with global order or go so far as to establish new forms of self-government as the Zapatistas and the spread of *zapatismo* have demonstrated. Hardt and Negri observe, “[t]he *common* currency that runs throughout so many struggles and movements for liberation across the world today – at local, regional, and global levels – is the desire for democracy.”¹⁰⁷ Through their multiplicity, or as a result of it, they have the collective effect of deepening democratic life.

Hardt and Negri refer to the sweeping multiplicity of egalitarian social movements and democratic political projects as the multitude fueled by the vital energies of the common. Before expanding on Hardt and Negri’s theorization of democracy, it is necessary to clarify how the concepts multitude and common operate within my discussion. Hardt and Negri have received numerous criticisms directed toward their concept of the multitude. Although fascinated by their notion of the common as it emerges within cities, David Harvey nonetheless sees the relationship between the multitude and the state as too ambiguous in Hardt and Negri.¹⁰⁸ In Mike Davis’s assessment “the multitude” presupposes political resources that must instead be mobilized by the poor. Davis claims, “Portentous post-Marxist speculations, like those of Negri and Hardt, about a new politics of “multitudes” in the “rhizomatic spaces” of globalization remain ungrounded in any real political sociology.”¹⁰⁹ Equally dismissive

¹⁰⁷ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, xvi. My emphasis.

¹⁰⁸ David Harvey, *Rebel Cities* (New York: Verso, 2012), 152. For an extended treatment of how Harvey’s thought can help think through the spatial forms of the multitude see chapter 4 of this dissertation.

¹⁰⁹ Davis, 201.

of the complexities of political space, Bruce Robbins sees Hardt and Negri's vision of the multitude as largely unhelpful for thinking on the left, suggesting "the multitude exists only on the drawing board, where it shares space with a lot of other unbuilt and perhaps unbuildable structures."¹¹⁰ I argue, to the contrary, that by refusing a single, ideal-type revolutionary subject in favor of the multitude, the social body characterized by internal multiplicity and driven by a volcanic set of energies, Hardt and Negri contribute to a pluralistic arsenal of democratic practices. A closer examination of the ontology of the multitude and the democratic experiments that take shape within it mitigates these accusations of excessive abstraction and depoliticizing messianism. Furthermore, it reveals a sophisticated theorization of the planetary social body as hyperobject existing at a scale beyond human perception and with nonlocal sites of encounter.

Hardt and Negri have emphasized the ways in which the multitude differs from the concept of "the people." In particular, the multitude does not resolve internal differences into a settled identity. Nor does it form a social body designed to submit to sovereignty. Rather than locating its power in the transcendence of an originary, chaotic state of nature, the multitude draws energy from its multiplicity.¹¹¹ Although the singular "multitude" has become the familiar term in the political vocabulary of Hardt and Negri, they have adopted the plural "multitudes" in more recent writing in order to better emphasize the numerous movements and efforts of different scope and purpose.¹¹² The connections between these movements are periodic, informal, ad hoc, and explicitly resistant to resolving differences into unity, as in the case of the World Social Forum.

¹¹⁰ Bruce Robbins, "Multitude, Are You There?" *n+1 Magazine*, Issue 10 (2010), <https://nplusonemag.com/issue-10/reviews/multitude-are-you-there/>.

¹¹¹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 169 – 170.

¹¹² The plural "multitudes" appears in Hardt and Negri, *Declaration*, 1.

Even without specific points of contact, the diverse multitudes have cumulative effects in their opposition to existing global order.

While the plural term may more effectively convey the internal multiplicity I retain the singular in order to emphasize the multitude as hyperobject. The multitude is the hyperobject of all bodies in resistance to the axiomatics of Empire. The concept of the multitude attempts to envision an egalitarian, democratic movement on a planetary scale that thrives on the forms of difference that persist within it. Its massive scale resists totalization by human perception. While this kind of hyperobject on the left might threaten existing principles of mobilization and organization, such as those upon which national social democracy and orthodox Marxism rely, it may identify new reserves of democratic energy suited to the terrain of planetary politics. Hardt and Negri do not dismiss familiar domains of struggle on the left such as state-regulation, public works, international treaties, or unions. Instead, they see vital roles for all of these in the negotiations with what they refer to as the “global aristocracy,” reforms that will prove necessary in the short and medium term.¹¹³ These concepts are not to be jettisoned, but they are limited in their ability to speak to global/planetary condition of politics. By contrast, the multitude and the common emphasize the planetary dimension of politics in which new constituencies working at a massive scale can address the condition of global civil war.

Hardt and Negri’s examples of the multitude in sporadic action are abundant – Seattle in 1999, protests against the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, Zapatistas, Bolivian autonomist programs opposing the privatization of water, anti-colonial

¹¹³ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 320.

struggles, the Occupy movement, the Arab Spring, Spanish *indignados*, and projects of “co-research” by industrial workers movements in the 1960s.¹¹⁴ These diverse constituencies share in common a commitment to radically democratic forms of self-government and organization. The multitude “is not a spontaneous political subject but a project of political organization, thus shifting the discussion from *being* the multitude to *making* the multitude.”¹¹⁵ Democracy becomes an ongoing process of political struggle waged at number of scales. This process is further clarified in *Declaration*: “The task is not to codify new social relations in a fixed order, but instead to create a constituent process that organizes those relations and makes them lasting while also fostering future innovations and remaining open to the desires of the multitude.”¹¹⁶ This is a constituent process not limited to “the people,” but involving the sometimes cacophonous voices of the multitude powered by the forces of the common. In these terms “the common” is something like diverse energies and materials available for the organization of new social bodies of multitudes and the sustenance of collective forms of life.

Although the most visible and dramatic manifestations of the multitude appear in the sporadic forms of direct action named explicitly by Hardt and Negri, the sources of the multitude’s power arise from various constituencies and anchorage points within global political life. Consumers, workers (formal and informal), technicians, teachers, professors, and journalists each wield specific political powers. Individually, their abilities to promote awareness, think critically, make alternative choices, and withhold labor exercise important, but nonetheless limited, influence. Working collectively

¹¹⁴ On the last point see Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 127.

¹¹⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 169.

¹¹⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Declaration*, 8.

through, formal solidarities, ad hoc alliances or simply tacit support, their powers amplify and they exercise more intensive and extensive leverage on the power of Empire.

Collaborative efforts between these overlapping constituencies possess the ability to envision alternative political and economic configurations, to pursue efforts through pressures at multiple sites of production and consumption, and to critically reflect on their efforts in pursuit of these visions. This is a transformative vision for politics working through a massive social body but grounded in highly specific sites and forms of influence. Such a political body differs greatly from Davis's and Robbins's characterization of the multitude as portentous speculation existing only on the drawing board.

The global body of the multitude takes shape in one of Hardt and Negri's more cryptic formulations:

the flesh of the multitude is an elemental power that continuously expands social being, producing in excess of every traditional political-economic measure of value. You can try to harness the wind, the sea, the earth, but each will always exceed your grasp. From the perspective of political order and control, then, the elemental flesh of the multitude is maddeningly elusive, since it cannot be entirely corralled into the hierarchical organs of a political body.¹¹⁷

Here, multitude resembles a hyperobject. It exceeds our perceptual powers, totalization, and the conventional metrics of political economy. As subjects we see and dwell on surfaces of the multitude without access to the thing in its entirety. However, this "thing" is not static, it takes the shape of dynamic flesh. Just as hyperobjects teeter on the verge of the sublime, the body of the multitude risks becoming monstrous: "[t]he new world of monsters is where humanity has to grasp its future."¹¹⁸ Hardt and Negri leverage the sort

¹¹⁷ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 193.

¹¹⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 196.

of ontological maneuver being made by Morton to gesture toward a political hyperobject, collectivity thought at new spatial scales set against the forces of economic exploitation and warfare that constitute their own hyperobjects. Democracy names one possible condition of encounter between the hyperobjects Empire and multitude.

To better understand the multitude one has to examine the ways that it has been carved up by Empire through geographies of exploitation, hierarchy, and war. The global body of the multitude finds itself divided along a number of axes through complex spatial distributions and controls. In *Multitude* Hardt and Negri suggest “[o]ne has to be geographer today to map the topography of exploitation.”¹¹⁹ They approach this geography through a pair of spatial concepts, topology and topography describing the relation of these terms as follows:

We need to investigate furthermore the political and social institutions that maintain the global hierarchies and the geography of poverty and subordination. Our analysis must move now, in short, from the topology of exploitation to its *topography*. Whereas the topology examined the logic of exploitation in production, the topography will map the hierarchies of the system of power and is unequal relations in the north and south of the globe. These spatial relations of control and subordination are key to understanding how the contradictions of the system are transformed into antagonism and conflict.¹²⁰

Topology describes the logics or practices through which exploitation functions.

Topography, on the other hand, maps the spatial relations that both enable and result from conditions of exploitations. The topography of exploitation is involved in both the causes and effects of the practices of exploitation described by topology. Take for instance what David Harvey refers to as “accumulation by dispossession.”¹²¹ There are several practices and operations internal to this process, e.g. structural adjustment, privatization, and

¹¹⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 164.

¹²⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 158 – 159.

¹²¹ David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (New York: Verso, 2006), 41 – 50.

deregulation. The topology of exploitation creates a conceptual toolbox for exploring the inner workings of these practices. The topography of exploitation accounts for the “uneven geography” by which this process of accumulation proceeds. For Hardt and Negri these are complementary parts of an effective analysis of power relations in the existing global order.¹²²

Hardt and Negri identify an elaborate geography of inequality irreducible to national boundaries or neat delineations between the global North and global South. They find an extensive system of power asymmetries in which “[c]apitalist globalization ... has managed to solve this problem [of inequality] in the worst possible way – not by making labor relationships equal in countries throughout the world but rather by generalizing the perverse mechanisms of unevenness and inequality everywhere.”¹²³ The unequal relations of exchange between places come into view at multiple scales. As Hardt and Negri observe, “there is uneven development and unequal exchange between the richest and poorest neighborhoods of Los Angeles, between Moscow and Siberia, between the center and periphery of every European city, between the northern and southern rims of the Mediterranean, between the southern and northern islands of Japan – one could continue indefinitely.”¹²⁴ The topography of exploitation traces the multiple levels of inequality – within cities, between cities, across regions, within and between the global North and South – documenting the movements across scales as well. As they observe, “[t]he topography of global divisions of labor, poverty, and exploitation, in short, is a shifting matrix of politically constructed hierarchies.”¹²⁵ This complex geography contains a

¹²² See Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 332 – 336 for their analysis of uneven accumulation.

¹²³ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 164.

¹²⁴ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 164.

¹²⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 165.

number of territorial visions that draw old practices of spatial separation into new formations. As Hardt and Negri suggest in *Empire*:

The transformation of the modern imperialist geography of the globe and the realization of the world market signal a passage within the capitalist mode of production. Most significant, the spatial divisions of the three Worlds (First, Second, and Third) have been scrambled so that we continually find the First World in the Third, the Third in the First, and the Second almost nowhere at all. Capital seems to be faced with a smooth world – or really, a world defined by new and complex regimes of differentiation and homogenization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization.¹²⁶

Taken together, an analysis of global inequality through the topology and topography of exploitation lead Hardt and Negri to declare: “We are living in a system of global apartheid.”¹²⁷ Global apartheid names the process through which the body of the multitude is divided along internal lines of antagonism. This process is closely related to global civil war. The many viscous surfaces of global civil war; small wars, manhunts, urban sieges; reinforce lines of global segregation and inequality.

Thinking about planetary democracy today requires formulating responses to the divisions and hierarchies within the social body of the multitude. Hardt and Negri identify a number of democratic experiments already underway in contesting the conditions of Empire and global civil war. These come into focus through their open and pluralizing definition of globalization: “Globalization, of course, is not one thing, and the

¹²⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, xiii.

¹²⁷ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 166. More work could be done within political theory on the notion of global apartheid. Places to start such work would include W.E.B. DuBois on the global color line and Étienne Balibar’s work on transnational citizenship. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, eds. David W Blight, and Robert Gooding-Williams (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997). Etienne Balibar, *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, trans. James Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). The geographer Joseph Nevins has discussed the militarization of borders as part of a system of global apartheid. See *Dying to Live: A Story of U.S. Immigration in an Age of Global Apartheid*, with photographs by Mizue Aizeki (San Francisco: Open Media/City Lights Books, 2008).

multiple processes that we recognize as globalization are not unified or univocal. Our political task, we will argue, is not simply to resist these processes but to reorganize them and redirect them toward new ends.”¹²⁸ This formulation clearly draws upon and extends the enthusiasm surrounding the alter-globalization movement and its profound statement in Seattle only a year before the publication of *Empire*. Maria Hynes and Scott Sharpe characterize the ethos of the alter-globalization movement succinctly, “The movement’s stance is popularly captures in the formula ‘One no, many yeses’; a resounding no to corporate globalisation is followed up with an energetic proliferation of alternatives.”¹²⁹ This understanding of globalization acknowledges multiple contending processes traversing global space. These include corporate, military, and juridical projects irreducible to a single political program but, taken as a totality, constituting Empire. Globalization, by this definition, also includes the numerous popular and democratic struggles against Empire. Many of these responses are locally situated – tied to the right to housing, a living wage, gender equality opposition to police brutality or a particular war – yet they resonate with one another across borders in their call for a world different from the one being forced upon them by neoliberalism, fascism, and militarism.

While recognizing the heterogeneity of objections to conditions within the current global order, Hardt and Negri nonetheless suggest that we might consider these grievances collectively as resembling the *cahiers de doléances*, the list of grievances compiled against the ancien regime prior to the French revolution. The late modern *cahiers de doléances* compiled by Hardt and Negri contain scalar diversity similar to its

¹²⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, xv.

¹²⁹ Maria Hynes and Scott Sharpe, “Affected with Joy: Evaluating the Mass Actions of the Anti-Globalisation Movement,” *borderlands* 8 (2009): 3.

historical predecessor including “denunciations and demands that ranged from the most local problems to issues that touched on the highest levels of government.”¹³⁰ In particular Hardt and Negri have compared the World Social Forum to the *cahier de doléances*. They suggest:

One should thus read the papers and conferences presented at Porto Alegre like the *Cahier de Doléances* (statements of grievances) presented to the Estates-General in France in 1789 ... At Porto Alegre ... [t]hey reveal the horrible state of our present form of globalization, the scandal of neoliberal capitalist power, and the misery of the majority of the world’s population ... They demonstrate a mature and organized desire to go beyond what we have, to construct a new world that is possible.¹³¹

The World Social Forum adopts a non-deliberative organizational strategy which provides an open space for participants to exchange thoughts, tactics, and strategies without vying for hegemony. It issues no declarations and explicitly states its opposition to *pensamientos únicos* – unitary forms of thought that close off alternatives. Instead, the Forum seeks to foster encounters and internal conversation in order to energize a still-inchoate global left.¹³² It provides for a space of convergence in which bodies may gather together without collectively falling under the header of a single agenda or set of goals. Furthermore, it emphasizes communication allowing for diverse interests and groups to speak to one another without resolving into a single political entity, party, or movement.

¹³⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 269.

¹³¹ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, “Foreword,” *Another World is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum*, Ed. William F. Fisher and Thomas Ponniah (Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing Ltd., 2003), xvii – xviii.

¹³² Much of my account here comes from Janet M. Conway’s discussion of the WSF as an “open space.” Janet M. Conway, *Edges of Global Justice: The World Social Forum and its ‘Others,’* (London: Routledge, 2013), 9 – 10, 33 – 66. As an organizer involved with the WSF since its first meeting in Porto Alegre, she is sympathetic to a number of goals behind the notion of “open space” but wary of the ways in which this notion of openness may in fact occlude power relations that persist within the forum. Conway indicates the limits of the WSF in its current form for addressing anti-colonial, anti-racist, and feminist politics and points to new directions (and concealed histories) of the forum that might better enable these pursuits.

