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Miller, B.; Nicholls, W.

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SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN URBAN SOCIETY: THE CITY AS A SPACE OF POLITICIZATION

Byron Miller[1]
Department of Geography
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Walter Nicholls
Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
Division of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Amsterdam
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Abstract: Recent anti-systemic social movements have illustrated the central role of cities in social movement mobilization. We not only highlight the characteristics of urban social relations that make cities fertile ground for mobilization, but also point to the disjunctures between the geographies and spatialities of social relations in the city, and the geographies and spatialities of many systemic processes. Struggles for a more just society must consider the broad geographies and spatialities of oppression, which we illustrate with a brief analysis of the Occupy movement. Finally, we introduce the next five articles in this special issue, all illustrating the importance of the geographies and spatialities of urban social struggle. [Key words: urban theory, social movements, political mobilization.]

The recent upsurge of different anti-systemic social movements in northern Africa, southern Europe, and North America speaks to the central role of cities for social movements. But what is the relationship between cities and social movements? This question has sparked considerable debate and relatively little agreement, yet the debate is illuminating for the questions of causation, possibility, and strategy it raises. Certainly, the city has been the central stage for contesting hegemonic power relations in urbanized societies, making broad claims for rights and justice, building and mobilizing solidarities among diverse peoples and groups. The city has been the central platform for elevating these struggles and driving them toward their respective ends. Yet while struggle frequently unfolds through the city, the central goals of such movements have not been limited to territorially bounded urban issues. The Arab Spring has been about democracy and justice, economic and otherwise; the Occupy movement has been about economic and social justice, with Wall Street finance capital as the embodiment of the ruling elite; and the massive mobilizations in Spain, Greece, and Portugal have been directed against the revanchist neoliberalism of the European Union, European national governments, and the International Monetary Fund. Nevertheless, the city has been the main arena through which these broader struggles have been fought. The urban, it would

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[1]Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Byron Miller, Department of Geography, University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive NW, AB T2N 1N4 Calgary, Canada; telephone: 403 220 7321; fax: 403 220 5584; email: bavrmill@ucalgary.ca

appear, has been a means to an end rather than an end in its own right. Claiming—occupying—its spaces makes it possible for activists to challenge the dominant symbolic order, mobilize and concentrate their own symbolic, social, and material power, and make the case for alternative possible worlds.

There is a considerable literature on "urban social movements" (Lefebvre, 1968, 1970; Castells, 1983; Fainstein and Hirst, 1995; Harvey, 2012; Katznelson, 1981), but conventional readings of this literature leave us surprisingly ill-equipped to understand how cities incubate the unfolding of social movements. A central problem has been the way in which "urban movements" have been conceived in much of this literature. "Urban social movements" are frequently treated as distinctive movements in their own right, standing apart from other movements like those for civil rights or the environment. "Urban social movements" have been viewed as struggles to create more just, democratic, and livable cities for inhabitants. Asserting control over the "urban" was conceived primarily as the objective of these struggles–creating a paradoxical symbiosis between approaches that "could recognize but not theorize it" (Beauregard, 2011, 470), and an enduring preoccupation with "interrogating the 'urban' " as the central task of urban theory itself (2012, 474). The city-struggle approach is reflected in Manuel Castells' (1983) well-known tripartite definition of "urban social movements." Collective consumption, particularly around the provision of use values, is conceived as the primary source of grievances; territory, particularly the neighborhood, is conceived as the basis for creating common collective identities; and the local state is claimed to be the principal target of collective mobilizations, with the primary goal of achieving decentralized, territorially based self-management. This formulation not only posits distinct goals for urban social movements, but also suggests that urban movements are constituted in ways that differentiate them from other social movements. Castells (1983, 1996) argues that the very thing that makes these movements urban is also their fatal flaw: their "urban" basis predisposes them toward defensive struggles to protect their particular places ("reactive utopias") against the "global space of flows." It was the defensive nature of such place-based politics that led David Harvey (1991) to decry the conservative nature of the politics of place, only to modify his position in 1997 in his discussion of Raymond Williams' outward-looking concept of "militant particularism." The classical place-bound notion of urban social movements provides few if any insights into how cities become incubators of and platforms for broader social movements—both spatially and in terms of goals. Indeed, Castells' notion suggests that exerting power over particular urban areas is the end goal of "urban social movements." The inherent particularism of such urban movements narrows the political visions and relations of participants rather than opening them up to broader political and systemic struggles.

Recent writings on the "right to the city" have not necessarily moved us beyond this theoretical impasse. On the one hand the "right to the city" is viewed as a "cry and a demand," a mobilizing frame that helps unite urban activists in different cities across the world (Marcuse, 2009). As such, the principal goal of the "right to the city" movement is to enhance the power of citizens in cities. In some "right to the city" narratives, the rights of citizens in the city are conceived as the focus of the movement and not as a means for achieving broader political goals. To the extent that such narratives adopt some version of a bounded notion of the city, we are not furnished with theoretical tools to help us explain how cities play a crucial role in broad social movements that effect change beyond the

individual cities in which they arise. On the other hand, some narratives frame the "right to the city" not necessarily as city-bounded, but as part of a broad movement to create "cities for people, not for profit" (Brenner et al., 2012). This latter line of analysis maintains that the systemic forces of capital and the state, through the processes of commodification and bureaucratization, dispossess and displace urban residents from their living spaces. Systemic displacement and dispossession from the spaces of everyday life serve to catalyze urban residents to assert their power to produce space, in sometimes sweeping and sometimes mundane ways. Here the "right to the city" is cast in systemic terms and conceived as a citizens' struggle to appropriate the means of producing urban space. Purcell (2003) adds that "The right to appropriation is the right to define and produce urban space primarily to maximize its use value over and above its exchange value. The notion of urban space as property, as a commodity to be exchanged on the market, is antithetical to the right to appropriation" (578). This formulation of the "right to the city" provides important insights into the origins and stakes of "urban" struggles. Nonetheless, in spite of this attention to the systemic origins of oppressive urban conditions, the "urban" is still conceived as an "end" in these struggles. Such analytical and strategic conceptualizations are widespread not only in some strands of the contemporary "right to the city" movement, but also in many streams of anarchist and autonomous Marxist thought (e.g., Hardt and Negri, 2005, 2011) that lie at the heart of large segments of the Occupy movement.