To state the function of the World Social Forum in terms closer to Hardt and Negri's, the "open space" of the Forum creates room for conversations and collaborations of the multitude(s) to defy the imperial controls of global civil war. Glimpsing the plurality of efforts against neoliberal globalization, it also offers a brief glimpse of the hyperobject that is planetary democracy.

Within the demands made at Porto Alegre, Hardt and Negri note the repeated importance placed on confronting the ongoing state of war around the globe and its promotion by major military powers:

[T]he struggle against war is a central element of this program. It is perfectly clear to those at Porto Alegre that the neoliberal world order and the interminable state of war go hand in hand, that they support and legitimate each other ... Numerous strategies have been invented by the movements for this struggle against war, such as caravans for peace and operations of 'diplomacy from below', that is, intervening actively in conflicts, outside official state channels ... The networks that are based on our differences and our commonalities create an unbreakable relation not only against war and death, but ultimately for a new form of life.¹³³

The list of grievances against neoliberal global order formulated at the World Social Forum identifies the limitations of egalitarian social change imposed by a condition of generalized planetary violence. The creative acts of democratic experimentation and anti-war resistance respond to the changing terrain of politics under global civil war. In order to ameliorate this condition the Forum creates conversations between practitioners of a variety of approaches to conflict resolution and opposition to the conduct of specific wars.

The politics of scale are central to the World Social Forum. Its origins lie in "the local administrators experimenting in new forms of participatory democracy together

¹³³ Hardt and Negri, "Foreword," xix.

with the utopian schemers of a global democracy.”¹³⁴ Furthermore, the question of scale has been at the center of debates within the World Social Forum:

Different ideological positions focus on the primacy of different scales. Some activists argue that the primary agent of progress lies in localization ... Others argue for a new form of state that is run by radical, participatory democratic principles that are regulated by criteria established by civil society ... A third position proposes global forms of regulation. The emphases on different scales ... constitute potential fault-lines in the movement for global justice and solidarity. Whether these differences are fundamentally antagonistic or should be read as *contradictions in process* that can be reconciled into a complementary multiplicity, is unclear at this time in history.¹³⁵

Hardt and Negri provide a number of key insights into this “complementary multiplicity” and its geography that is at once local, national, and global. They provide a list of democratic experiments aimed at different dimensions of social and political life and tailored to a number of scales.

Hardt and Negri group their responses to the grievances of existing global order into four categories: reforms of representation, rights and justice, economic reforms, and biopolitical reforms designed to reduce the frequency and devastation of war. They engage a number of institutions, treaties, and reforms, offering ways to expand the scope and effect of each. For instance, they see the International Criminal Court and truth commissions as valuable institutions that might be expanded to address colonialism and the Atlantic slave trade.¹³⁶ They lend support to existing corruption reforms but suggest that these institutions might be expanded to “not only to prevent corruption but retribute

¹³⁴ Hardt and Negri, “Foreword,” xvi.

¹³⁵ Thomas Ponniah and William F. Fisher, “Introduction: The World Social Forum and the Reinvention of Democracy” in *Another World is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum*, eds. William F. Fisher and Thomas Ponniah (Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing Ltd., 2003), 9 – 10.

¹³⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 296-298.

the common that has been stolen.”¹³⁷ They advise that economic control might be reduced simply by shortening the duration of copyright. Additionally, they suggest that initiatives such as Creative Commons provide a model for shared, democratic methods of knowledge production. International initiatives to reduce climate change as well as treaties that would restrict the production and use of land mines, biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons present possibilities for global reform as well. However, Hardt and Negri do not limit their list to already-existing initiatives. They also suggest experiments in activist politics designed to facilitate more democratic access to media and provide space for voices critical of military build-ups, economic inequality, and environmental destruction. Ultimately, they suggest “it may be more productive not to generate reform proposals but to develop experiments for addressing our global situation.”¹³⁸

Through this list of grievances with the global order and the accompanying variety of democratic experiments and practices in self-government, Hardt and Negri devise a politics of hyperobjects designed to strengthen planetary democracy. Certain recommendations, such as those that would radicalize global governance, seek to intervene directly at a massive global scale. In addition to each of the global reforms that they endorse, sometimes hesitantly, they include “a note of skepticism about the *gigantism* of such proposals. Global commissions, global institutions, and global agencies are not necessarily adequate solutions to global problems.”¹³⁹ The cumbersome and potentially monolithic nature of global institutions often produces obstacles to addressing urgent social, economic, and political crises as well as potentially subverting ongoing

¹³⁷ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 298.

¹³⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 305.

¹³⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 298.

struggles for democracy. Hardt and Negri direct more concern towards fostering local projects that open new political horizons at the global scale. The long list of possible actions seeks out numerous viscous surfaces upon which individual and collective action can sustain local democratic aspirations while amplifying nonlocal entanglements across multitudes. They frame their politics of engagement on a number of different scales that breaks with “a linear, isomorphic relationship among legal and political forms of the city, the nation, the region, and the world.”¹⁴⁰ Transversal connections between local and global enable a potential democratic organization capable of addressing global challenges that extend beyond the reach of any single constituency. The result is a strikingly pragmatic, multi-sited, and experimental politics.

The City in Common

The possibilities of democracy on a planetary scale are closely connected to the scaling of urban life. The layering of urban space provides one of the microcosms of planetary politics, a viscous surface of planetary democracy. Hardt and Negri suggest in *Empire* “[t]he multitude is not formed simply by throwing together and mixing nations and peoples indifferently; it is the singular power of a *new city*.”¹⁴¹ They offer this formulation as a way to contrast the immanence of the multitude with the transcendence of Augustine’s City of God, yet it also provides insight into the way that figures of urban space inform the spatiality of the multitude in its early formulations within their trilogy. In the pages of *Multitude*, Hardt and Negri revisit the importance of urban space for social and political organization. Looking at the shifting focus of guerilla movements

¹⁴⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 296.

¹⁴¹ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 395. My emphasis.

from rural to urban spaces, they observe that “[t]he focus . . . was increasingly not on attacking the ruling powers but rather on transforming the city itself. In metropolitan struggles the close relationship between disobedience and resistance, between sabotage and desertion, counterpower and constituent projects became increasingly intense. The great struggles of *Autonomia* in Italy in the 1970s, for example, succeeded temporarily in redesigning the landscape of the major cities, liberating entire zones where new cultures and new forms of life were created.”¹⁴² Here, the ability of resistance movements to interrupt the functioning of everyday life intensified in urban space. Lines of mobility through the material cityscape, what Lefebvre and others have called the “right to the city,” reflected the efforts of democratic transformations and successful campaigns of worker self-government.

Hardt and Negri’s strongest endorsement of the democratic potentialities within urban space appears in *Commonwealth*. They observe, “metropolitan life is becoming a general planetary condition.”¹⁴³ Living in cities has become a part of the common shared by an increasing percentage of humanity. The space of the city is not shared equally. It is divided, sliced, segregated, policed, and subjected to hierarchies. Military urbanism disciplines bodies and populations moving through urban space. Urbicide seeks to reduce

¹⁴² Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 81-82. Hardt and Negri equivocate on the matter at times. While this move acknowledges the privileged role that urban space plays in neoliberal capitalism, Hardt and Negri immediately qualify the significance of the city in political resistance and social transformation: “[t]he real transformation of guerilla movements during this period, however, has little to do with urban and rural terrain – or, rather, the apparent shift to urban spaces is a symptom of a more important transformation. *The more profound transformation takes place in the relationship between the organization of the movements and the organization of economic and social production*” (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 82). As they see it here, urban space remains epiphenomenal in the formation of society subordinated to the dominant mode of economic organization.

¹⁴³ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 252.

built environments, as spaces constituting the possibility of being-in-common, to rubble.¹⁴⁴ Yet, the element of being together still impinges upon the lives of urban citizens.

The connection between the city and deeper, more expansive forms of democratic practice extends beyond the pervasive urbanization rapidly changing the terrain of politics. For Hardt and Negri the city provides a valuable resource for democratic organization in its creation of the common. As they suggest “[t]he metropolis is ... the space of the common, of people living together, sharing resources, communicating, exchanging goods and ideas.”¹⁴⁵ The emphasis on the common, here, differs from understandings of the common as a “natural” space or set of resources: “The common ... is not so much the “natural common” embedded in the material elements of land, minerals, water, and gas, but the “artificial common” that resides in languages, images, knowledges, affects, codes, habits, and practices. This artificial common runs throughout the metropolitan territory and constitutes the metropolis.”¹⁴⁶ The common for Hardt and Negri represents an active, productive force, not an idyllic past in need of “conservation” or “restoration.” Jason Read expands on this unconventional notion of the common: “What human individuals have “in common” is not some abstract idea of humanity but

¹⁴⁴ Coward, *Urbicide*, 81.

¹⁴⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 250. Etymological connections between the common and the city reveal this relation to be a longstanding one: “*il commune* in Italian – is the word for city” (Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 250).

¹⁴⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 250. Hardt and Negri suggest a vision of the common that extends beyond “the human” but seem to run up against some conceptual limits here. The older vision of a “natural commons” tends to pose this essentialized notion from which I have attempted to distance my own thinking about the common. However, the language of the “artificial common” presupposes an essentialized “culture” distinct from nature and seems inadequate to describe a non-anthropocentric common.

their *specific relations*, which are constituted each moment in multiple forms.”¹⁴⁷ The common is neither a set of given resources, nor is it the universalist and universalizing essence of “humanity.” Rather it is the condition of shared relations, the democratic undercurrents constantly fueled by the condition of being-together.¹⁴⁸

The contemporary urban form is that of the “biopolitical city” in which the city increasingly corresponds with the space of production:

With the passage to the hegemony of biopolitical production, the space of economic production and the space of the city tend to overlap. There is no longer a factory wall that divides the one from the other, and “externalities” are no longer external to the site of production that valorizes them. Workers produce throughout the metropolis, in its every crack and crevice.¹⁴⁹

It is in this sense that “*the metropolis is to the multitude what the factory was to the industrial working class*,” both the space of control and the common condition of being- (and working) together.¹⁵⁰ This extended space of production brings with it a flexible system of controls that are less easily identifiable than those of the factory floor manager. However, it also opens a more extensive set of connections across society. Capitalist production both relies upon biopolitical production and faces the challenge of new forms of subjectivity enabled by the common.

While the common can provide a resource for democracy, its contribution to egalitarian human flourishing is not guaranteed: “the common can be positive or negative: dynamic local cultural circuits in a metropolis are a positive form of the

¹⁴⁷ Jason Read, *Micro-Politics of Capital*, 23. My emphasis.

¹⁴⁸ As I see it, there is no reason that Read’s account of the common could not be extended to include the relations between human and nonhuman, that which is often considered “nature” and “culture.”

¹⁴⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 251.

¹⁵⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 250.

common, whereas pollution, traffic, social conflicts, and the like are negative forms.”¹⁵¹

Democratic politics in post-Fordist, biopolitical cities, becomes a matter of organizing encounters: “The politics of the metropolis is the organization of encounters. Its task is to promote joyful encounters, make them repeat, and minimize infelicitous encounter.”¹⁵²

This Spinozist-Deleuzian urbanism sees the bumpy, scalar layering of city life as a place where local, state, global and planetary processes meet.¹⁵³ The hope and promise of this politics is that, in an era of accelerated urbanization, it can have effects that reverberate beyond the city:

The metropolitanization of the world does not necessarily just mean a generalization of structures of hierarchy and exploitation. It can also mean a generalization of rebellion and then, possibly, the growth of networks of cooperation and communication, the increased intensity of the common and encounters among singularities. This is where the multitude finds its home.¹⁵⁴

The density of encounters with the common make cities pivotal sites for democratic organization. Mega-cities, conurbations and urban networks extend the common across urban fabric that exceeds the territorial boundaries of the city. The urban becomes a surface of the hyperobject “multitude” holding within it political capacities enabled by well-staged encounters. Cities gather together multitudes and connect them across distant geographic space. The hope of planetary democracy depends on the vital energies within and across cities and urban fabric throughout the globe: “A new geography is established by the multitude as the productive flows of bodies define new rivers and ports. The cities of the earth will become at once great deposits of cooperating humanity and locomotives

¹⁵¹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 253.

¹⁵² Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 255.

¹⁵³ Whereas *Multitude* views urban politics as determined by the means of production, *Commonwealth* sheds the insistence on the subordination of the urban scale to the functioning of global capitalism and begins to look instead at their co-production.

¹⁵⁴ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 260.

for circulation, temporary residences and networks of the mass distribution of living humanity.”¹⁵⁵

Ash Amin, Doreen Massey, and Nigel Thrift offer a number of insights into the practical dimensions of constructing democratic politics within and between cities. While not explicitly employing the language of the common and the multitude, their concern with egalitarian economic development and flourishing democratic practices aligns their project with that of Hardt and Negri. Amin, Massey, and Thrift see cities as intensive social networks that bring together a multiplicity of forms of life, the multitude, in a single space. Contemporary cities, with their densely-packed encounters, highlight the challenges of creating global democracy:

If we think of cities not in terms of their physicality or built design only, but also in terms of constellations of lives, then the intensity with which those lives are lived, together with the diversity of lives which are brought together, present both special problems and particular opportunities ... [I]n a globalised world democracy faces challenges everywhere, in cities and outside them, but in cities one comes face to face with perhaps the most acute expressions of these challenges.¹⁵⁶

Cities not only pose new challenges for the constitution of democratic politics, they also enable new forms of connection across space. They open up “*transversal politics* ... [that] seeks, first, to reconcile universal goals with particular interests by forging solidarities across the disparate sites and social demands of the heterogeneous contemporary city ... Second, it seeks to provide mechanisms for airing differences and, as far as possible, a level playing field for contestation.”¹⁵⁷ Transversal politics cut across scales forming habits, practices, constituencies, and demands that connect groups and

¹⁵⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 397.

¹⁵⁶ Ash Amin, Doreen Massey, and Nigel Thrift, *Cities for the Many. Not the Few* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2000), 31.

¹⁵⁷ Amin, Massey, and Thrift, 39.

techniques across geo-space as well as reverberating upward and outward. This is not a unitary body of political thought or action. Transversal politics open up “real experiments with urban democratisation around the world.”¹⁵⁸ Such an approach approximates the forms of political engagement that I have offered for dealing with hyperobjects. They enter politics through viscous surfaces at a number of sites and move more easily through networks of nonlocal entanglement. The transversal politics connecting globalized cities offer a starting point for building planetary democracy. It provides a method of connection and communication that facilitates egalitarian visions at a massive, unprecedented scale, yet it does not seek to produce a global project (in the unified, universalist sense). The aim is not a new sovereignty of Empire, but the coexistence of multiple forms of life and governance.

* * *

Hardt and Negri provide a map of the collisions and encounters between hyperobjects in which politics unfolds at unprecedented scales and folds previously distant spaces together through scalar discrepancies. Their politics resists the temptation to design a program for the left. Instead, it offers a rethinking of scale that echoes thinking about the left offered by Gilles Deleuze, one of their interlocutors. Deleuze suggests that rather than being contained within a particular preexisting political identity, being on the left represents a particular “phenomenon of perception”:

So how to define being on the left... first, it's a matter of perception, which means this: what would *not* being on the left mean? It's a little like an address, extending outward from a person: the street where you are, the city, the country, other countries farther and farther away ... It starts from the self, and to the extent that one is privileged, living in a rich country, one might ask, what can we

¹⁵⁸ Amin, Massey, and Thrift, 43.

do to make this situation last? One senses that dangers exist, that it might not last, it's all so crazy, so what might be done so that Europe lasts? Being on the left is the opposite: it's perceiving ... first the periphery ... say the world, the continent -- let's say Europe --, France, etc. etc., rue de Bizerte, me.¹⁵⁹

Whereas the Right asks about questions of universal morality and self-interest as it moves outward into the world from the starting point of the self, the left looks to the horizon. The horizon represents the more expansive world but also the periphery, marginalized, and excluded. Being on the left involves assessing power relations and looking into the complex interconnections that create the world and society. As Deleuze continues:

First, you see the horizon... And you know these millions of starving people can't last... there's no point in kidding about it, it's an absolutely worn-out justice system, it's not a matter of morality, but in perception itself. It's not in saying that the natality rate has to be reduced, which is just another way of keeping the privileges for Europe. <Being on the left> is really finding arrangements, finding world-wide assemblages. *Being on the left, it is often only [knowing that] Third World problems that are closer to us than problems in our neighborhoods.* So it's really a question of perceptions... more than being a question of "beautiful souls."¹⁶⁰

The phenomenon of perception that characterizes the left involves rescaling – self, street, city, country, and world – and identifying lines of connection between scales. For Deleuze, as for Hardt and Negri, the questions of the left turn on understanding the scalar relations of globalized life. On the left, one thinks through possibilities of intervention, new tactics, strategies, new alliances, and possible resonances.

I find in Morton's theorization of hyperobjects new ways of thinking about spatial connections on the left that dislocate concentric circles of belonging. Viscosity, phasing, and nonlocality offer not only a way to think through natural phenomena impinging upon human life, as pursued by Morton, but also a vocabulary for the nonlinear dynamics that

¹⁵⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, "G as in 'Gauche'" in *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, trans. Charles J. Stivale (2004). <http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/CStivale/D-G/ABC2.html>.

¹⁶⁰ Deleuze and Parnet, "G as in 'Gauche.'"

characterize collective action on a massive scale. By reading Empire and the multitude as hyperobjects, I have emphasized the multiple scales intertwined in each of these global systems. This spatiality reveals a dynamic political terrain that defies human control and requires periodically rescaling political organization and democratic practices.

My analysis has focused on the encounter between global civil war and planetary democracy in its incipient form. The interaction between these two hyperobjects involves more than a dialectic relation between two seemingly totalizing entities. It involves a vast web of encounters between diverse processes of militarization and the efforts to cultivate forms of life outside the production and reproduction of global violence. The encounters of these viscous surfaces take a number of forms. They appear in the confrontations between the extension of public surveillance and artists efforts to satirize or subvert these programs. They appear between weapons manufacturers and university, city-wide, or national divestment campaigns. They appear between the ideology that suggests “the world is a battlefield” and the democratic vision of the World Social Forum, seeking to replace a few of the battlefields with open spaces of encounter.

4 | The Urban Question and the Scales of Politics

The previous chapter posed the question of the city's distinctive relations to political-economic processes through the work of Hardt and Negri. They see the city as a privileged space of production that has eclipsed the factory as a pivotal site for struggles over subjectivity and the organization of the social body of the multitude. This approach suggests that aleatory encounters within cities contain democratic energies entangled with global political forces. The examination of urban space within Hardt and Negri's thought provides an implicit response to what social theorists have conceptualized as the "urban question." The urban question names a problematic of the relations located between society and space, on the one hand, and the city and global capitalism, on the other. Hardt and Negri cast the question as a matter of responding to imperial power operating on a global scale. This same question has, however, been posed, framed, and answered in distinct ways by thinkers working in different traditions.

Manuel Castells's *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach* provides a formative account of the relations between cities and capitalist society. Castells poses the urban question in a historical and epistemological framework, as a matter of a "scientific theory" of the relation between the capitalist mode of production, its corresponding social formation, and the city.¹ Subsequent debates over the urban question have offered

¹ Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979), 64. Castells sought to shift social theory away from the concept of urban culture that associates "the urban" with normativities of modernity and development while sidelining questions of material conditions at work in the formation of cities. Although Castells's formulation of the urban question emphasized power relations in the study of cities, the influence of a strong Althusserian structuralism reduced the study of cities to the epiphenomenal workings of a totalizing capitalist structure. Castells's account and the debates surrounding it would shape Marxist urban sociology and geography by focusing urban studies on the power relations between labor and capital. For a detailed account of the problems that stem from Castells's

differing approaches to expanding the scope of the question by focusing on the location and distribution of agency within and between cities.² Adopting a historical materialist approach, Neil Brenner succinctly frames the urban question as it has been posed by Marxist geography as a problematic with deliberate, productive ambiguity. He sees two overlapping dimensions of the urban question: “On the one hand, the urban question refers to the role of cities as sociospatial arenas in which the contradictions of capitalist development are continually produced and fought out. On the other hand, the urban question refers to the historically specific epistemic frameworks through which capitalist cities are interpreted.”³ That is, the urban question involves both material processes of urbanization in the context of contemporary capitalism and the concepts formed in the design, planning, and study of cities. By material, here, I mean the narrow terms of historical materialism, as the accumulation of capital in and through cities as well as the contradictions that result from this accumulation process. Brenner sees cities and global capitalism as co-constitutive. He ascribes agency to processes at a number of scales examining the supra- and sub- urban processes in the formation of contemporary capitalist cities.⁴ The urban question proves inextricably tied to multiple scales of politics and their intersections.

“epistemological critique” of urban studies see Peter Saunders, *Social Theory and the Urban Question* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987), 174 – 182.

² Castells sought to discredit urban theories (on both the left and right) that relied on the rhythms and habits of everyday life in their understanding of the city. Instead, he provided a framing in which “[t]he practices of individuals . . . can be explained only through a scientific theory of structure” (Saunders, 170). In contrast to Castells, I wish to suggest that habit, rhythm, and everyday life need not be understood in opposition to structures. A notion of structure less rigid than Castells’s opens a space for thinking about rhythm and everyday life as both forming and formed by structural conditions.

³ Brenner, 362.

⁴ Brenner, 362.

Brenner's work builds on the influential work of David Harvey, and a return to Harvey's thought helps further clarify the trajectory of debates about the urban question. Harvey has characterized his approach as "historical-geographical materialism" in which space plays an important role in understanding the continued expansion of capital as well as the formation of a democratic politics in opposition to capitalism.⁵ Harvey's formulation expands the scope of the urban question, the framework for understanding cities, and their relations to capitalism. In Harvey's recent work on urban geography, the city reflects collective answers to numerous political questions: "the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kind of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold."⁶ The city forms at the intersection of social, political-economic, ecological, and aesthetic concerns.

Pushing back against the structuralism of Castells, Harvey sees potential for class struggle in the thought and practice of diverse urban social movements. He stretches the boundaries of inquiry within Marxist urban geography, modifying it through engagements with everyday, lived space. By folding in new domains for consideration, such as aesthetics and ecology, Harvey expands the urban question beyond the immediate and conventional concerns of political economy. He pays close attention to the multiple scales in which the social, economic, and political life of cities participate. Framing the urban question as a matter of organizing anti-capitalist politics through the city and democratizing the process of urbanization, his work makes the urban question both political and scalar.

⁵ David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 15.

⁶ David Harvey, *Rebel Cities* (New York: Verso, 2012), 4.

Harvey has not been alone in expanding the terms of the urban question. The group of writings loosely gathered together under the name New Materialism, incorporating work from ontology, philosophy of science, and ecocriticism, have also offered a unique framing of the urban question, albeit in less explicit terms. New Materialists take notice of the smallest and most subtle forms of agency. The work on cities coming from this body of thought carries the urban question through an historical and epistemological inquiry, in the line of Castells, to the realm of the ontological. For New Materialists, cities embody forms of complexity that bring humans, nonhuman animals, and things into political and social assemblages irreducible to familiar categories of “nature” and “culture.”⁷ As a representative of this approach, I focus on the work of Manuel De Landa. He expands the terms of the urban question to include the intersection of linguistics, biology, and geology, each set on a number of temporal and spatial scales.⁸

Harvey’s “historical-geographical materialism” and De Landa’s “New Materialism” share a common problematic: both shift the urban question away from historical and epistemological inquiry, in the lines of Castells, and toward an expansion of the forces and agencies included in political economy. Both also lean heavily on a dynamic understanding of scale in their cartographic approach. The two fields have rarely entered into the same theoretical conversations. But in this chapter I draw these two approaches to urban geography together to see how they can inform one another. I bring Harvey’s politically engaged vision of social justice to New Materialist thinking on the

⁷ For a full account of New Materialism see Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010). My understanding of the approach is influenced by Jane Bennett’s *Vibrant Matter*. See also William E. Connolly, “The ‘New Materialism’ and the Fragility of Things,” *Millennium* 41.3 (2013): 399 – 412.

⁸ Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (New York: Zone Books, 2000).

city while simultaneously deepening Harvey's thought by expanding his understanding of social and political life to processes and publics that extend beyond the human. Through this encounter between historical-geographical materialism and New Materialism, the thematic of scale comes to refer to the numerous planes of organization including but not limited to the spatial extension of capitalist development. Whereas Castells's framings have focused on the historical arc of urbanization and capitalism and the epistemology of studying this relation, the encounter staged between Harvey and De Landa's thought explores connections between ontology, political practice, and ethical cultivation. By the ontological dimension again I mean the ways the New Materialists challenge subject/object, human/nonhuman, and culture/nature binaries by attributing differential degrees of agency to both sides of these divisions and by exploring nonhuman processes imbricated within human cultures. Reading Harvey and De Landa as complementary framings of the urban question provides us with a robust understanding of the relation between cities and other scales of democratic, egalitarian political organizing.

The first two sections of the chapter work at the level of social ontology. They examine how the encounter between historical-geographical materialism and new materialism broadens and deepens our understanding of urban political economy. The first section examines the concept of historical process in historical-geographical materialism, beginning to push this approach beyond the treatment of historical processes as synonymous with capitalist accumulation. The section proceeds by differentiating urban process from capitalist process and noting the forms of social complexity that begin to appear when cities serve both as and more than incubators for capitalist surplus. The second section examines historical processes through De Landa's approach to

nonlinear history. It elaborates on historical processes irreducible to capitalist accumulation and considers their interaction with the built environments of cities. The third section develops a more subtle theorization of the agentic powers of bodies, one that is closely attuned to the political potentials within the informal sectors of cities. By expanding understandings of historical processes and bodies, I seek not only to add sites of agency to a political field, understood as a settled space of preexisting actors and mechanisms. The aim, additionally, is to show how closer attention to the workings of historical processes and bodies changes our understanding of causal relations. Through a consideration of the scalar relations that shape the urban question, nonlinear causal dynamics such as feedback loops emergence come into focus.

The final section draws lessons on the spatialization of society from historical-geographical and new materialism. It identifies the contributions of this conversation to the theory of scale developed throughout this project. In particular, it explores how the spatial and scalar sensitivities of alternative approaches to architectural theory might inform the practice of political theory. In this conclusion, I suggest ways in which the political theorist might periodically think as an architect, offering insights into the spatiality of power and resistance in the contemporary political moment.

I conclude the project with this chapter because it provides a more dynamic map of the multitude – the social body constituted by the heterogeneous movements for self-government and radical democratic organization. This chapter seeks to consider the urban question as it pertains to the multitude, that is to say, the organization of a multitude in and through cities. Its inquiry into the relation between cities and global systems involves clarifying the forms of urban governmentality within Empire and identifying the spaces

of emergence, organization, and vitality through which the multitude is embodied. How could a planetary social body constitute itself just as the very substance of its being is shifting rapidly – at a moment when human settlements expand in ways that alter ecosystems, climate systems, and geopolitical power relations on a planetary scale? What are its anchorages and points of leverage on imperial and capitalist institutions? How are its diverse constituencies organized? What possibilities of organization become available as bodies – human and nonhuman – are redistributed through global urbanization? The urban question as I formulate it concerns the spatial distribution of Empire and the multitude. It provides a problematic within which to think about politics on a planetary scale while maintaining concern for deep democracy. As a problematic it does not solve in advance all the issues it poses. Rather, it provides a perspective from which to enact possibilities and then to review their effects.

Disaggregating Historical Processes

Harvey and De Landa approach urban geography with the common aim of understanding the long *durée* social transformations shaping and shaped by cities. As a result of this historically extended lens both thinkers work not only in spatial terms of the city and urban scale but also in temporal terms represented by their notions of urban process. While their images diverge in important respects, for both, the urban process attests to the constant changes of the city – movements of populations, changes of regimes, urban metabolisms of commerce and transit, and the ever-changing face of the built environment – and to the significance of the urban scale in modulating global processes. For both Harvey and De Landa, the urban process interacts with more general historical processes that exceed the urban milieu. Through engagements with these two

distinct social ontologies, I pursue an expanded notion of historical process that includes the movements of matter and energy broadly conceived. This notion of historical process sees history as the movement of diverse intertwined processes. Capitalist processes form an important part of this historical account but encounter and interact with biological and ecological processes irreducible to capitalism. The complex scalar relations that come into focus convey the nonlinear effects of the city in global capitalism. The position of the city relative to larger historical processes demonstrates the ways in which small shifts in the urban fabric produce dramatic effects at other scales.

For Harvey historical process acquires its meaning in the tradition of historical materialism. Harvey's thinking about urban space emerges within his return to and revitalization of Marx's *Capital*. The encounter between geography and Marxist political-economy staged by Harvey altered the social ontology of Marxism as well as the political engagements of geography. To understand the workings of capital requires attention to its mobility, to the movement and distribution of labor, to spaces of production, and to the land on which labor toils and through which rent is extracted. Geographic accounting of the spatial dimensions of capitalism produces "historical-geographical materialism," a method attentive to the spatial distributions of capital and the geographic fragmentation of class struggle.⁹ The importance of a geographic dimension for thinking about capital comes through most clearly in Harvey's notion of a "spatial fix," a geographic

⁹ Harvey suggests, "We need far better ways to understand if not resolve politically the underlying tension between what often degenerates into either a temporal teleology of class triumphalism (now largely represented by the triumphalism of the bourgeoisie declaring the victorious end of history) or a seemingly incoherent and uncontrollable geographical fragmentation of class and other forms of social struggle in every nook and cranny of the world" (Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 55).

reorganization of contradictions within capitalism designed to avert or contain crises.¹⁰

Colonization and imperialism embody spatial fixes to which Marx was attuned.¹¹

Neoliberalism presents its own set of geographic maneuvers designed to suspend contradictions within capitalism. This includes the complex geography of inequality formed within and between cities.

The city appears as a node in Harvey's analysis of uneven development and in his examination of urbanization as a process of capital growth. Harvey portrays the city as a dynamic space embedded in the relations of capital through the process of urbanization:

Cities have arisen through the geographical and social concentration of a surplus product. Urbanization has always been, therefore, a class phenomenon of some sort, since surpluses have been extracted from somewhere and from somebody, while control over the use of the surplus typically lies in the hands of the few ... This general situation persists under capitalism, of course, but in this case there is a rather different dynamic at work. Capitalism rests, as Marx tells us, upon the perpetual search for surplus value (profit). But to produce surplus value capitalists have to produce a surplus product. This means that capitalism is perpetually producing the surplus product that urbanization requires. The reverse relation also holds. Capitalism needs urbanization to absorb the surplus products it perpetually produces. In this way an inner connection emerges between the development of capitalism and urbanization.¹²

Let's focus on the ways in which this quotation defines the distinctions and overlaps between capitalist process and the process of urbanization. As Harvey formulates this relation, cities work as incubators for capital expansion while containing the political and revolutionary volatility at work in capitalist, urbanizing processes. Cities have long formed from concentrations of surplus products that predate capital, and so capitalist and

¹⁰ David Harvey, *Limits to Capital* (London: Verso, 1999), 415 – 417. See also Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 23, 54.