Yet, strikingly, the originator of the idea of the "right to the city," Henri Lefebvre, did not think of the city in such bounded terms. In 1970, only 2 years after coining the term "the right to the city," Lefebvre published *La Revolution urbaine (The Urban Question)*, revising his thinking about the city in ways that have continued to strongly influence contemporary formulations of "the urban." In the first chapter of *The Urban Question*, "From the City to Urban Society," Lefebvre (2003) makes the case that we can no longer think in terms of independent cities and urban agglomerations because urbanization processes have become widespread, indeed global, to the point that the urban problematic has become "predominant" (5). As Neil Smith (2003) summarizes in his foreword to the English language edition, the urban problematic "globalizes itself" (xx) as "highly mobile global capital increasingly descends to and aspires to the remake of urban centers. At the same time there is a more seamless collaboration among property capital, the state, retail capital, and financial capital than at any previous time" (xxi). Today our lives are shaped by the global process Lefebvre termed "planetary urbanization."

Lefebvre's reconceptualization of the city as "urban society" presaged a rethinking of cities by scholars as diverse as David Harvey (1982, 1985), Doreen Massey (1991), and Michael Peter Smith (2000). Harvey (1982, 1985), in *The Limits to Capital* and *The Urbanization of Capital*, examined urbanization as integral to the process of global capital circulation and uneven development; in "A Global Sense of Place" Massey (1991) considered myriad ways in which global flows of labor, information, and cultural practices shape our senses of place; and in *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization,* Smith (2000) exploded the dualisms of global and local, culture and economy, to show how global relations *are* local and that mobilities are central to constructions of place, with implications for the politics of everyday life.

Lefebvre's distinction between "the city" and "urban society" is analytically significant. Drawing from him, we maintain that in order to understand the role of cities in

broader social and political struggles, we are required to think beyond the notion of the bounded city, instead focusing on the systemic processes that "run through" and shape the social relations of cities. This is not a claim that worthwhile mobilization strategies must always look beyond the city. Some issues can be effectively addressed at the scale of the city or, in some instances, even smaller scales. Effective scalar strategy is an empirical question, and largely a function of the spatial constitution of the process in question. But here is where the spatiality of anti-systemic movements becomes particularly complicated: while the social-spatial milieu of everyday urban life may create conditions supporting the formation of bonds, trust, and resource-sharing so necessary to social movement mobilization, social movements are extremely difficult to build and sustain in the absence of meaningful victories. Critically, victories are unlikely to be achieved if they do not go beyond the proximate or "frontline" experiences of discrimination and oppression to address the systemic causes of grievances. In the case of urban social movements, this typically means mobilization beyond the city to address oppressive and discriminatory processes that run "through" the city. As Melucci (1994, 118) puts it, "the paradox of the contemporary movements [is that] they address the whole of society in the name of a category or group, or on the basis of a particular place within the social structure." Miller (2000) makes a similar observation, but in explicitly spatial terms:

> The disjuncture between the geographies of lifeworlds and the geographies of systems represents one of the most intransigent and paradoxical problems facing social movements. On the one hand, most major political grievances derive from processes that are systemic in nature; they stem from the functioning (or dysfunctioning) of the economy or the state. On the other hand, social movements mobilize around shared lifeworld identities and values that have their own geographies, usually different from those of systemic processes. (2000, 67)

The principal problem social movements must confront is how to build the relationships that enable political mobilization. Cities are where the conditions that foster these relationships are most frequently found. But successful anti-systemic movements must extend relationships beyond individual cities. Our primary focus is on the geographies of the mechanisms that help build or break relationships among activists in and beyond cities (Miller, 2013). Through this analysis we aim to illuminate the processes that foster, as well as demobilize, "urban" social movements.

URBAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS VERSUS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN URBAN SOCIETY

The elephant in the living room, which most are loath to discuss, is the problematic notion of "the urban" itself. Commonly regarded as self-evident, even by many urbanists, "the urban" in fact has no widely agreed-upon definition. Manuel Castells' equation of "the urban" with issues of collective consumption is today widely regarded as too narrow to capture the range of processes that arise in and shape life in cities. Moreover, Castells' conception can serve to reify a particular bounded notion of space and deny the global characteristics of many processes that shape cities.

Not long after the 1983 publication of Castells' classic book on urban social move-ments, *The City and the Grassroots*, a lively debate over "the urban" broke out between urban sociologist Peter Saunders and urban geographer David Harvey. Saunders argued that there is no homology of social process and spatial form, i.e., there are no specifically urban processes. Cox (2001, 747) summarizes Saunders' position: "…socio-spatial fusions cannot be found. What happens in cities is attributable to social processes that originate or extend beyond their bounds. This was realized by the founding fathers of sociology who saw the urban as merely an intensifying factor, a contingent condition … there can be no urban question that contains at its heart the notion of distinctly urban processes." David Harvey, however, begged to differ. Harvey saw the agglomeration of production activities in urban regions, and the attendant formation of specifically urban labor markets, as the structural basis of urban processes (Harvey, 1985). Harvey's student, Neil Smith (1984, 136), understood these processes as the basis for the production of a specifically urban scale: "the geographical limits of the urban scale (not to be confused with the administrative boundaries of a city) are primarily determined by the local labour market and the limits to the daily commute." While Harvey emphasized the geography of production and Smith the geography of labor, both posited a structural reality to "the urban" which formed the basis of a specifically urban politics.