¹¹ Marx's work on colonization, particularly through the discussion of "primitive" or "original" accumulation has been the subject of interesting recent scholarship on Marx as a thinker of political violence. See Jason Read, *Micro-Politics of Capital*, 19 – 25. See also chapter 3 of this dissertation.

¹² Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 5.

urban processes are intertwined but do not coincide exactly. Nonetheless, Harvey emphasizes the contemporary function of urbanization as it pertains to the organization and growth of capitalist surplus. Under capitalism the “geographical and social concentration” induced by urbanization absorbs surplus products in order to maintain seemingly endless growth.

The urban absorption of surplus capital and containment of political potential in surplus labor have focused on a number of different spaces and scales of construction in the city. The clearest example of capitalist and urban processes intersecting appears in Haussmann’s rebuilding of Paris. Haussmann’s urban planning is best known for the open spaces that enabled the suppression of mass dissent and its marginalization of workers and the poor.¹³ Harvey notes that these large construction projects also suppressed social unrest in another less direct fashion. The grand boulevards and public works designed by Haussmann required massive expenditures of labor and capital. The result was the stabilization of a crisis first appearing in Paris, but also unfolding across Europe, involving “unemployed surplus capital and surplus labor side-by-side.”¹⁴ The absorption of surplus labor and capital through urbanization involved imagining the city at a different scale: “Haussmann thought of the city on a grander scale, annexed the

¹³ As Merrifield observes, “Haussmann’s first characteristic was an immense hatred of the masses, of the poor, of rootless homeless populations, the wretched and ragged victims of his giant wrecker-ball” (Merrifield, *The New Urban Question*, 36). Although Haussmann’s designs for Paris include public works, his notion of the public rests on a privileging of the bourgeoisie and contempt for the poor. Hardt and Negri’s call for a politics based on the common as opposed to the public might be understood in this context. Whereas the public involves a mobilization of state power, potentially to the exclusion of workers and the poor, the common represents an expansive democratic energy crossing lines of class, race, gender, and sexuality. See chapter four of this dissertation. In my discussion of Machiavelli and Bennett, I retain a notion of the public closer to Hardt and Negri’s “common” than Haussmann’s “public works.” See chapter one of this dissertation.

¹⁴ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 7.

suburbs, and redesigned whole neighborhoods ... rather than just bits and pieces of the urban fabric.”¹⁵ The city no longer represented merely the sum of its parts. Instead, Haussmann imagined the city as a larger object of government in which the built environment could be remade *en masse*. The result was construction on a new scale that could both absorb surplus capital and contain the revolutionary potential of surplus labor. Following Haussman’s example, future instances of urbanization would defer social crises at national and global scales. Robert Moses would enact similar reforms in the New York metropolitan area, linking the suburbs to the urban fabric through a vast network of highways and in the process resolving problems of surplus capital and labor.¹⁶

An even more substantial rescaling of the urban process takes place under neoliberalism. Contemporary urbanization “has now become genuinely global, in part through the astonishing integration of financial markets that use their flexibility to debt-finance urban projects from Dubai to São Paulo and from Madrid and Mumbai to Hong Kong and London.”¹⁷ The expansion of this process relies on new financial institutions to continue seemingly endless modes of debt-financed construction. Cities become nodes in a global network of surplus capital movement. Alongside debt-financed mega-projects, fortified enclaves produce new patterns of spatial segregation whereby high walls and private security guards inscribe and enforce socio-economic separations. Paradoxically, “the physical distances separating rich and poor have decreased at the same time that the mechanisms to keep them apart have become more obvious and complex.”¹⁸ Neoliberal

¹⁵ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 7.

¹⁶ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 9.

¹⁷ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 12.

¹⁸ Teresa P.R. Caldeira, “Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation,” in *Cities and Citizenship*, ed. James Holston (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 115. Caldeira notes that the inward facing design of fortified enclaves contradicts the principles of Haussmann’s urban

urbanism both dictates the process of large-scale urbanization and produces more complex and diffuse practices of withdrawal from the public sphere.

For Harvey the real stuff of history emerges from capitalist dimensions of urbanization. In his account urban processes largely coincide with capitalist processes insofar as the significant dimensions of the urban process involve its encounters with and resolution of capitalist contradictions. Here, historical processes primarily entail the endless growth of capital. Urbanization, through its absorption of surplus products, becomes “historical” insofar as it enters into the process of capital accumulation.

Planetary Dynamics of Historical Processes

Although Harvey directs his attention to the overlap of urbanization and capitalism, he leaves room at the margins for divergence. For instance, by noting that urbanization as a concentration of surplus products preceded capitalism, Harvey hints at the existence of important dynamisms within urbanization irreducible to capital. He even seems to pose the possibility of other historical processes. De Landa’s work accentuates aspects of urbanization not wholly subsumed by capitalism. This is an understanding of urbanization as a historical process with a partial dynamic of its own, generated by a broader set of forces and tied to a more complex web of social relations. He directs attention to worlds of production beyond not only capitalist relations but humanism more broadly. This involves engaging a wider array of processes – biological, evolutionary, climatic, capitalist, and urbanizing – periodically converging and interacting with one another. Broadening Harvey’s understanding of historical processes through engagements

design committed to grand, open spaces (Caldeira, 125). However, the spatial separation of classes embodied by enclaves carries with it the legacy of Haussmann’s disdain for the urban poor.

with De Landa's nonhumanist and nonlinear approach to process may provide a richer image of the city and a more dynamic account of forces at work in political economy.

De Landa expands the notion of historical processes to include "cosmological and evolutionary history in addition to human history."¹⁹ Cosmological processes include "natural" systems – climate, ocean currents, patterns of drought, and intensified storms. However, none of these systems is without cultural, human imbrications. This is a notion of historical process that extends to nonhuman bodies and forces playing active roles in the constitution of society. This nonhuman nature is not set in opposition to "the human" or "culture;" it is often bound to the human as biological process or defined through ecosystems involving encounters with humans. However, De Landa moves beyond an understanding of cosmological processes limited to familiar designations of "the natural." He sees the vast urbanization of the planet, now visible from space, as a process mineralization by which flows of matter and energy moving on a planetary scale have formed an "urban exoskeleton" no less significant than the evolutionary development of bone.²⁰

To envision society crossing familiar conceptual thresholds, De Landa's social ontology engages assemblages composed of the human and the nonhuman, nature and culture, and "products of historical processes."²¹ Within an assemblage, constituent components continue to exercise their own capacities while entering into a larger-scale

¹⁹ Manuel De Landa, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 28.

²⁰ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 27. Mike Davis observes, "Urban inequality in the Third World is visible even from space: satellite reconnaissance of Nairobi reveals that more than half of the population lives on just 18 percent of the city area" (Davis, 95).

²¹ De Landa, *New Philosophy*, 2.

entity with capacities that exceed the sum of its parts.²² It is through the concept of assemblage that De Landa “bridge[s] the level of individual persons and that of the largest social entities (such as territorial states) through an embedding of assemblages in a succession of micro- and macro- scales.”²³ Assemblages exhibit the qualities of the parts from which they are formed, their relative micro-scale, as well as constituting a new macro-scale with its own set of capacities.

De Landa’s expanded field of historical processing and attendant spatiality complicates historical-geographical materialism as a framework of political economic analysis. It is an ontological approach, in part because it shows by comparison the implicit ontology in other approaches and also because it works to break the nature/culture, human/nonhuman, and cause/agent dualities often circulating in historical-geographical materialism. Through expanded notions of history, process, and society, De Landa emphatically resists the reduction of historical process to capitalist process. This distinction becomes clear in his insistence on the complexity of economic relations. Although sympathetic to the projects of Marxist sociology and geography, he disaggregates the processes and institutions gathered together under the heading of “capitalism” more radically than Harvey’s approach allows: “The conceptual confusion

²² De Landa uses “larger-scale” to mean something different from extensive space that would imply a concentric understanding of scale. By “larger-scale” he denotes a scale containing a large quantity of energy and a higher order of complexity, as a result of more numerous components, than other scales: “the meaning of the expression ‘larger-scale’. Its usual meaning is geometric, as when ... one says that a street is the longest one in a city, or that one nation-state occupies a larger area than another. But there is also a physical meaning of the expression that goes beyond geometry. In physics, for example, length, area and volume are classified as *extensive* properties, a category that also includes amount of energy and number of components. It is in this latter extensive sense, not the geometric one, that I use the expression ‘larger-scale’” (De Landa, *New Philosophy*, 6 – 7).

²³ De Landa, *New Philosophy*, 17.

engendered by all the different uses of the word “capitalism” (as “free enterprise” or as “industrial mode of production” or, more recently, as “world-economy”) is so entrenched that it makes an objective analysis of economic power almost impossible.”²⁴ De Landa invokes the notion of antimarkets in order to transcend the conceptual baggage tied to “capitalism.” Borrowing this notion from Ferdinand Braudel, antimarkets capture a specific dimension of political economy, used “exclusively to refer to a certain segment of the population of commercial and industrial institutions.”²⁵ The term antimarket should not be confused with the rhetoric of “naturally” equilibrating markets emerging through the removal of state intervention, an image invoked in popular neoliberal discourse (but actually a discarded fragment of liberalism). Instead, antimarkets refer to the power relations necessary for producing and controlling markets. By resisting any formal analysis of surplus value, the concept highlights the role of power in political-economic structures.

De Landa complicates the forms of causation at work in the formation of society by further dissecting the forces within capitalism:

Resisting the temptation to reduce complex institutional dynamics to a single factor (e.g., antimarket economics) is even more important when considering the great circuitry of trigger flows that formed the basis for the Industrial Revolution. No doubt, antimarkets played a key role in the conjunction of trigger flows (coal, steam, cotton, iron, raw labor, skills) that made up the factory towns and the industrial conurbations. But here, too, other destratified elements, other particle accelerators were necessary.²⁶

His concern with this “single factor” targets a monolithic understanding of capitalism governed by efficient, linear causality. He offers in its place an image of society

²⁴ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 48.

²⁵ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 48.

²⁶ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 266.

produced at the intersection of multiple processes periodically interrupted by radical changes emerging from the confluence of seemingly minor forces. While I follow his resistance to a reductive account of political economy, the concept of capitalism might be recovered by referring to a historically specific mode of production, social formation, forms of subjectivity, commodities, and dispositions to nature. De Landa focuses too heavily on disaggregating capitalism and seems periodically to lose sight of the assemblage as more than the sum of its parts. Reference to antimarkets fails to convey the expansiveness of this elaborate system of interconnections and its hegemony as an aggregate of economic and political relations. The term capitalism names this larger entity. One can follow De Landa's methodological suggestion by treating capitalism as an open system which interacts with other processes and systems at its porous borders. Here the methodological move is, as Connolly suggests, to "treat economic markets *as merely one type of imperfect self-regulating system in a cosmos composed of innumerable, interacting open systems.*"²⁷

In this focus on multiple interacting open systems, including capitalism, cities serve not only as sites for the deposit of surplus products, as Harvey would see it, but also as "veritable transformers of matter and energy."²⁸ Technologies of urban construction exert influence on socio-spatial organization. For instance, the design of miniaturized motors for use in elevators in conjunction with the availability of mass produced iron enabled the construction of skyscrapers. These intertwined processes of electrification and metallization exerted a centripetal effect in which growing city centers attracted

²⁷ Connolly, *The Fragility of Things*, 25.

²⁸ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 76.

unprecedented concentrations of population, industry, and commerce.²⁹ The availability of combustion engines in personal automobiles had the opposite effect, granting urban residents who could afford cars access to suburbs.³⁰ Considered within their effects on capitalism, these technological developments produce distinct effects in cities that interact with the organization of production and the distribution of wealth. When approached from the broader perspective of movements of matter and energy, the dramatic changes in the built environment brought about through electrification and metallization represents a geological shift. The mineralization of the city – its appropriation of matter and energy to produce a built environment – changes fundamentally. This materialist approach, a critical approach inflected by the ontological attunements of new materialism, captures the intersection of historical processes of urbanization with the development of capitalism. However, it also maintains the irreducibility of historical processes to the framework of political economy.

A growing body of thought in urban sociology and geography adopts an approach to the crossings of nature and culture that shape cityscapes. Eric Klinenberg’s “social autopsy” of the 1995 Chicago heatwave “treat[s] the city as a complex social system of integrated institutions that touch *and* interpenetrate in a variety of ways.”³¹ The climatic

²⁹ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 92.

³⁰ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 92. In the US the centrifugal effects of widespread automobility would have been more limited had it not been for two intervening factors: national nuclear defense strategy and racism in the form of “white flight.” Suburbs grew in size as a result of white populations moving out of urban centers to produce *de facto* segregation, the construction of an Interstate highway system that was heavily subsidized by the federal government, and a decentralization of the population supported by the military as a move toward nuclear resiliency. See Stephen Graham, “Cities as Strategic Sites: Place Annihilation and Urban Geopolitics,” in *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics*, ed. Stephen Graham (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 42.

³¹ Eric Klinenberg, *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 22. Emphasis in original.

event of the heatwave cannot be understood solely in its meteorological dimensions, that is, as a purely natural event. Instead, the heatwave refers to weather phenomena. They impinge upon and amplify urban inequalities. This approach attends to the ways in which “the nature, culture, and politics of the city crystallized in Chicago in the summer of 1995.”³² The extreme event of the heatwave brings processes of urban inequality into stark contrast; it “integrates and activates a broad set of social institutions and generates a series of social processes that expose the inner workings of the city.”³³ The isolation of urban poor citizens, the degradation of urban hotel residences, the privatization of social services, and the social abandonment of neighborhoods, already deadly on a level below the spectrum of social visibility, acquire new degrees and scales of lethality.³⁴

Drawing on a similar approach, Matthew Gandy traces water flows as they move between the operations of capital and the material dynamism characterizing larger planetary processes. Water crosses domains of life moving from visible spaces of the landscape to invisible spaces of infrastructure. Both landscape and infrastructure find their conceptual origins in the “rationalizing impulse of modernity,” landscape from the Dutch term referencing the “drainage and regularization of land” and infrastructure as an emerging project of the modern state.³⁵ For Gandy, human relations to water reflect the multiple understandings of modernity:

Water, in its different relationships with urban space, touches on ... the “modernization” of water supply, especially from the middle decades of the nineteenth century, to the “modern” experience of bathing, hygiene, and public

³² Klinenberg, 13.

³³ Klinenberg, 32.

³⁴ Klinenberg, 24.

³⁵ Matthew Gandy, *The Fabric of Space: Water, Modernity, and the Urban Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 3.

health, and finally to the advent of “modernist” approaches to design, which still persist in aesthetic if not ideological terms.³⁶

These partially overlapping notions of the “modern,” from the technoscientific and biopolitical to the architectural and aesthetic, shape human interactions with water. The process of “modernization” allows technocratic practices of water distribution to override democratic decision making. It is through this “hydro-social cycle” that the materiality of water is folded into social life.³⁷

The interaction between evolutionary and planetary processes and urbanization appears clearly in the example of Lagos. Gandy considers the interactions between water, the spread of malaria, and colonialism unfolding at the urban scale. The materiality of water constantly enters political life in Lagos: “its presence and the disruptive effects of flooding; its absence and the dangers and indignities experienced in the “infrastructure-free” parts of the city; and its role in the transmission of disease.”³⁸ The lack of water infrastructure, leaving only one home in twenty connected to the municipal water supply, reflects an assault on urban investment imposed by structural adjustment.³⁹ However, the most extensive remaking of the cityscape in relation to water came about in the 1940s with the draining of more than 6 square miles of swamps in an effort to contain the spread of malaria.⁴⁰ The project, conducted by British colonial administrators, impinged upon several scales beyond the city. It represented an exercise in the centralization of colonial power: “the swamp drainage scheme systematically extended control over land

³⁶ Gandy, *Fabric of Space*, 4.