Cox (2001), in his seminal article "Territoriality, Politics and the 'Urban'," recounts this debate but draws his own distinctive conclusions. According to Cox, what Harvey observed in the United States was largely a politics of urban development, territorial competition, and conflict, made possible by a highly decentralized United States federal state structure that pitted city against city in the quest for capital investment and tax revenue, thereby generating a "relatively autonomous urban politics." The lack of a specifically urban politics that Saunders observed in the UK was associated with a strong central state emphasizing redistribution, and the absence of specifically local interests that would generate a similar urban politics. Cox stresses the importance of Harvey's argument calling our attention to the importance of fixity versus mobility in politics, and the role the state plays in setting the preconditions for a politics of mobility.[2] And while he concludes that Harvey was entirely right to argue for the "necessary spatialization of politics," he qualifies his endorsement, asserting that "there does not have to be 'a relatively autono-mous urban politics' " (760). A "relatively autonomous urban politics" depends on "the conditions underlying it [which]… are by no means found everywhere." Cox's own conclusion is that:

> The use of the urban, and indeed all spatial categories that carve up the world and to which we have become accustomed as vehicles for pigeonholing information about it—the different types of region, the rural, the national, the international, the local, the global, the "country"—need to be treated with great caution. They are, rather, flags of convenience for agents whose essential socio-spatial preconditions of being are far too diverse, far too changeable to be forced into those particular procrustean beds, but for whom negotiating the contradiction between fixity and mobility is an

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[2]Mobility politics is social and cultural as well (e.g., Cresswell, 2010), such as the politics of public space and the politics of automobility.

essential preoccupation to be solved by whatever means, symbolic and therefore material, are to hand. (2001, 761)

Cox's argument is compelling, particularly in its portrayal of urban politics as a particular and contingent sub-category of spatial politics, a sub-category that may frequently reflect the lived experiences of political actors, but not necessarily the spatial constitution of the processes that produced their grievances, *or the spatial framing needed for effective resistance*. This is not to say there is no such thing as urban politics. Everyday life in cities is a critical realm of "lived space," to borrow Lefebvre's terminology, and it is around shared urban experiences that movements frequently mobilize. Nonetheless, Cox's analysis cautions against reifying socially constructed categories that reference shared experiences shaped by processes that may operate at much broader scales.

Merrifield (2012) elaborates upon Lefebvre's notion of "urban society," which does not posit a fixed and bounded understanding of the urban, to ask why we might want to understand "the urban" in a more open way. His argument is epistemological. Drawing from Spinoza, Merrifield discusses three forms of knowledge: (1) knowledge that occurs "at the level of everyday life, with its chaos and disorder, a level totally legitimate and real for life yet an inadequate idea for fully understanding that life," (2) knowledge that encompasses "a bigger pattern of human relationships behind that chaos, understanding the interconnectivity of human life…," and (3) knowledge that pushes our horizons "even further, to an intuitive reason of human experience… our future becoming, the substance to our lives, the basis for improved and sustained common notions." The first form of knowledge, associated with everyday life experiences, is the basis on which most movements—urban and otherwise—mobilize, yet that basis of knowledge may fall short of full understanding of the processes at play. This distinction is not merely analytical, but has important strategic implications for building effective social movements. It means that most successful movements must not only build bonds and alliances based on common experiences and interests in the city, but they must also devise strategies for reaching beyond the realm of everyday lived experience.

URBAN CONDITIONS AND THE EXPERIENCE OF OPPRESSION

Cities can provide fertile environments for the formation of robust groups, but they are also important sites where discriminatory and oppressive practices are enacted through policy—urban, regional, and national (Armstrong, 2002; Chauncey, 1995; Massey, 2007; Maussen, 2007; Mitchell, 2003). The disconnect between the strength of social groups and the real limitations of their everyday rights and powers can make the city into a politicizing arena provided, of course, citizens do not retreat into a technocratic post-political world (Badiou, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2009). Many decisions affecting the everyday lives of urban residents are made by urban institutions. Urban officials enjoy wide discretion over how actual rights are distributed and regulated. For example, national courts may guarantee religious freedoms for all, but local officials can employ local zoning ordinances to impose severe restrictions on how and where mosques are built (Bowen, 2006). Laws like the Civil Rights Act and the Fair Housing Act in the United States decree racial-ethnic equality and ban discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, and religion, but local officials employ a range of strategies through housing regulations,

transit policy, and zoning to favor certain groups, e.g., white middle class, over others, e.g., minority and working class (Davis, 1990). Similarly, the right of public assembly is often violated by local officials who restrict the right of assembly of specific groups such as gays and lesbians (Armstrong, 2002; Chauncey, 1995), the homeless (Mitchell, 2003), and immigrant day laborers (Theodore et al., 2009; Valenzuela, 2003; McTague and de Vise Jansen, this issue). These and countless other governance practices make cities key arenas of struggle shaping how rights are distributed, implemented, and violated.

Encountering denigrating limitations in everyday life is essential to the process of group politicization, driven by the sharp disconnect between a group's expectations of equal rights and treatment, and everyday experiences that violate those expectations. The city, in this sense, becomes the frontline space where inequality and injustice are experienced. When groups become politically conscious and can mobilize sufficient resources, their first political targets tend to be those urban policies and practices that restricted their civil or political rights. For example, the initial mobilizations of gay rights activists targeted municipal policies that restricted rights of assembly (Chauncey, 1995; Armstrong, 2002). Similarly, the civil rights movement in the United States was grounded in struggles against restrictive neighborhood covenants, segregation in local school districts, and racially segregated public spaces (McAdam, 1982). These antagonisms, based in everyday urban experiences, gave rise to political mobilization.

But in what sense are these urban movements? Certainly, resistance grew out of everyday lived experiences in largely urban contexts, but in the cases of both gay rights and civil rights, recurring instances of local resistance grew into national movements. Given the scalar structure of the United States state, this is not surprising. The legal authority of local governments to engage in discriminatory and oppressive practices is derived from the central state, and only revocation of that authority by the central state could put a stop to legal discrimination. In the case of civil rights, American states and their municipalities obtained the legal authority to impose "separate but equal" "racial" segregation through the Supreme Court's 1896 *Plessy versus Ferguson* ruling. Strikingly, the geography of legally imposed school segregation was largely regional—not city by city—and confined primarily to the states of the old Confederacy. *Plessy versus Ferguson* was not overturned until the 1954 *Brown versus Board of Education* ruling, which itself was influenced by a number of nationally recognized studies documenting the ill effects of "racial" discrimination, as well as a 1950 United Nations declaration condemning racism. Cold war geopolitics also played an important role in the struggle for "racial" equality, as it was important that the American fusion of capitalism and democracy be seen as a fair and just systemic alternative to Soviet "communism." The passage of the 1965 national Voting Rights Act is widely regarded as the crowning achievement of the American civil rights movement, culminating many years of struggle by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and its allies. Was the American civil rights movement an urban movement? The question is far more complicated than at first it seems.