³⁷ Gandy, *Fabric of Space*, 5.

³⁸ Gandy, *Fabric of Space*, 83 – 84.

³⁹ Matthew Gandy, “Learning from Lagos,” *New Left Review* 33 (2005): 46, 50. See also Mike Davis 152.

⁴⁰ Gandy, *Fabric of Space*, 91.

by the colonial state.”⁴¹ Furthermore, it began to consolidate a global network of scientific expertise on malariology, a technocratic response met with ambivalence by those concerned with complex social dynamics occluded by the vast colonial project.⁴² The case of Lagos demonstrates the importance of expanding the analytical frame of historical processes beyond its capitalist horizon. As Gandy suggests:

The *independent agency of nature* – in this case represented by the spread of malaria-carrying mosquitoes in response to irrigation policy – should be woven into the analytical frame. This is not to argue that mosquitoes are “actors” in the sense of an undifferentiated causal network that downplays human sentience, but to highlight the active role of biophysical factors in *historical processes*.⁴³

The interactions between water, malaria, and colonial urban planning, that is, of nature and culture entangled and intertwined, constitute the complex field of historical processes.

Water continues to remake the urban space of Lagos with the image of rising tides contributing to new forms of spatial segregation built into the metropolitan region. The design for Eko Atlantic, a privatized city built in response to climate change, has rescaled the process through which inequality manifests spatially. The city will be built on an island of sand dredged from the Atlantic and envisioned by developers as a reclamation of the land lost to the last 100 years of climate change and rising sea levels. The project also involves the construction of a “Great Wall of Lagos,” which developers claim will control flooding and further erosion of the coastline. Private administration and security will govern and police the city. Following on the legacy of Haussmann, design concepts

⁴¹ Gandy, *Fabric of Space*, 94. “The drainage of the Lagos swamps reveals a far more tightly centralized and state-directed mode of government control than the forms of “indirect rule” that had hitherto characterized the colonial project in Nigeria” (96).

⁴² Gandy, *Fabric of Space*, 95 – 96.

⁴³ Gandy, *Fabric of Space*, 102. My emphasis.

of the city display grand boulevards lined with high rises and skyscrapers, dotted with yacht basins and green space.⁴⁴

The fortified enclave takes on a new scale in Eko Atlantic. The walls that once embodied fears of social heterogeneity (often coded as concerns about crime) now return as barriers between different ecological worlds. The walls of the city are meant to encircle a space safe from flooding and chaotic climate, yet they serve as an even more extreme form of spatial segregation, a fortification set against the perceived disorder of slum construction, urban poverty, and informal urban life. The environmental journalist Martin Lukacs sees Eko Atlantic as a prototype for new models and practices of socioeconomic segregation through urban design:

Eko Atlantic is where you can begin to see a possible future – a vision of privatized green enclaves for the ultra rich ringed by slums lacking water or electricity, in which a surplus population scramble for depleting resources and shelter to fend off the coming floods and storms. Protected by guards, guns, and an insurmountable gully – real estate prices – the rich will shield themselves from the rising tides of poverty and a sea that is literally rising. A world in which the rich and powerful exploit the global ecological crisis to widen and entrench already extreme inequalities and seal themselves off from its impacts – this is climate apartheid.⁴⁵

With the construction of Eko Atlantic, crisis capitalism has seized on the threat of climate change in order to further extend already stark inequalities and build fortresses of private wealth on a new scale. The plan for the privatized city threatens future urban bulldozing, forced evictions, and slum clearance, practices feared by nearby residents of the island city. Social abandonment and environmental injustice can already be felt. Rising sea levels have been reported by nearby communities, causing their own form of

⁴⁴ Eko Atlantic, “Image Gallery,” <http://www.ekoatlantic.com/media/image-gallery>.

⁴⁵ Martin Lukacs, *The Guardian*, “New, Privatized African City Heralds Climate Apartheid,” January 21, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/true-north/2014/jan/21/new-privatized-african-city-heralds-climate-apartheid>.

environmentally induced displacement.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Eko Atlantic has displaced more equitable alternatives that embody what Rob Nixon calls an “environmentalism of the poor.”⁴⁷ For instance, low-cost floating structures adaptable to rising sea levels have proven effective in the nearby Makoko slum.⁴⁸ This alternative remains free of the anti-social dimensions of private enclosure and, as a result, more amendable to democratic, egalitarian organizations of space.

Inequalities built directly into cityscapes are not limited to Eko Atlantic. Climate change adaptation serves as a new terrain for confrontations between mobilization for economic justice and exercises of power through economic segregation.⁴⁹ Eko Atlantic and the debate over climate adaptation demonstrate the convergence of planetary processes and capitalist spatial segregation. As these two processes intersect, the notion of historical processes should be expanded to include what Gandy refers to as the “explicit recognition of the mix of biophysical and cultural influences that shape urban space.”⁵⁰ With this recognition will come a new politics of environmental justice in which democratic action at a number of scales partially shapes, but never fully masters,

⁴⁶ The discussion of Eko Atlantic remains limited primarily to journalistic sources. For the issues referenced here see Stan Okenwa, *Daily Champion*, “Nigeria: Fear Grips Eko City as Lekki Residents Experience Sea Rise,” <http://allafrica.com/stories/201202100540.html>. Jude Njoku, *Vanguard*, “Nigeria: Raging Controversy Over City in Atlantic Ocean,” <http://allafrica.com/stories/201201250520.html>.

⁴⁷ Nixon sees the “environmentalism of the poor” as a response to “conjoined ecological and human disposability” (Nixon, 4). By blending together ecological and postcolonial critique, the writing of Ken Saro-Wiwa serves an important, if not formative, role in Nixon’s thinking about the environmentalism of the poor. Eko Atlantic demonstrates the resurgence of powerful financial forces and elites behind Saro-Wiwa’s execution. Funding for Eko Atlantic comes from a subsidiary of the Chagoury Group. Gilbert Chagoury, one of the two men behind the Chagoury group, was also an advisor to the military dictator Sani Abacha who executed Saro-Wiwa. On the Chagoury connections to Eko Atlantic see Lukacs.

⁴⁸ Lukacs.

⁴⁹ Margaux J. Hall and David C. Weiss, “Avoiding Adaptation Apartheid: Climate Change Adaptation and Human Rights Law,” *The Yale Journal of International Law* Vol. 37 (2012): 314.

⁵⁰ Gandy, *Fabric of Space*, 208.

the complexity of historical processes. Rather than the technocratic management of climate change, this involves envisioning new social relations – just ways of planning, building, and dwelling in cities – that consider adaptations and responses to climate change as an integral part of that social vision. The question of scale will prove indispensable:

The shift away from technocratic politics is also reflected in attempts to rethink the flow of water through urban space at different spatial scales, ranging from individual households, with the differentiation and reuse of water, to more complex community negotiations over wastewater treatment technologies, floodplain restoration, and even urban agriculture.⁵¹

Considering the ways in which the materiality of water enters political life at several scales exerts a democratizing effect on the hegemonic, technocratic forms of management. A multiscale social ontology facilitates democratic decision making at each scale of society: the household, community, and region. Scalar entanglements allow grassroots democratic actions to enter into and reshape larger social assemblages.

Bodies in the Informal City

Historical processes involve organizations of the bodies of humans, nonhumans, and things. Capitalism and urbanization, understood as distinct but overlapping historical processes, exert forces on bodies that reinforce, amplify, contest, or each process.

Understanding the contours of these processes requires a closer examination of the agentic powers of the bodies upon which they work. Harvey's ontology of bodies sets out from an engagement with Marx. Marx's approach to embodiment provides for Harvey "something to build upon rather than to negate ... The human body is a battleground

⁵¹ Gandy, *Fabric of Space*, 16 – 17.

within which and around which conflicting socio-ecological forces of valuation and representation are perpetually at play.”⁵² Harvey turns to Marx for a dynamics of embodiment that brings into focus both the extraction of value from laboring bodies and the transformative power of workers bodies to resist. I trace the way that this understanding of the body as labor power enables important lines of critique while nonetheless requiring modification and expansion to elucidate urban geopolitics.

By building on the work of Marx, Harvey offers a materialist understanding of bodies: “The particularity of the body cannot be understood independently of its embeddedness in socio-ecological processes ... [T]he body ... cannot be understood outside of the forces that swirl around it and construct it.”⁵³ The notion of a body defined in relation to material social forces draws lessons from the social constructionist or cultural turn influenced by deconstruction and poststructuralism. But it also pushes back against the perceived limits of this moment in political and social theory. Harvey finds important emancipatory potential in work on gender, sexuality, and race within social constructionist thought. By locating these axes of power in material social processes, he directly connects questions of gender, sexuality, and race to the functioning of capitalism.⁵⁴ This approach begins to move in the direction of what Diana Coole and Samantha Frost refer to as “critical materialism,” which “after the cultural turn

⁵² Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 116.

⁵³ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 16.

⁵⁴ “Class, racial, gender, and all manner of other distinctions are marked upon the human body by virtue of the different socio-ecological processes that do their work upon that body” (Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 99). For Harvey, attending to the intersection of material forces working on the body provides critical leverage for thinking about organizing bodies in resistance. I am not as convinced that social constructionist thought bracketed questions of collective resistance, but I see Harvey engaged in a politically energizing mode of theorization that makes practices of political intervention more explicit.

foregrounds an appreciation for just what it means to exist as a material individual with biological needs for survival yet inhabiting a world of natural and artificial objects, well-honed micropowers of governmentality, and the more anonymous but no less compelling effects of international economic structures.”⁵⁵ Harvey’s work sets us on our way to thinking about conditions of embodiment formed within but not entirely determined by economic structures.

The task of tracing the body in relation to larger social structures, be they capitalist, colonial, imperial, patriarchal, or heteronormative, leads Harvey to reconsider the concept of globalization. The term has taken on a number of different usages of which he remains wary. Neoliberal vocabularies equate it with the deregulation of capital flows, disciplining of labor, and selective fiscal austerity.⁵⁶ More recently “globalization” has served as a term that many on the left allowed “to displace the far more politically charged concepts of imperialism and neocolonialism.”⁵⁷ In these instances, the study of globalization described the diffuse economic, social, political, and cultural relations at work in the production and reproduction of an uneven, unequal world. At times, however, this work falls short of describing how these diffuse processes form larger assemblages of power and how these assemblages foster longer historical legacies of exploitation and domination.

These cautionary notes lead Harvey to consider globalization as a diverse set of processes working at a macro scale and changing in relation to bodies: “boiled down to its simplest determinations, globalization is about the socio-spatial relations between

⁵⁵ Diana Coole and Samantha Frost “Introducing the New Materialism” in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, ed. Coole and Frost (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 28.

⁵⁶ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 13.

⁵⁷ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 13.

billions of individuals.”⁵⁸ The politics of contemporary globalization involves identifying and transforming the effects of historical processes that organize bodies at the scale of the entire planet. His aim is to connect the scalar vocabularies of the body and globalization to notions that have otherwise worked in different corners of social thought separated by disciplinary boundaries and geographic imaginaries. The task is to think through the relations between scales: “These two discursive regimes – globalization and the body – operate at opposite ends of the spectrum in the scalar we might use to understand social and political life. But little or no systematic attempt has been made to integrate ‘body talk’ with ‘globalization talk.’”⁵⁹ Tracking the relays between body and globe, Harvey acknowledges multiple dimensions through which bodies are differentiated under globalization, but he chooses to focus on political-economic order.⁶⁰ The primacy of the economic domain in his approach to globalization might seem to reduce globalization to its economic dimensions. However, I read Harvey’s selective emphasis as a strategic move in that, rather than naturalizing the global economic order, highlights its unequal power relations and potential sites of transformation.

Examining the somatic dimensions of economic globalization leads Harvey to focus on the body as it enters the labor process and is translated to the global scale.⁶¹ In

⁵⁸ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 16

⁵⁹ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 15.

⁶⁰ Evidence of Harvey’s willingness to acknowledge globalization beyond the economic sphere dots his work. For example, “the globe never has been a level playing field upon which capital accumulation could play out its destiny. It was and continues to be an intensely variegated surface, ecologically, politically, socially, and culturally differentiated” (*Spaces of Hope* 33). Also, “Class, racial, gender, and all manner of other distinctions are marked upon the human body by virtue of the different socio-ecological processes that do their work upon that body” (Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 99).

⁶¹ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 16.

his account, the body is primarily that of “the worker” and its capacities are those of labor power:

the worker exchanges the use value of labor for the use value of the commodities that can be bought for the money wage. Exchanges of this sort are usually highly localized and place-specific. The worker must take his or her body to work each day ... But labor power is inserted as a commodity into a Money-Commodity-Money circulation process which easily escapes the spatiotemporal restraints of local labor markets and which makes for capital accumulation on a world stage.⁶²

Capital accumulation relies on the labor power of bodies transfigured into commodities in order to move beyond the domain of local labor markets. This connection between the local, place-specific effects of bodies and global processes of accumulation serves as the starting point for Harvey’s vision of labor organized at multiple geographic scales to regulate capital at each scalar domain.

Although focused on the body as it enters the labor process, Harvey also pluralizes the identity of the anti-capitalist left. One must commend his willingness to offer an expanded notion of class beyond the subjectivity of the factory worker.⁶³ In particular, Harvey resists the opposition between class struggle and rights-based politics. This division, and its privileging of a vanguard of industrial workers, leads to the presumptive dismissal of urban movements:

If urban social movements are considered at all, they are typically construed as either mere offshoots or displacements of these more fundamental struggles. Within the Marxist tradition ... urban struggles tend to be either ignored or dismissed as devoid of revolutionary potential or significance. Such struggles are construed as being about issues of reproduction rather than production, or about rights, sovereignty, and citizenship, and therefore not about class.⁶⁴

⁶² Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 109.

⁶³ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 128.

⁶⁴ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 120.

Harvey sees no reason to draw such strong lines between movements. To do so would neglect the long history of “urban-based class struggles” and the strength of their connection to place.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the denigration of urban movements ignores the forms of exploitation occurring through the urban fabric, those “economies of dispossession and of predatory practices ... with respect to housing markets.”⁶⁶ The more important question for Harvey is how to relay social movements beyond the territorial limits of the city and into other scales of political action and mobilization. The nature of contemporary urban political economy weakens distinctions between class struggle and rights claims; it reveals overlaps and relays between political actions separated into these categories.⁶⁷

Processes other than capital accumulation, that is to say “metabolic, ecological, political, social, and psychological – that play key roles in relation to bodily practices and possibilities,” call for philosophical resources beyond the scope of historical-geographical materialism.⁶⁸ In particular, biopolitical regimes for regulating laboring bodies also involve the meticulous study of biological processes, interfaces between bodies and technology, and the position of the body in planetary, that is to say ecological and climatic, systems. De Landa, while never quite characterizing his work as a study of

⁶⁵ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 115 – 116. Urban-based class struggles include, but are not limited to “Paris from 1789 through 1830 and 1848 to the Commune of 1871, ... the Petrograd Soviet, the Shanghai Communes of 1927 and 1967, the Seattle General Strike of 1919, the role of Barcelona in the Spanish Civil War, the uprising in Córdoba in 1969, and the more general urban uprisings in the United States in the 1960s, the urban-based movements of 1968 (Paris, Chicago, Mexico City, Bangkok, and others including the so-called “Prague Spring,” and the rise of neighborhood associations in Madrid that fronted the anti-Franco movement in Spain around the same time” (Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 115).