FORMING BONDS AND ALLIANCES IN THE CITY

Urban theory has long suggested that large cities provide propitious environments for diverse social groups to settle and flourish (Fischer, 1975; Holston, 2008; Isin, 2002;

Wirth, 1938). A variety of scholars have maintained that the large numbers found in cities facilitate anonymity, weaken the possibilities of enforcing general collective norms, and favor more tolerant dispositions among residents. Cities can also accommodate large numbers of individuals of particular groups, providing the "critical mass" needed to create and sustain associations, media, socializing venues, religious organizations, and other social institutions (Fischer, 1975). These institutions enable individuals to bond with one another and form collective identities. As distinctive groups form, grow, and build cultures of solidarity, these cities may become known as places of refuge for others. For example, Duyvendak (2011) shows how the strong pull a handful of cities had for gays and lesbians helped to reinforce gay and lesbian communities in those cities, in turn bolstering the reputations of those cities as places of refuge, diversity, and tolerance. This notion of the tolerant and diverse city is, of course, rooted in Chicago School theories of subculture formation. To the extent that these theories are correct, they have important implications for urban politics. Strong groups have enhanced abilities to pool resources and construct narratives identifying the sources of their oppression. In-group solidarity and collective power make it possible for groups to envision alternative possibilities of expanded rights and a more just city. The processes and conditions found in cities provide activists with the means to make broader claims (Arampatizi and Nicholls, 2012; Nicholls and Vermeulen, 2012; Uitermark et al., 2012).

While some emergent groups may act "alone," most reach out to other groups in the city, build bridges, and construct exchange networks with varying logics and structures. When these kinds of relationships are sufficiently developed within an urban milieu, the success of an individual group depends on its ability to draw in the support of other marginal groups in the city. This reflects logic of "traded and untraded" interdependencies (Storper, 1997).

The urban arena becomes an important space for politically activating marginalized groups, but it is also a favorable environment for creating complex alliances among diverse organizations, groups, and actors that reside within these cities. Large cities contain rich and heterogeneous social movement environments, constituted by diverse groups, activists, and organizations with specialized resources and knowledge in different policy areas (see Vermeulen, 2006; Nicholls, 2008). The complex nature of urban policies means that when grievances arise in response to restrictive urban policies, most mobilized actors lack sufficient knowledge, skills, and resources needed to contest a policy effectively. In cobbling together alliances, diverse actors can collectively possess the array of resources needed to address complex policy issues.

For example, when urban policies restrict the rights of certain immigrant groups, their grievances can be directed at different policy areas including housing, zoning, transit, and economic development. Aggrieved immigrants facing restrictions on their rights in one policy area, e.g., housing, will often lack the sufficient skills and resources in this area to mount a successful campaign. This will require them to establish connections with organizations in possession of specialized knowledge and skills in those domains, e.g., squatters and housing activists. Moreover, geographical proximity among diverse actors reduces the transaction costs between them, permitting the time to experiment with new multi-actor coalitions and learn how to trust one another in complex forms of collective action.

Through various struggles and coalitions, politically active groups can develop webs of weak-tie relations among themselves (Granovetter, 1983). These networks provide connected activists with information about their complex political field and a reservoir of potential allies to draw upon for successive campaigns. In addition to circulating information and pooling resources, repeated interactions over time provides actors with the collective know-how concerning complicated multi-actor coalitions. This know-how allows them to quickly assemble coalitions, develop strategies to confront an issue, pool resources, and deploy those resources in effective ways. Any single group therefore depends not only on the resources and information of their diverse allies in their urban milieu, but also on the common know-how of running complicated multi-actor campaigns. The development of these kinds of independent, place-based networks (Storper, 1997) opens up the resources of the urban milieu to the collectivity, allowing partners to tap into and deploy the resources of the network for a variety of political purposes. These ties are by no means free of personal, ideological, and power conflicts, but when the benefits of cooperation are seen to outweigh the costs participants are likely to stay connected in spite of any misgivings (which can be many!) they may have about their allies. Thus, grievances arising in a range of policy areas spur complex networking processes in the city. The city can be conceived of as a "relational incubator" because it facilitates the building of networks among diverse activist groups and, in turn, the collectivization of group resources (Nicholls, 2008).

Strong interdependencies are built through complex networks in which the success of any single campaign depends on activists mobilizing the support of allies. Constant networking among individuals in different activist groups permits the flow not only of information, ideas, and resources, but also the construction of common discourses. Through networked exchanges, individuals are placed at the intersection of different ideas constituting the urban activist milieu. This positioning allows individuals to appropriate and refashion ideas of other groups, making them their own. For example, undocumented immigrant groups may employ the language of "coming out" from the gay movement to describe their own efforts to emerge from the shadows of the city. These exchanges not only permit the flow of ideas, arguments, and mobilizing frames among different groups, but also allow different groups to empathize with the concerns, struggles, and suffering of other groups, such as when undocumented immigrants come to feel commonalities of suffering and aspiration with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community.

The processes of locating and framing similarities on intellectual and emotional levels reinforces feelings of solidarity among different groups in the city. Intertwined networks encourage diverse activists to interrogate the commonalities of their various struggles. When diverse activists participate in coalition-building during a campaign, they must construct common frames to justify and motivate their participation (Martin, 2003, 2013). Broad concepts like "justice" and "rights" may serve as *motivational frames* spurring group members to action, but activists must also build shared understandings of the causes of their problems, i.e., *diagnostic frames*. And they must develop *prognostic frames* that lay out a course of collective action including, in most case, solutions to the identified problems.