⁶⁶ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 129.

⁶⁷ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 128 – 129.

⁶⁸ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 116.

biopolitics, locates bodies within the matrix of forces coming from historical processes beyond the workings of capitalism.

By examining bodies in relation to flows of matter and energy De Landa evokes biological and ecological processes which intersect, make possible, and periodically disrupt the workings of political economy. De Landa's study of bodies traces the history of biological processes intersecting with urban life. For De Landa, "[o]ur organic bodies are, in this sense, nothing but temporary coagulations in these flows: we capture in our bodies a certain portion of the flow at birth, then release it again when we die and micro-organisms transform us into a new batch of raw materials."⁶⁹ This approach might be called biopolitics, albeit in a different sense of the term than deployed by Foucault. Whereas Foucault writes a genealogy of how life comes to be defined through its treatment as an object of government, De Landa provides a historical sociology of how biological processes, already understood as life, infuse, trouble, and impinge upon politics. De Landa's conception of causality and political agency, focused on bodies as flows and coagulations differs greatly from Harvey's at times mechanistic scale jumping between the body and the globe. By following the neglected political effects of biological systems, De Landa provides an account of urban governmentality formed through the scalar relations of bodies and planetary systems. I seek to infuse this account with Harvey's conviction and sense of urgency, thereby bringing De Landa's sociological vision into a politically engaged register.

While early urban sociology considers the ecology of the city in metaphorical terms, De Landa finds an actual ecosystem in the transformations of matter and energy in

⁶⁹ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 104.

cities. For instance, he construes the food chain, the movement of biomass by which energy transfers from plants to herbivores and then onto carnivores, as a process altered by the agricultural practice focused on feeding urban centers.⁷⁰ At the same time medieval towns and cities consumed forests turning land and resources into urban space.

An ecological approach to urban political economy involves, in part, exploring its dependence upon and interaction with other ecosystems. Noteworthy influences come in the form of microscopic and massive ecosystems that play an extensive role in organization of urban life and commerce: “Both infectious diseases and changing weather patterns played a great role in urban history, making epidemics and famines part of the “biological regime” that dominated urban and rural life until the eighteenth century.”⁷¹ Evidence of the importance of interactions between micro-organisms and human bodies can be found in Foucault’s genealogy of urban form that traces shifts from the spatial relations of the plague stricken town to the punitive and carceral city plans.⁷² Climate plays an equally important role in the late middle ages and early modern period by influencing the amount and type of agricultural outputs. The “biological regime” formed through human experiences of climate and encounters with micro-organisms is not a nested scalar hierarchy in which political subjects move through influences emanating from concentric scales. Instead, it exhibits what Morton calls “scalar discrepancies” in which pressures emanating from different scales of being, in this case microorganisms and planetary climate systems, help to shape human life and the urban dimensions of life

⁷⁰ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 106.

⁷¹ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 106.

⁷² For a comparison of the punitive city and the carceral city see Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 129 – 130. See also chapter 2 of this dissertation.

in particular.⁷³ For instance, cities act as “‘heat islands,’ separated from their countrysides by a sharp difference in temperature.”⁷⁴

Such scalar discrepancies come into focus through the nonlinear dynamics of contagious disease. In particular, De Landa identifies the intersection of microorganisms, rat populations, and urban centralization that brought about the Black Death in Europe. The expansive spread of the plague in the fourteenth century depended upon three intersecting factors: the presence of rats with fleas likely to carry the microorganism, the presence of the plague in underground rodent colonies, and the connection of shipping routes between European cities.⁷⁵ Each of these factors provided a necessary condition for the epidemic that would emerge. However, no single factor served as the sufficient condition. The virulence of the plague meant that without a large population of microorganisms, a large population of rats capable of carrying the disease, and consolidated pathways of urban interconnection, any outbreak would be brief. The Black Death emerged from a series of amplifications between bodies and biological processes – of *Pasteurella pestis*, a particular species of rats, and well-traveled shipping lanes – across different scales. The spatial practices of strict separation and partition, characterizing the plague-stricken town identified by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, embody a scalar discrepancy of microorganisms reflected in urban form.⁷⁶ Human

⁷³ Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 34. See also chapter 4 of this dissertation.

⁷⁴ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 107.

⁷⁵ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 124. Much of De Landa’s account of the Black Death comes from William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Garden City, NJ: Anchor/Double Day, 1976), 146.

⁷⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 197. See also chapter 2 of this dissertation.

encounters with rats and microorganisms ushered in the diagram of the plague town, a new sociospatial formation.⁷⁷

While the diagram of the plague town represents one set of spatial practices connected to the control of disease, contemporary pest control campaigns operate on different understandings of spatiality in urban life. The movements of rats and other pests, says Dawn Biehler, defy modernist visions of space reliant upon clear public/private, nature/culture, and human/animal distinctions. For Biehler, pest control campaigns either target individual households, “making pest control a private responsibility despite broad-scale factors that sustained infestation” or they “launched top-down projects ... ignoring the small-scale dynamics.”⁷⁸ This insistence upon a simplified image of urban space downplays the complexity of urban ecology and its scalar relations. But as pest control campaigns attempted to maintain these divisions, “rats [nonetheless] scurried across property lines and breached crumbling foundations.”⁷⁹ Pests disclose the permeabilities, proximities, and encounters that define urban life. The movements of rats required an ecological approach in which controlling pests would also confront racial injustice reflected in residential segregation, poverty, urban politics, and federal housing policy.⁸⁰

Insisting upon strict public/private divisions, pest control campaigns sought to define the presence of rats, flies, bedbugs, and cockroaches as a natural phenomenon

⁷⁷ In a fashion similar to architecture, political theory engages in the construction of what Deleuze would call maps and diagrams. For Deleuze, this term refers to a blueprint never directly or exactly transposed onto society. See Deleuze *Foucault* 22. I focus on his example of panopticism as a map/diagram in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

⁷⁸ Dawn Day Biehler, *Pests in the City: Flies, Bedbugs, Cockroaches, and Rats* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 7.

⁷⁹ Biehler, 7.

⁸⁰ Biehler, 150.

devoid of political significance: “By narrowing their conception of infestation to either a public or private issue, reformers depoliticized urban ecology and sometimes even tried to isolate it from its community context.”⁸¹ In place of this depoliticized view of pests, Biehler writes a history of the city in which pests provide a cipher for examining the geography of urban inequality. She reveals patterns of environmental injustice by tracking ways in which landlords neglect properties based on lines of residential segregation: “Insiders in infested communities saw rats as fleshy manifestations of the ecology of injustice.”⁸² Furthermore, Biehler sees how an urban history of pests reveals insight into “the position of homes in public life.”⁸³ First, the gendering of domestic space often defined pest control as the work of wives and mothers thus adding to the unacknowledged labor of women. Secondly, households negotiated their relationships to the public sphere in different ways. Some sought to hide potentially stigmatizing pest infestations from the eyes of the state while others sought public protection from neglectful landlords.⁸⁴ In either case “the biological ecology of rats could not be separated from the political ecology of the city.”⁸⁵

In each instance, rats and other pests enter into the formation of political life in ways not yet fully appreciated by De Landa. Whereas De Landa notes the importance of

⁸¹ Biehler, 8. I am wary of the language “pests” and “infestation,” but Biehler mobilizes these terms in direct opposition to their stigmatizing and racialized invocations. Her project questions the techno-scientific approach to pest extermination pointing to the modernist vision underpinning this approach (and its failures). She seems particularly skeptical of what she calls “the exertion of human agency to manage urban nature and domestic space” (127). Furthermore, she sees pests as part of an ecology that defines urban life. While this ecology is the web through which environmental injustice and threats to health come into being, it also seems to embody democratic and egalitarian qualities of interconnection.

⁸² Biehler, 150.

⁸³ Biehler, 8.

⁸⁴ Biehler, 8.

⁸⁵ Biehler, 138.

biological processes and planetary processes in the history of urban transformation, I wish to suggest that these processes intersect with, impinge upon, and inflect social inequality, citizen activism, state action, and global political economy. The “biological regime” of which De Landa speaks, helps to structure the organization of bodies. As the relationship with micro-organisms, pests, and climate changed over time, the political organization of cities transformed from rigid, sovereign forms to more flexibly organized political-economic spaces. The scalar discrepancies between humans, micro-organisms, and climate have become even more radical and asymmetric as more extreme forms of precarity emerge through late capitalism.

De Landa’s political attunement seems more refined in his discussion of colonialism. In his biopolitical frame, European colonialism represents not only pervasive brutality and exploitation but attempts to reorganize life across the face of the planet. De Landa describes this as a twofold process in which, from the standpoint of biological history, Europe was “digesting the world, transforming it into a supply zone for the provision of energy and raw materials, a process that ... involved a great ecological and cultural homogenization. On the other hand, European nation-states began digesting their minorities, in the sense that the new disciplinary institutions embodied homogenizing criteria of normality to which everyone was now made to conform.”⁸⁶ Viewed from the global scale through a lens focused on the movements of matter and energy, one sees twin processes of European colonization abroad and imperial centralization within Europe. Europe rescaled internal territorial governance through disciplinary institutions and practices that gathered together human and nonhuman bodies under new spatial

⁸⁶ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 162.

arrangements. But at the same time, these colonizing and absorption processes promoted a precarity of capitalist civilization in general hardly noticed by most participants.

The process of European colonialism included the absorption and digestion of colonized languages. In particular, English-speaking colonizers “entered into a number of different contact situations through which linguistic items from foreign tongues penetrated English.”⁸⁷ Although contact situations altered English, these modifications tended to be temporary. The linguistic items of colonized peoples adopted by English-speakers rarely became permanent parts of the language; only a handful would make their way into regular use.⁸⁸ This process of linguistic subjugation (backed by colonial violence) played a role in the rise to prominence of English in global commerce, a field shaped in many ways by colonialism.⁸⁹

The regulation of bodies under discipline contributed to a process of “digestion” at work over a long time scale in Europe. De Landa draws upon Foucault’s study of discipline to explicate the regime of surveillance and spatial partitioning that migrates from towns to institutions in the eighteenth century. His materialist approach expands upon Foucault’s account in important ways, however. First, by treating discipline as a historical process, De Landa views it as “a mixture of materials that had been accumulating for centuries.”⁹⁰ Understanding discipline as a set of material practices

⁸⁷ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 241.

⁸⁸ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 241.

⁸⁹ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 242. The acceleration of communications through the telegraph and steam powered transportation and the large-circulation newspaper play important roles in English consolidating into a single language, or as De Landa prefers, a single “norm pool” (De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 242). He further notes that English possessed preadaptations that made it one possible candidate as a language of international finance. Conquest from France in 1066 CE left its effects on the English language, pressing it to become an analytical language, lacking most inflections and possessing a simple syntax (De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 195 – 196).

⁹⁰ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 159.

refutes the common reception among Marxists in which discipline is treated as a “discursive regime” closely akin to ideology.⁹¹ Discipline has material effects that shape the contemporary form of capitalism and the world beyond political economy. In addition to focusing a reading of Foucault on the materiality of discipline, De Landa notes how discipline reaches beyond the regulation of human life. Disciplinary measures cataloged and organized both human and nonhuman bodies: “the new disciplinary institutions processed more than human bodies: animals and plants, too, fell under a net of writing and observation.”⁹² Institutions for regulating the lives of nonhuman animals and plants included standardizing breed pedigrees for animals and agricultural practices that would only later come to be understood as controls over plant genetics.

In his analysis of the expansion of disciplinary power, De Landa attends to “microfeatures of bodily actions.”⁹³ Discipline seeks outcomes at the level of the body, understood as the individual, but it intervenes through tactics that target dispositions and parts of the body: “The new goal was to study bodies and break down their actions into basic traits, and then to empty them of their know-how and reprogram them with fixed routines.”⁹⁴ Elsewhere, De Landa refers to this scale of political intervention as “subpersonal components,” which function at a scale distinct from the individual body or person: “persons are not the smallest analytical unit that social science can study ... persons emerge from the interaction of subpersonal components, and ... some of these components may justifiably be called the smallest social entities.”⁹⁵ Contrary to Harvey’s

⁹¹ Harvey is a noteworthy example of those who see discipline as a “discursive regime” (Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 15).

⁹² De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 162.

⁹³ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 161.

⁹⁴ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 161.

⁹⁵ De Landa, *New Philosophy*, 47.

suggestion that “‘the body’ is surely the most micro from the standpoint of understanding the workings of society,”⁹⁶ De Landa finds a whole world of power and social relations that work in and on bodies as “microfeatures” and “subpersonal components.”

It is in the informal dimensions of urban life where microfeatures, those processes and relations below the level of the body-as-organic-whole, take on their greatest significance. These microfeatures and subpersonal components filter into formal urban decision-making apparatuses and compose much of the informal city. The informal refers to a number of different conditions of urban life, naming markets existing outside of municipal and/or state authorization, residency with precarious tenureship, and civil society broadly conceived. AbdouMaliq Simone explores the dimensions of the informal as it extends beyond the economic interactions of formally recognized markets. The informal involves a “heterogeneity of social collaborations.”⁹⁷ These social relations are diverse and amorphous yet they still have real effects on the urban fabric. Simone characterizes their form in a variety of ways: They are “affective bonds,” “diffuse forms of social mobilization and coordination,” a “hodgepodge,” “faint signals,” “flashes of important creativity,” “small eruptions in the social fabric,” and “micropolitics of alignment, interdependency, and exuberance.”⁹⁸ They exhibit a “throbbing” vibrant energy while remaining “highly tenuous and frequently clandestine.”⁹⁹ Their seemingly abstract qualities nonetheless produce substantial political effects, which are “diffuse but no less concrete” marking “small but important platforms from which to access new

⁹⁶ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 15.

⁹⁷ AbdouMaliq Simone, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 22.

⁹⁸ Simone, 12, 5, 1, 12, 12, 12, 12.

⁹⁹ Simone, 1, 5.

views.”¹⁰⁰ Informality represents a field of relations difficult to isolate and identify as discrete units. These relations are not a defining or determinative part of political life on their own but exert undeniable, even profound, cumulative effects.

This vast field of relations contains political possibilities not immediately evident within extant political vocabularies and approaches. The informal sector has produced substantial changes in its formal counterpart. It has absorbed over half the workforce in many African cities.¹⁰¹ In Latin America “a third of all city dwellers live in informal conditions.”¹⁰² This transformation becomes even more significant when considering construction of the urban fabric: “squatters and *favelados* build more square miles of city than governments, developers, architects, or anyone else.”¹⁰³

These shifts necessitate reframing the spatial concepts of historical-geographical materialism. The factory, as a privileged space of collective organizing and action, proves inadequate to describe networks of subcontracted labor engaged in factory production but tied together outside regulatory frameworks.¹⁰⁴ “Macrolevel” governance and development projects succeed or fail insofar as they consider the milieu of informal relations in which they intervene: “Macrolevel interventions ... interact with these local dynamics to set up a shifting and often precarious terrain of constraints and possibilities that local actors must carefully navigate.”¹⁰⁵ Territorial governance of urban districts interacts with, complicates, and in some ways subverts informal relations. One should

¹⁰⁰ Simone, 12.

¹⁰¹ Simone, 25.

¹⁰² Justin McGuirk, *Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture* (London: Verso, 2014), 107.

¹⁰³ McGuirk, 107.

¹⁰⁴ Simone, 28.