The development of shared frames and political imaginaries that result from individual and collective exchanges serve to build activist "counterpublics" constituting "parallel

discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser, 1990, 68). Rather than reinforcing the hegemonic ideology that society has already achieved equality, justice, and emancipation for all, counter-publics can produce powerful critiques of the social order. Such discursive arenas not only generate resistance, but also reinforce and reproduce commitments to values like equality, justice, and solidarity within activists' socio-political worlds. Activist networks, therefore, are not necessarily spaces where minorities and outcasts become integrated into mainstream social and political norms, but spaces from which society can be challenged for failing to live up to its egalitarian pretensions.

BEYOND THE BOUNDED CITY: THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSLOCAL MOBILIZATION

The very dynamics that give rise to networked interdependencies, resource-sharing, and common discursive frames in the city may make it difficult to build connections beyond the everyday lived experiences of the city. This is the problem of militant particularism identified by Raymond Williams (1989): how can movements for broader societal transformation be built from experiences forged in particular places? As Williams points out,

> … the difficult thing [for a community-based political movement] …is that because it had begun as local and affirmative, assuming an unproblematic extension from its own local and community experience to a much more general movement, it was always insufficiently aware of the quite systemic obstacles which stood in the way. (1989, 115)

Here we return to the themes of Lefebvre and Merrifield: how do we bridge the gap between knowledge that derives from everyday life in the city, and knowledge of broader systemic processes and obstacles? There is no single answer to this question, and movements may mobilize and evolve in different ways. In some instances, connections created through urban-based campaigns can evolve into strong, complex, and rich ties which can then serve to drive local, national, and transnational movements. In other instances, ties among activists may be narrower, more limited, and of shorter duration. We highlight four factors that may help to explain these differences:

First, local actors may fail to see, or strive to build, connections to other activists and organizations. Failure to pursue broad networks and alliances may occur for a variety of reasons. Conflicts may arise among local activist groups. Interests and ideologies may differ sharply among groups, precluding the formation of broad networks and alliances, even in the presence of overlapping instrumental concerns. For example, the beliefs of certain religious groups may conflict with those of the LGBT community. A shared geography of interests and experience is often central to building broad networks and alliances across ideological boundaries. Such relationship-building typically relies upon the discursive deployment of *motivation place-frames* which "refer to the daily-life experiences residents are likely to have…, [fostering] recognition by residents of their location-based commonalities" (Martin, 2003, 736). There is no guarantee, however, that

motivation place frames will be successfully deployed. Activists may fail to frame the issue they face in a manner that builds and broadens networks and alliances. The geography of interests, moreover, may be so polarized that building a common place frame across all or part of the city may be highly problematic. Some groups may find a strategy of exclusion serves their interests better than a strategy of cooperation and alliance-building.

Second, beyond the difficult task of finding a common motivating frame, are two critical and related questions: (1) what is the diagnosis of the actual problem, i.e., what is the *diagnostic framing*; (2) what actions should the movement take, i.e., what is the *prognostic framing* (Martin, 2003)? The answers provided to these questions frequently represent the Achilles' heel of urban social movements. The very strength of urban social movements—the fact that they emerge from a shared and largely localized socio-spatial lifeworld; that the networks of information-sharing, resource-sharing, and trust are based in the city; that oppression and discrimination are experienced in the city—often gives rise to diagnoses and prognoses that locate the source of grievances, and strategies for addressing those grievances, in the city. In some cases city-based diagnoses and prognoses may be appropriate and effective. In other cases, they may represent misdiagnoses of the systemic sources of problems (Cox, 2001; Harvey, 2012; Merrifield, 2012; Miller, 2000) and lead to ineffective prognostic frames and strategies. Movements are especially prone to problems of misdiagnosis and ineffective strategy when particular protagonists in a conflict can exercise high degrees of spatial mobility—and that mobility is not recognized. The ability of some actors to escape the geographical realm in which a solution is sought is the crux of Cox's (2001, 761; see also Harvey, 2012, 115–153) assertion of the central importance of "negotiating the contradiction between fixity and mobility". Problems of misdiagnosis and ineffective strategy not only bode ill for the ultimate success of a movement, but they can also have devastating effects on the very mobilization of a movement. Given that movements tend to grow when they accumulate small victories and demobilize when they suffer defeats, sound diagnosis and prognosis, on the one hand, and successful mobilization, on the other, tend to work in tandem.

Third, activist organizations compete for scarce resources, oftentimes from the same sources. Interorganization resource competition requires organizations to differentiate themselves, thereby reducing overlap and motivation to work together in common campaigns. Constant and intense competition for resources can also diminish trust among organizations, further inhibiting alliance-building. Moreover, organizations participating in local coalitions are often located within multi-scalar organizational structures, e.g., labor unions or religious organizations, or are dependent on affiliations with other organizations or institutions for resources and legitimacy (Herod, 2001). Some organizations may receive support from private funders and still others may have important connections to national political parties. These broader dependencies may play an important role in influencing how, and whether, organizations build broader alliances. While local organizations may respect their coalition partners and agree on common strategy, parent organizations may believe that the innovative relational practices of their local affiliates deviate from the parent organization's broader agenda, prompting it to limit or suppress local alliance-building. In other instances, however, struggles carried out through local alliances may coincide with the agendas of organizational patrons, prompting the latter to support these activities. For example, local branches of the Service Employees

International Union (SEIU) in the United States have long promoted coalition-building in their various campaigns. Because the national union views local coalition-building as consistent with its agenda of recruitment and profile-raising campaigns, it strongly encourages work in this direction (Milkman, 2006). Significant variations in activist networking and coalition-building can be partly explained by relations between local activists and their broader support structures.