¹⁰⁵ Simone, 29.

take caution before proscribing or insisting upon centralization or action at a “larger” scale without assessing the implications for the vast field of informal relations.

The importance of informality largely eludes the current reach of historical-geographical materialism. While Harvey acknowledges the significance of the global expansion of slums, his thinking on embodiment makes little room for subtle shifts in power that emanate from the informal sector. In his consideration of the body as a site of politics, he focuses on struggles for a living wage.¹⁰⁶ Harvey’s accounts of living wage campaigns demonstrate one important dimension of bodily capacities – the laboring body as it enters into economic accords and acquires the power of negotiation in its ability to withhold work. This political capacity represents one among many, some of which do not depend on the body’s position within formal economic structures. Undoubtedly a commendable cause, the emphasis on urban struggles around a living wage nonetheless treats those already within wage labor as the prime locus of social and political change.

Other allies of the urban poor within historical-geographical materialism have similarly downplayed political possibilities within the informal sector. In particular, Mike Davis, while providing an extensive chronicle of the social abandonment and state repression that rapidly expands urban informality, views the political position of the informal sector within the terms of its class location, that is, as “semi-proletarianization” or “passive proletarianization.”¹⁰⁷ For Davis, exclusion from the formal sector entails near total depoliticization. As he envisions informality, the position outside the economy

¹⁰⁶ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 117 – 130. Harvey’s emphasis comes through in declarations such as the following: “From the standpoint of the laborer, embedded as a political person within the circulation of capital, politics is rooted in the positionalities that he or she assumes and the potentialities that attach thereto” (Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 120). Here, the horizon of political potentiality extends only so far as the laborer can see.

¹⁰⁷ Davis, 175.

of wage labor strips one of all political leverage. The rapid expansion of the informal sector carries with it forms of violence and exploitation, but it also continues to carry its own subtle set of political possibilities. Focusing on the body as it labors within formal economies, and to thereby treat the informal sector as the repository for wholly depoliticized non-subjects, neglects what Simone refers to as the “enormous creative energies” within the informal arena.¹⁰⁸

To state the theoretical issue explicitly, historical-geographical materialism neglects the microfeatures of the body and the subpersonal components in circulation through informalities. Infusing historical-geographical materialism with De Landa’s attention to the agentic power of seemingly minute processes would sharpen its understanding of politics at the scale of the body. Work on informal urbanism has drawn on De Landa’s social ontology to theorize the interactions of the formal and informal sector as a “complex adaptive assemblage” with nonlinear and multiscale relations.¹⁰⁹ Rather than viewing the formal and informal as opposed domains separated by the line of the law, formal and informal practices constitute the urban fabric so seamlessly that they might never be fully disentangled. Informal settlements, while seemingly small-scale, exert scalar discrepancies at work in shaping the contours of global society.

In this reframing of global urban life, De Landa provides a social ontology with more conceptual space for thinking through the politics of informality in the city, yet he includes almost no mention of the informal sector as it forms through socio-economic exclusions. Harvey, on the other hand, offers an ontology of bodies that deemphasizes the

¹⁰⁸ Simone, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Kim Dovey, “Informal Urbanism and Complex Adaptive Assemblage,” *International Development Planning Review* 34, no. 4 (2012): 357.

political energies contained within informal life in the city. However, he foregrounds the urban poor in his ethical and political concerns, even if they remain for him only a nascent political force.

Scale and Politics

So far I have focused primarily on the complementary dimensions of social ontologies advanced by new materialism and historical-geographical materialism. I wish to turn more explicitly to the political and ethical prescriptions of each approach to the urban question, the strategies for mobilizing urban citizens in relation to politics at other scales. The city holds a privileged space in imagining alternative political orders. Such efforts to reimagine political life often rely on an idealized small-scale city resembling the ancient Greek *polis* and limited in population, geography, and territory. The spatial restrictions imposed on this urban body allow utopian visions of political life to bracket the complex sociospatial scales within and across cities.¹¹⁰

My project has also advanced the importance of the city for political theory, but it does so in order to emphasize social complexity. Rather than conceal the constantly changing, sometimes turbulent conditions of politics in an imagined space of territorial boundaries, a neatly ordered citizenry, and clean divisions between public and private, I take the city, shaped by global forces and periodically remade through new interactions between formal and informal, to be instructive about political life in general. The aim here is to cast off the pathologizing treatment of actually existing urban life and acknowledge the political possibilities existing within the contemporary urban form.

¹¹⁰ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 157.

The urban question proves indispensable in theorizing the political geography of globalization. The challenge of mobilizing political action calls for new modes of perception and sensation attuned to connections across global space. Jerry Brotton identifies the need for new modes of perception to emerge from gaps between the geographic representation of the terrestrial globe and the power dynamics of globalization.¹¹¹ The terrestrial globe, now an iconic image of an overarching late modern globalization, traces its origins to late fifteenth century Europe where it rose to prominence through its use as a geographic device in territorial disputes between the Portuguese and Castilian empires.¹¹² This geographic device has become outdated by changes in the structures of political spatiality. For Brotton “the terrestrial globe can no longer represent the invisible flow of information technology across its surface.”¹¹³ Information now moves invisibly across the surface of the globe through pathways that depend little on terrestrial space. The political world unfolding in and through information flows and telecommunications exists as a world apart from the globe; as Brotton suggests it “becomes *extra-terrestrial*.”¹¹⁴

In addition to the effects of telecommunications technology, one must consider the ways in which climate systems, ocean currents, intensified storms, and the threat of droughts render the terrestrial globe inadequate. That is to say, planetary processes formative of political life fall outside the perceptive habits of the terrestrial globe. Furthermore, urban interconnections across the planet in the form of political solidarities,

¹¹¹ Jerry Brotton, “Terrestrial Globalism: Mapping the Globe in Early Modern Europe” in *Mappings*, ed. Denis Cosgrove (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 71 – 89.

¹¹² Brotton, 75 – 88.

¹¹³ Brotton, 72.

¹¹⁴ Brotton, 72.

financial flows, infrastructure networks, flight paths, shipping routes, and migration patterns produce experiences of globalization not captured by the cold, abstract image of a terrestrial globe. New methods of geographic perception attuned to the intensive and extensive qualities of power and resistance require new ways of seeing and new material and spatial sensitivities.

Cultivating attunements to the material and spatial dimensions of politics as they emerge at multiple scales requires the political theorist to work as a sort of architect.¹¹⁵ By suggesting the political theorist think and work as an architect, my aim is not to develop an approach to political theory built from the ground up on unshakeable foundations. Furthermore, I do not wish to invoke the notion of a grand architect wielding control over every outcome. Nor do I wish the political theorist to work as a foot-soldier of privatization pursuing a vision of political life that advances hyper-individualistic gated communities and neoliberal gentrification and development. Instead, I seek to inflect political theory with the material and spatial sensibilities of politicized approaches to architecture, specifically Harvey's insurgent architecture and Eyal Weizman's forensic architecture. The aim is to pursue theory as a practice that works in the middle of entangled spaces that both enable and constrain new possibilities. Political theory, in ways similar to architecture, engages in construction as it expands upon old concepts, practices, and modes of organization or periodically creates them anew. The confluence of forces and processes at multiple scales determines the viability of these constructs.

¹¹⁵ While I focus on the metaphorical significance of political theorist as architect, the architect has been equated with political activist and theorist on a number of occasions. Justin McGuirk's examination of "activist architects" reinvigorating the project of social housing in Latin America through new approaches to design treats the architect as a figure of radical politics (McGuirk, 18-19, 28 – 35).

Harvey suggests we approach egalitarian politics through the eyes of an “insurgent architect” committed to disrupting social relations and rebuilding more equitable configurations: “As crafty architects bent on insurgency we have to think strategically and tactically about what to change and where, about how to change what and with what tools.”¹¹⁶ Insurgent architects consider how their constructs responds to surroundings. They never work on a blank slate but, instead, intervene in a preexisting social field of elaborate interconnection. This should put them on guard against displacements and dispossessions that might result from their work. Ideally, they design against displacement. The political theorist as insurgent architect envisions political organization and mobilization occurring within a particular spatiotemporal domain. They map possibilities of connection between existing political energies and suggest practices for activating latent potentials.

The figure of the insurgent architect is particularly instructive to political theory in its attention to spatial scale. As Harvey observes, “real political change arises out of simultaneous and loosely coordinated shifts in both thinking and action across several political scales.”¹¹⁷ For Harvey, this involves thinking, movements, and actions at the scale of the body, the city, and the (global) social order with an eye to the ways in which these scales prove mutually interdependent. Productive efforts at collective politics involve tactical interventions at one or more of these scales. The urban question for Harvey involves understanding relationships between the city and other scales of politics in order to help harness the unique political energies of the urban scale.

¹¹⁶ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 233.

¹¹⁷ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 234.

Harvey frames the question animating his inquiry as one concerning the possibilities of the city as a space for political organizing: “To what degree should anti-capitalist struggles explicitly focus and organize on the broad terrain of the city and the urban?”¹¹⁸ A rich history of urban struggle figures prominently within the larger history of anti-capitalist and revolutionary action.¹¹⁹ Harvey’s attention never strays far from the urban question, and yet, his concern might better be described as attached to scalar hierarchies, the privileging of certain scales over others in political analysis and action. His focus on the city as a scale of territorial governance comes from a dissatisfaction with the history of state action.¹²⁰

In addition to a skepticism directed at state-centric approaches, Harvey is equally dissatisfied with scalar reorganization on the left in the wake of national revolutions and reforms. The tepid results of social-democratic reforms and the dismal conditions resulting from communism and socialism at the national level has produced a widespread aversion to involvement with the state. The result has been a rescaling of political organization in which “[t]he burden of politics thus shifts back to some form of worker, community, or localized control.”¹²¹ As criticism of the state grows, the local scale becomes primary.¹²² For Harvey the emphasis on the local prioritizes the practices of

¹¹⁸ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 115.

¹¹⁹ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 115 – 116.

¹²⁰ The national scale has offered promising developments that either go awry or are defeated by counter-revolutionary force. Although in favor of some centralized regulation of capital, Harvey sees national efforts as they have unfolded so far taking four primary forms ranging from unsatisfactory to dismal: Stalinism, the form of state-capitalism that emerged through the transformation of China’s economy, limited social democratic reforms, or the efforts of Latin American countries in the 1960s remade by the neoliberal counter-revolution of the 1970s (Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 124).

¹²¹ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 124.

¹²² While Harvey is critical of the emphasis on locality, seeing it as a strategic error, he acknowledges that it may have substantial effects. “The assumption is that the oppressive power of the state can be “withered away” as oppositional movements of various sorts ... gather

organization over the specific concerns with social change. He sees this as a pervasive problem:

The left as a whole is bedeviled by an all-consuming “fetishism of organizational form.” ... [P]rinciples are frequently advanced – such as “horizontality” and “non-hierarchy” – or visions of radical democracy and the governance of the commons, that can work for small groups, but are impossible to operationalize at the scale of a metropolitan region, let alone for the 7 billion people who now inhabit planet earth. Programmatic priorities are dogmatically articulated, such as the abolition of the state, as if no alternative form of territorial governance would ever be necessary or valuable.¹²³

Harvey’s critique of horizontality stems less from objections to the principle itself – one he later endorses as “an excellent objective” – than from a lack of attention to the operations of power at multiple scales that can undermine movements espousing strong commitments to horizontality.¹²⁴ Harvey attributes the “fetishism” of horizontality, and the resulting over-emphasis on the local, to political movements broadly, but particularly to thinkers and movements who, “focus their efforts on the recuperation of ancient and indigenous notions of the rights of nature, or insist that issues of gender, racism, anti-colonialism, or indigeneity must be prioritized above, if not preclude, the pursuit of an anti-capitalist politics.”¹²⁵ Indeed, his claim of fetishizing horizontality may apply at certain moments and to certain voices within social justice, feminist, and anti-colonial

momentum within civil society. This amounts to what one might call a “termite theory” of revolutionary change: eating away at the institutional and material supports of capital until they collapse. This is not a dismissive term. Termites can inflict terrible damage, often hidden from easy detection. The problem ... is that, as soon as the damage wrought becomes too obvious and threatening, then capital is both able and all too willing to call in the exterminators (state powers) to deal with it” (Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 124 – 125). Davis’s conclusion in *Planet of Slums* problematizes this claim by pointing to some ways in which the urban poor, if politicized, might create perpetual chaos not easily reined in by the forces of capital. However, as I note earlier Davis also tends to play down the political potentials of informal urban life (Davis, 202).

¹²³ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 125.

¹²⁴ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 70.

¹²⁵ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 125.

movements. He nonetheless seems to invoke a tired distinction between anti-capitalist politics and “identity politics.” Rather than see anti-racist, feminist, anti-colonial and indigenous movements to be at odds with anti-capitalist politics, as Harvey does, one might draw sustenance from their critiques of territorial governance – be they directed at the public/private divide, the constitutively racist dimensions of the contemporary national state, territorial occupation and collective punishment, or the ongoing history of settler colonialism – when envisioning a map of the global left. Harvey offers a compelling vision of equitable and complex forms of territorial governance. However, these need to be infused with an ethos of radical democracy, self-government, and autonomy advanced in different ways by anti-racist, anti-colonial, indigenous, and feminist movements.

De Landa’s attunement to a wider field of materiality and an extensive notion of agency can help us to navigate the challenges of horizontality and centralization. He approaches this organizational question through the relations between hierarchies and meshworks as they emerge from processes of destratification and restratification.¹²⁶ Stratification refers to the structuring of material flows, not to any strong normative proscription. As De Landa observes, “the mere presence of an emergent meshwork does not in itself mean that we have given a segment of society a less oppressive structure.”¹²⁷ Instead, he calls for an experimental politics attentive to numerous combinations of meshworks and hierarchies. Curiously, De Landa’s notion of social movements remains limited to the logic of recognition. Although social justice movements may employ a variety of “expressive displays,” ranging from sabotaging machines to statements in mass

¹²⁶ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 260.

¹²⁷ De Landa, *Nonlinear History*, 272.

media, he suggests that their common goal “is to achieve recognition as a valid interlocutor on the part of the governmental organization.”¹²⁸ Such criteria of what constitutes a social justice movement arbitrarily restricts the political aims of a group. The relationship of the left to the state proves more complex as movements navigate complex overlapping governmentalities in which the state may periodically provide resources for resistance while at other times constituting a central part of the assemblage of domination. Autonomous movements, affirmations of indigenous sovereignty, and anti-statist movements are presumptively dismissed from possible coalitions.

Moving through the connecting links between different scales involves a way of navigating a field of hierarchies and meshworks that privileges each of these tendencies at different moments. Anti-colonial politics, opposition to state violence, and the abolition of mass incarceration embody strong destratifying tendencies with periodic modes of restratification at work to maintain their political energy. Collective action to slow climate change, halt environmental destruction, and protect workers may periodically involve certain degrees of stratification in organization. Destratifying elements will nonetheless prove important to maintain their tactical and strategic viability. The climate movement in its current form has offered an extensively connected network of dispersed movements with interspersed moments of hierarchy. Indigenous and environmental justice movements, which now constitute an indispensable part of the climate movement, contest both the sovereignty of settler colonial states and fluid, destratified forms of corporate power moving across national boundaries.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ De Landa, *New Philosophy*, 59.

¹²⁹ The Idle No More movement finds the Canadian state and mining, logging, oil and fishing companies intertwined in contemporary settler colonialism. See “The Manifesto,” Idle No More, <http://www.idlenomore.ca/manifesto>.