Fourth, the state may play a variety of roles in disempowering, narrowing, and constraining activist groups in cities. A hallmark of neoliberal policy has been the downloading of programs and responsibilities from the nation-state to sub-national scales of the state including, ultimately, cities (Peck and Tickell, 1994). The effects of rescaling not only include the evisceration of social programs, but similarly the evisceration of institutions of democratic governance. At the scale of the city, one finds increased responsibility for a range of forms of collective consumption provision, but the fiscal capacity to carry out such responsibilities is absent. Limited capacity urban government (Miller, 2007) reduces the local state, in many instances, to a mechanism through which social movements can vent their discontent but accomplish little. Mobilization efforts may lead to a new consensus around policy, but the ability to implement the desired policies may be very limited. This is not, however, to claim that the local state is impotent. Local states can use patronage relations with certain groups to channel them away from politically disruptive behavior. Sites (2007), for example, has shown how patronage was used in Chicago to turn influential grassroots leaders away from supporting an anti-Wal-Mart ordinance. Patronage mechanisms were effectively used to redirect disruptive anti-Wal-Mart politics toward system-supporting pro-Wal-Mart politics. Local states can create a variety of institutional mechanisms to limit the development of politically disruptive relations in cities including programs and policies that encourage organizations to limit their work to highly specialized programs (e.g., after-school care for second generation children) in narrowly defined areas of the city. These programs not only professionalize organizations and stifle their political voice, but they also impose narrow limits on what they do and where they do it. The de-politicizing effects of such programs can restrict the development of relations among different insurgent groups. Constant monitoring and audits by the city government further reduces the possibility of organizations deviating from governmental controls (Nicholls, 2006; Uitermark, 2012; Uitermark and Nicholls, 2012). Thus, the local state can play a significant role in channeling and suppressing political activism.

BUILDING MOVEMENTS BEYOND THE CITY

Coalitions and mobilizations often begin and coalesce in cities but they do not necessarily stay there. Issues concerning rights may shift back to the national or international arena when new laws and regulations are introduced by the national state and international governing entities (e.g., World Trade Organizations, International Monetary Fund, and European Union). When relations among urban activists are well structured and relatively cohesive, diagnoses of systemic processes are coherent, and prognoses for change imply action beyond the realm of the city, movements can shift from the city to broader national and transnational arenas (Leitner et al., 2008; Mayer, 2009; Miller, 2004; Nicholls, 2009; Sikkink, 2005; Tarrow and McAdam, 2005). This type of "scale shift" is

made possible because actors in urban coalitions may lobby their parent organizations, allies, or supporters to back larger scale campaigns. In such instances, larger organizations can employ their infrastructure and networks to connect local coalitions of activists across diverse spaces. They can also help to set up information networks, sponsor meetings, and participate in organizing national and international protests. Once these networks are in place, activists in different urban coalitions can contribute their own resources to the broader struggle while national and transnational networks coordinate how these resources are circulated and deployed in the most strategic ways (Routledge et al., 2007). When mobilization shifts to the national or international scale, participants in local activist networks can deploy local resources for these broader campaigns. In such instances, cities can become the primary sites of mobilization for national or international social movements.

Activists in cities may have multiple organizational affiliations, in their own city or elsewhere (Diani, 2004; Nicholls, 2008; Routledge, 2003). For example, activists (immigrant rights organization, local Catholic Church, union local, etc.) involved in a local coalition to fight against day labor restrictions in a particular city may also belong to respective national organizations. These affiliations allow local groups to reach broader publics and transmit the importance of particular struggles to more geographically extensive parent organizations. Moreover, connections through vertical organizations and comparatively horizontal networks allow local actors to gain information relevant to understanding underlying structural forces and viable mobilization strategies. Such connections may aid in the expansion of the political playing field of local activists, the circulation of strategic information about opportunities, resources, and events, and the adoption of effective tactics. They may also be responsible for the similarities of campaigns and movements mobilizing in distant locales (Routledge et al., 2007; Tarrow and McAdam, 2005).

As local actors participate in the discourses of geographically extensive networks (through mediating organizations, mainstream media, and/or social media), the ways in which those actors perceive and conceive of their own struggles become entangled with distant others. Social movement space expands, whereby activists in diverse places believe that they are part of a much broader struggle. Even though one may know that there are important context-specific factors that differentiate these struggles, activists attempt to see beyond these differences and adopt and adapt strategies and tactics to new place-specific circumstances. In this way, activists in Athens looked to the Egyptian revolutionaries not only for inspiration but also as allies in the common struggle for justice and democracy in a neoliberal world (Arampatizi and Nicholls, 2012). Similarly, Egyptian revolutionaries adopted and adapted strategies and tactics from the Serbian student organization—Otpor! (Resistance!)—that played the leading role in the overthrow of Slobodan Milosovic (Rosenberg, 2011). In all three cases the diffusion of information and strategy occurred through a combination of vertical (multi-scalar organization-based) and horizontal (e.g., social media networked) processes. Direct and indirect connections between these and other struggles permitted activists to conceive of their social movement space as diverse but relatively unified. And—significantly—in all three cases, structural crises, each with their own geographies, produced strong and widespread grievances: brutal austerity across Greece; economic crisis and brutal repression across Serbia; widespread food crisis across North Africa with especially severe effects in Egypt, coupled

with brutal state repression. These structural crises created circumstances that facilitated the resonance of well-crafted mobilization frames, but by no means guaranteed their success.

And herein lies the crux of the problem of "urban social movements:" by focusing on the sites of protest—Syntagma Square in Athens, the universities of Serbia, Tahrir Square in Cairo, Puerta del Sol Square in Madrid, and the Occupy sites in hundreds of cities across North America and around the world—we see the power of cities as incubators and condensers of political protest, but do not see the complex geographies of the myriad processes that must align and become co-implicated in order for protests to ever occur. Mobilization processes may be territorial (e.g., claiming space), place-based (e.g., relying on bonds created in a geographically specific milieu), networked (e.g., drawing resources from geographically extensive weak ties), and dynamically scaled (Jessop et al., 2008). They may struggle over the spatial mobility of capital and labor (Cox, 2001; Harvey, 1985). And they inevitably entail the geographical framing of the cause of oppression, the motivation for mobilizing against oppression, and a strategy for transformation (Martin, 2003). These complex geographies are rarely limited to any bounded notion of the city. This is not to say that cities are unimportant to social movement mobilization, quite the contrary. But it is to say that cities must themselves be deconstructed and their complex geographies understood (Lefebvre, 1970; Cox, 2001; Massey, 1991; Smith, 2000). The processes that produce mobilization, and the strategies of movements, are inherently constituted in multiple and ever-changing spatialities. Failure to adequately grasp the spatialities of both oppression and mobilization can lead to the de-mobilization of movements. The Occupy movement's trajectory of mobilization and de-mobilization is a case in point.

A SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN URBAN SOCIETY: THE SPATIAL CONSTITUTION OF OCCUPY

The original call for the occupation of Wall Street began in the July 2011 edition of the online counter-cultural magazine, *Adbusters*, located in Vancouver. Calling Wall Street the "financial Gomorrah of America," *Adbusters* demanded that "Barack Obama ordain a Presidential Commission tasked with ending the influence money has over our representatives in Washington. It's time for **DEMOCRACY NOT CORPORATOCRACY**" (bold and capitals in the original) (Adbusters, 2011), with a further single demand to be determined by consensus. *Adbusters* called for Wall Street to be occupied by 20,000 people on 17 September 2011, with the occupation to last "a few months." The movement took off through *Adbusters'* email list. From there the call spread through a combination of social networking sites and mainstream media, frequently playing off each other. This interaction of multiple communication networks allowed for the fast transfer of mobilization frames and the occupation of Wall Street began on September 17. Nonetheless, the movement failed to gain significant traction until the pepper-spraying of peaceful Occupy activists by New York City police on September 24 was broadcast by mainstream media. From that point onward, the movement's evolving demands (e.g., reverse increasingly severe income inequality, hold the institutions of finance capital responsible for the global economic crisis) and tactics (e.g., the general assembly and the human microphone),

voiced from diverse urban occupation sites in North America and Europe, began to garner serious attention.

Framing itself as "the 99%" against "the 1%" of finance capital, the Occupy movement rapidly spread to hundreds of cities around the world. However, as Occupy "traveled" from Vancouver to cyberspace to the mainstream media to occupation sites in extremely different cities, it encountered significant dilemmas of and limitations to "protest mobilities" (cf. McCann and Ward, 2011). Occupy Los Angeles, for example, was adopted in a rich urban activist milieu, dominated by working class immigrant activists. Many Los Angeles immigrant activists found the mobilizing frame of "occupation" fundamentally problematic because of its association with imperialist conquests and occupying powers in the global South. While Los Angeles activists recognized the legitimacy of the struggle, the general mobilizing frame (occupy) conflicted with their own activist cultures, cultivated in place over an extended period of time. Local labor leaders who supported Occupy Los Angeles eventually had to reframe Occupy to make it meaningful and useful for local immigrant activists. The concept of Occupy became infused with new meaning that was particular to the local milieu but retained its connection to and resonance with the general struggle. Thus, in spite of the conceived flatness of the Occupy social movement space, real unevenness and disjunctures existed which impeded extra-local connections and flows. This required the work of "brokers," or "imagineers" (Routledge, 2003), to step in and reframe key components of the Occupy message to build equivalencies among local and distant actors. These brokers became pivotal players in overcoming local particularisms, globalizing the local and localizing the global.

The Occupy movement encountered an entirely different set of circumstances in Calgary. With the highest per capita household income in Canada and one of the lowest unemployment rates of major Canadian cities (5.8% in September 2011), Calgarians were not suffering from the global economic crisis to the same extent as residents of most North American cities. Calgary's class structure is less working class than most cities and its unionization rate of 21.7% is below the national average; unions exert little political influence in Calgary. Moreover, in a rapidly growing city where the majority of residents are born elsewhere, including 30% foreign-born, strong local bonds and extensive weak ties are far from the norm. Not surprisingly, Calgary has a relatively small activist community and only a portion of that community could be considered "left." Lacking extensive organizational and network ties, Occupy Calgary (OC) was relatively late to organize, holding its first meeting on 2 October 2011 (Devine, 2012). The OC campaign was troubled from the very start. The city's small activist community and a portion of the homeless population were the only clearly recognizable participating groups. Within days of its initial mobilization, OC split into two groups, one occupying Olympic Plaza in front of City Hall and another, associated with an individual who considered himself the "leader" of OC, set up an encampment, with permission from the City, out of public view on an island in the Bow River. Those occupying Olympic Plaza received substantial media attention, but lacking information, organizational experience, and other critical resources, were unable to articulate a coherent or even plausible message. Sympathy for the occupation dissipated. On 9 December, under court order, the Olympic Plaza Occupy camp disbanded with a press conference that addressed no grievances other than its forced disbandment. Calgary mayor Naheed Nenshi summed up Occupy Calgary's central problem: they "completely lost the plot" (Gerson, 2011). The protest had come to focus

on the right to occupy a particular space in front of City Hall, rather than the systemic injustices that occupation was intended to symbolically challenge.

Nenshi's critique of OC resonates strongly with Marcuse's (2011) warning about the danger of fetishizing space. Learning from the successes of the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement clearly understood the symbolic importance of occupying space. Asserting the right of democratic expression, challenging the sovereign authority of the state, and undermining notions of an immutable social order through place-based acts of transgression (Cresswell, 1996) were key components of Occupy's spatial tactics. Occupying space also had the benefit of facilitating the interaction of activists and demonstrating the strength of the movement. But as Marcuse states, "occupied space is a means to an end, and only one means among others, not the end itself" (2011). The end was not to claim space for the sake of claiming space in the city, but rather to rectify injustices driven by systemic processes that run through the city. Tactically, Occupy was both brilliant and fatally flawed. Brilliant because it visibly, through the occupation of space, challenged the social order and garnered widespread attention. Fatally flawed because it relied on the willingness of thousands of activists to change their spatial activities in a manner that could not possibly be sustained. As a tactic, occupation tends to work best when it coincides with the everyday spatial needs of activists, such as occupying land for a favela or squatting an abandoned house. Occupy required extraordinary changes in activists' everyday spatial activity; its spatial tactics did not coincide with the spatial requirements of everyday life in the city.