Rob Nixon's work on an environmentalism of the poor identifies the importance of stratification and de-stratification in mobilizing democratic, ecological action. He seeks to navigate tensions between place-based environmentalism that tends toward social and cultural homogeneity and postcolonial thought that emphasizes hybridity, dispossession, and movement.¹³⁰ In place of either approach, the environmentalism of the poor works through a "transnational ethics of place," a sense of ecologies defined by nature-culture crossings and the power relations within which they function. Here anti-colonial struggles and opposition to poverty are inseparable from environmental justice. Voices of such an approach include Ken Saro-Wiwa, whose poetry opposed a military regime and the interest of transnational oil, Arundhati Roy, who writes against dams as manifestations of class power and ecological destruction, Rachel Carson, who refused corporately branded toxicity, and Naomi Klein who joins cross-regional climate movements to egalitarian pursuits. Nixon's invocations pursue overlapping modes of political experimentation and action. He sees this environmentalism working not only on our political orientations but also on our collective spatial imaginary in order to think about ecological processes at multiple scales. Developing an appreciation for these spatial and political complexities requires the de-stratification of political thought. A multiscale approach to politics provides rich maps of political intervention. It breaks open old assumptions about the organization of political space and finds overlapping scales with rough edges constituting the terms of political subjectivity and collectivity.

¹³⁰ Nixon, 233 – 262. Nixon observes, "The environmentalist advocacy of an ethics of place has all too often morphed into hostility toward displaced people" (Nixon, 239). Within this place based environmentalist approach, "the concentric rings of the bioregionalist more often open out into transcendentalism than into transnationalism" (Nixon, 238). Nixon's critique of postcolonialism, on the other hand, focuses on cosmopolitan dimensions in tension with ecological efforts (Nixon, 236).

The intersection of temporal process and spatial scale requires the political theorist to work not only as an insurgent architect but also as a forensic architect, one who investigates the nonlinear dynamics of historical processes and their imprint on built environments at multiple scales. Forensic architecture emerged from the collective thought of architects, artists, and activists concerned with the material, aesthetic, and spatial sensitivities formed from the state practice of forensics. In contrast to the state deployment of forensics as a practice of determining criminality and assigning punishment, forensic architecture expresses what Eyal Weizman calls a “critical practice ... committed to investigating the actions of states and corporations and also to critical reflection on the terms by which contemporary forensic investigations – on the scales of bodies, buildings, territories, and their digital representations – are currently undertaken.”¹³¹ Forensic architecture draws upon the material sensitivities contained within forensics – the practice of interpreting traces left by processes and things – while mobilizing this interpretive-sensorial practice in service of critique and political action directed at state and corporate power.

To forensic architects spaces reveal imprints of power and violence. The task of the political theorist as forensic architect involves uncovering these markings, mapping the ways in which power shapes and inhabits space, and asking how this space-power relation requires us to reconsider political concepts and practices. Foucault’s genealogy of the city examined in chapter 3 provides a precursor to contemporary practices of forensic architecture. Today this practice entails confronting the neoliberal urban government of housing bodies seen as surplus, subjecting them to diffuse processes of

¹³¹ Eyal Weizman, “Introduction: Forensics,” *Forensics: The Architecture of Public Truth*, Ed. Forensic Architecture (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014), 9.

surveillance and systemic violence as well as acute acts of state, private, and privatized violence. This relation between spatiality and power moves through non-concentric relations between scales that produce nonlinear effects.

The genealogy of this intersection proceeds through the interactions of multiple scales: subpersonal components, the body and its microfeatures, the local, urban, global, and planetary. The rough edges of the different scales overlap without interlocking. The forensic architect tracks the transfers, swells, and disruptions of power as it works through these overlaps or moves across these rough edges. The political theorist as forensic architect stays attuned to the complex sociospatial dynamics of power and resistance. This involves cultivating sensitivities to material forces and spatial connections, a capacity honed by a critical materialist approach to the urban question.

* * *

Throughout this project I have argued against a concentric understanding of political spatiality in which hierarchical relations structure the nesting of bodily, local, urban, national, regional, global, and planetary scales. This chapter has explored scalar discrepancies between micro-processes and the meso-level workings of the city. Such constitutive frictions and elements of unevenness within connections shatter concentric images of ethical connection and political solidarity. Whereas this chapter has pursued non-concentric scalar relations through a reconsideration of the urban question, the whole project has also pursued non-concentric relations as they unfold through fugitive moments in political thought. Machiavelli attends to imperceptible material forces and spatial connections between bodies, cities, the region, and the cosmos. His oft-neglected urbanism provides a sense of the textured power relations of the city and its encounters

with *fortuna*, his cosmological notion that conceptualizes historical processes in a new key. Foucault engages a spatiality of power and resistance through attunement to differential scales of the body, society, and the population. His work informs conceptualizations of the ways in which neoliberal urbanism and its attendant security apparatuses reflect and shape global formations of power. A multiscale approach to the thought of Hardt and Negri helps to transform suggestions about the monolithic character of Empire into intersecting processes and forces set on different scales. Similarly, the figure of the multitude shifts from the appearance of an abstract and homogeneous entity, despite the insistence of the authors to the contrary, into a variegated, complex social body. Reconsidering the urban question through historical-geographical and new materialism lends further insight into the spatial organization of the multitude, the collective dynamics of humans and nonhuman animals in material assemblages infused by built environments and historical processes. The complex layering of the city undoes neat conceptions of scalar hierarchy, in which the body, population, city, state, region, globe, and planet correspond to nested, concentric circles. Instead, the city reveals numerous entangled scales of political life.

In place of a concentric image of politics, some have offered a “flat ontology” that would eliminate scale, even as an entangled and nonlinear relation. Sallie Marston, John Paul Jones III, and Keith Woodward have been at the forefront of advancing such a flat ontology, arguing against political and human geographies reliant on a concept of scale.¹³² They offer a spatial imaginary that dispenses with scale in favor of singular sites

¹³² Sallie Marston, John Paul Jones III, and Keith Woodward, “Human Geography without Scale,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30 (2005): 416 – 432. See also my discussion in chapter 2 of Ignacio Farias, Richard G. Smith, and other actor-network theorists who seek to discard a concept of scale. De Landa refers to flat ontology but articulates a carefully

around which social relations self-organize. For Marston et al. conceptions of scale prove too constraining for describing spatiality. Within their account scales are given in advance, defining the terms of social inquiry rather than facilitating investigation into the structuring of space.¹³³ Furthermore, scale implies nested hierarchies of spatial relations limiting the understanding of topological connections. The addition of networks to sociospatial thought, as this line of argument goes, simply adds a new set of coordinates that confuse the practice of human geography.

The abandonment of scale within flat ontology poses a number of problems, however. First, the rejection of scale is based on a critique of hierarchical scalar relations. In contrast to this hierarchical framing, I have sought to articulate a relational, dynamic understanding of scale in which the task of tracing the workings of power through space requires us to, as Foucault suggests, “shift the object and change the scale.”¹³⁴ Scale, as I approach it, does not fit a container model of socio-political space. It is, instead, intertwined with compositions of bodies and informs the workings of power.

Furthermore, flat ontology ignores the historical constitution of scale and its significance for politics. For instance, Machiavelli’s writing on *fortuna* emerges within an implicit debate over the scalar relations between cosmological forces, urban politics, and embodied life, as shown in chapter one. *Fortuna* provides a starting point from which to think about nonhuman agencies in politics, thereby influencing ecological thought and collective action. *Fortuna*, broadened and extended, can find expression as a swarm of

constructed theory of scale in conjunction with his notion of flat ontology (De Landa, *New Philosophy*, 28). While I do not follow De Landa in his pursuit of flat ontology, I nonetheless see his work on social ontology as indispensable to rethinking spatiality.

¹³³ Marston et al., 422.

¹³⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 89.

locusts that eats all the crops, a tsunami, an earthquake, rapid climate change, or a rare disease carried from elsewhere. It can even be a new weapon invented by an adversary for which you have no response, a new technology of extraction that gives you an incredibly flow of energy for production, or a loud uprising that disrupts transnational corporate transactions. *Fortuna* is the vicissitude of the outside bumping into the inside. Because this is so, it means that neither a partitioned view nor a concentric image will ever capture the complexity and potential volatility in cross-scalar connections. The historical and political significance of scale also appears in its role as a key concept within contemporary political movements. It frames debates over organization and political action in the World Social Forum, influencing the ways in which heterogeneous movements navigate challenges of geographic distance.¹³⁵

The flat ontologists opposed to scale seek to eliminate thinking about global structures, particularly what they see as the shibboleth of “globalization.” They prefer a “rigorous particularism” that would replace inquiry into processes of globalization with that of tracing “interactive practices through their localized connection.”¹³⁶ Such concern with the language of “globalization” underestimates the conceptual precision of critical globalization studies. I have taken care to disaggregate the neoliberal discourse of globalization from other studies that find it to be a far more ambivalent phenomenon and a concept indispensable to understanding the workings of contemporary power. From Tarak Barkawi’s account of how wars and colonialism brutally assemble spatial connections that we come to understand as the globe, to Hardt and Negri’s thinking about

¹³⁵ Fisher and Ponniah, 9 – 10. See also my discussion of debates about scale in the World Social Forum in chapter 3.

¹³⁶ Marston, et al., 425.

Empire and the multitude as global political formations that never quite amount to a coherent whole or a totalizing body, critical approaches to globalization offer more than reductionist and/or essentialist accounts of power, violence, and resistance.¹³⁷ When members of the New Left and the global justice movement invoke an idiom of globalization to suggest that “a new world is possible,” they appeal to a spatial imaginary of *worlds* and *globes*. Such a theoretical maneuver involves conceptualizing political and social life as both irreducible to concentric nestings and stretched beyond the hyper-specificity of “rigorous particularism.” The scaled movements, uneven edges, and asymmetrical connections we pursue can’t correspond merely to “particulars,” for a particular is a relatively stable mode that is nested within a “larger” configuration. The approach pursued here a multiscalar political world of breaks and dissonances flowing between global, local, transnational, transversal, interurban, and embodied connections. Flat ontology would mistakenly dismiss such efforts.

Theorizing the processes of globalization, and by extension global scales, involves thinking about political-economic, cultural, military and other open systems, with dissonances within and between them, producing and produced by the conditions of embodied, local, urban, national, and regional life. This is a notion of the global scale with room for what Connolly calls “eccentric flows of flight, compassion, connection, allegiance, identification, legitimacy, responsiveness, and responsibility that exceed the concentric image of how political culture does and must function.”¹³⁸ Their eccentric quality involves a decentering of political relations in which they move between and

¹³⁷ See my discussion of Barkawi, *Globalization and War* in chapter 2 and Hardt and Negri, *Multitude* in chapter 3.

¹³⁸ William E. Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 186.

across scales. In doing so, they are apt to appear strange, weird, abnormal, uncanny, or out of place to those captured by either a holistic or concentric image. Following Connolly, I see these eccentric flows and spatial connections to be more than marginal forces in the workings of globalization and cosmopolitan ethics. They enable “cross-country citizen networks” and cross-border political movements for ecological protection, improved working conditions, boycott and divestment campaigns against apartheid, and opposition to the global arms trade.¹³⁹ New alliances generated from these eccentric forces may possess more urgency, ethical attunement, and strategic value than those formed through nested sets of political relations within and below the national state.

Throughout this project I have offered visions of political spatiality particularly sensitive to the movement of eccentric flows. These marginal and marginalized moments in political thought express eccentric thought in all of its meanings. They insist on non-concentric notions of scale and in doing so appear strange to the state-centric dictates of political science. I wish to conclude this study with a detour through one kind of eccentric thought, the speculative fiction of J.G. Ballard’s short story “The Concentration City.” That detour may help clarify the distinctions between anti-scalar flat ontology and the relational, dynamic approach to scale I have developed.

In “The Concentration City” Ballard imagines a seemingly infinite city subjected to physical partitions that divide space, often in correspondence with the price charged to inhabit each space. As more partitions are built to delineate differently-priced spaces, new walls within the city gravitate toward the infinitesimal. Increasingly smaller spaces

¹³⁹ Connolly, *Neuropolitics*, 186 – 187.

are walled off until the dividers *become* the built environment of the city itself.¹⁴⁰ The proliferation of enclosures shapes fundamental conditions of thinking and everyday life within the city. Rather than living in a condition of claustrophobia, residents have forgotten, or never known, what “free space” – free of cost and free from restricted mobility – might look like.¹⁴¹ Architecture and engineering have now become the professions of choice, phasing out pure science and philosophy to provide a class of technocratic managers.¹⁴² Within this environment, real estate speculation drives the economy of the city.

The protagonist Franz M., a young physics student, is driven by a dream of free space and free flight. He has only dreams of these concepts upon which to build. He heads west by train. Seeking space without enclosure, he attempts to reach the edge of the city. After ten days of travel he learns that the train, without changing direction, is now eastbound. The geographical paradox is explained to Franz by police more concerned with Franz’s interest in free space than with the curvature of space that they have just witnessed. “How this curvature was built into the system they can’t explain, it seems to be some inherent feature of the City itself,” the police surgeon tells Franz.¹⁴³ Upon returning to his point of origin Franz discovers that although he has been traveling for three weeks, the date remains the same as the day he left.

As we respond to the anxiety and asphyxiation of the experience of curvature in “The Concentration City,” we can also sense the importance of attunement to non-

¹⁴⁰ J.G. Ballard, “The Concentration City” in *The Complete Short Stories* (London: Flamingo, 2001), 23 – 38.

¹⁴¹ Ballard, 25.

¹⁴² Ballard, 26.

¹⁴³ Ballard, 36.

concentric notions of scale in political thought and action. Concentration means bringing to a center the infinite and infinitesimal partitioning of a city that perpetually curves around itself. The replacement of philosophy and pure science with technocratic training is no coincidence. This is an urban spatiality that reigns in tendencies toward insurgent architecture, centering and enclosing eccentric flows within its walls and curvatures. Franz tests the limits of the logics of partition and curvature through his search for free space. Only by attempting to traverse the city, and thereby glimpsing the entanglements of the global and local, does Franz come to discern the spatial relations shaping the city. In shifting scales to the entirety of the city, he sees its fractal dimensionality, a recursive looping that does not resolve into a coherent or linear order. This shift to the global scale undertaken by Franz embodies the methodological move rejected by proponents of flat ontology. The “rigorous particularism” of those who subscribe to a flat ontology may not be concentrically nested within multiple predetermined scales, but it also refuses to discern how the global penetrates and helps to constitute the local. As a result it fails to account for the workings of power on the global scale.

Ballard helps us to see the limits of a concentric model of politics by turning to the genre of science fiction, which is to say, to eccentric thought. He takes us through a concentric world with Franz as our eccentric tour guide. The resulting travelogue assumes an uncanny quality, both recognizable to us and disorienting us. It pushes the workings of power in neoliberal urbanism to a logical extreme in order to reveal a world immobile, inaccessible, and unequal.

Whereas Ballard deploys eccentric thought to expose urban authoritarianism, this project unearths visions of eccentric cities that defy concentric political thought. The

eccentric city is not a *polis* in the classical sense of a bounded territory delineating an urban population enclosed inside nested circles of political belonging. It embodies a collectivity of emergent identities, micro-organisms, planetary systems, nonhuman animals, and urban citizens connected through nonlinear relations. Causality within an eccentric city involves dynamic hierarchies, inflections, feedbacks, recursive loops, resonance, emergence, sympathy, and accidents. This is a city and a spatiality that is neither concentric nor flat. Within the eccentric city multiple scales fold and impinge upon one another without becoming resolved into a single center. Its urban fabric stretches into states, regions, and global networks. From the eccentric city, and the multiscalar geography it embodies, political theory can learn to appreciate transversal ethical connections and to navigate decentered political solidarities.

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