If there is a flaw in Marcuse's critique, it is that it considers only a very narrow and specific spatiality. Marcuse's warning against fetishizing space is, in actuality, about the specific dangers of fetishizing fixed sites of occupation. Indeed, one could mount the opposite critique of Occupy, i.e., that it did not pay sufficient attention to the diverse spatialities of mobilization. For example, rather than focusing on occupying fixed protest sites, it could have considered a range of mobile and flexible spatial strategies and tactics. The World Social Forum, for instance, has created a hybrid organizational model that includes multi-scalar regional and local forums as well as horizontal networks. The Indignados of Spain have shifted to neighborhood organizing. As Juris (2012) notes, "acting in network beyond the square could give rise to multiple tactics and strategies, including public education, community organizing, neighborhood meet ups, and electronic civil disobedience as well as marches, protests, and decentralized direct actions" (269).

The point is not to suggest a correct or optimal spatial strategy for mobilization—no such general statement is possible. Our central assertion, rather, is that social movement mobilization is highly complex, always involving multiple co-implicated processes with diverse geographies and spatialities. These geographies and spatialities matter greatly, from the systemic geographies of oppression, to the geographical framing of issues and solutions, to the geographical basis of solidarity and resource mobilization, to the relative mobility or fixity of protagonists as they attempt to control or escape the geographically defined arena of struggle. The spatial constitution of the processes shaping mobilization matters. In recent decades, considerable attention has been paid to the ways in which motivational, diagnostic, and prognostic frames "resonate" with the groups activists are attempting to mobilize. In equal measure the "spatial resonance" of mobilization strategies and tactics, i.e., how strategies and tactics align with the geographies and spatialities of processes that shape both oppression and mobilization, may be critical to understanding

their success or failure. This is not to say that the geographies and spatialities of resistance must always be homologous to the geographies and spatialities of oppression. On the contrary, there may be very good reasons for adopting entirely different spatial strategies and tactics. But whatever strategies and tactics are adopted, their spatial constitution will have significant implications for the course of social struggle. In the five articles to follow, the implications of the geographies and spatialities of several very different struggles are examined.

SUMMARY OF THIS ISSUE

In "Contracts for Contentious Politics: Day Labor Hall Practices and the City of Cincinnati," Colleen McTague and Per Jansen examine the politics of day labor at a Cincinnati recycling facility, focusing on the relationship between working conditions, wage violations, and the everyday lifeworlds of the day laborers. Through the Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center a Day Labor Organizing Project was founded that challenged the neoliberal agenda of deregulating local labor markets. A political struggle based in the local interfaith community and the neighborhood of most day laborers broadened the scale of conflict by building alliances with regional and national labor and environmental organizations, eventually succeeding in forcing the City of Cincinnati to enforce its living wage ordinance. The tight intertwining of systemic processes and a deprived local life-world is evident in their analysis, as is the importance of building broad networks to mobilize resources in political struggle. Perhaps most disheartening in an otherwise hopeful narrative is, that in the aftermath of the Day Labor Organizing Project's victory, the offending day labor agency closed its Cincinnati office and moved to Kentucky to escape the regulations of Cincinnati.

In "Path Dependency and Patterns of Collective Action: Space, Place, and Agency in Long Beach, California, 1900–1960," Gary Hytrek and Alfonso Hernández Márquez examine the ways in which logics of collective action have taken different paths in Long Beach and Los Angeles. They demonstrate how Long Beach elites repressed local labor organizing and the building of interdependencies with other labor and community groups through violence and place-based framings of legitimacy and illegitimacy. The place-dependent structure of Long Beach harbor industries and the ability of Long Beach elites to build their own regional interdependencies further explains the difference in Long Beach activism vis a vis Los Angeles. Their analysis well illustrates the need to examine both the internal geographies of cities and extra-local relationships when attempting to understand geographies of activism.

In "Up against the Law: Legal Structuring of Political Opportunities in Neighborhood Opposition to Group Home Siting in Massachusetts," Deborah Martin looks at two cases of neighborhood based NIMBY activism against the siting of group homes in Worcester, Massachusetts. She examines how the actions and discourses of both local officials and neighborhood groups were shaped by the multi-scalar regulatory framework of the state of Massachusetts. Contrary to most United States states, Massachusetts precludes localities from using zoning to restrict the siting of group residential uses. As a result, the NIMBY discourse of preserving "family" neighborhoods ran headlong into state law, producing great frustration as local activists and officials were relatively powerless to deal with what was perceived as a local siting issue. Martin's analysis compellingly demonstrates the

significance of a scalar mismatch between local place-identity activism and a broader scale state regulatory framework.

In "Urban Contestation in a Feminist Register," Fran Klodawsky, Janet Siltanen and Caroline Andrew recount the efforts of the Ottawa-based City for All Women Initiative/Initiative: une ville pour toutes les femmes (CAWI-IVTF) to bring the voices of previously excluded and alienated women into the discussions and debates of Ottawa municipal politics. Many women's groups, particularly those from ethno-cultural minority communities, felt they did not understand the structures of municipal government sufficiently to voice their concerns beyond the realm of everyday life in their neighborhoods. Drawing on women's and ethno-cultural group networks, CAWI-IVTF trained and organized women to participate in the decision-making processes of Ottawa city government, changing both the multi-scalar and networked constitution of municipal politics.

Finally, in "To Inhabit Well: Counter-Hegemonic Movements and the Right to the City," Mark Purcell returns to Henri Lefebvre's notion of the right to the city. Reading Lefebvre through Deleuze and Guattari, Purcell examines how "a claim to inhabit urban space well is an integrative claim," bringing together diverse groups in the city, helping them to conceive of their interdependence. While groups will inevitably have irreducible differences "the right to inhabit implies common cause," driving actors to establish relations of equivalence even as they strive for autonomy and self-management. The struggle for self-management is itself a struggle for democratization, a "never-ending struggle to increase popular control over the production of urban space."

Through these five studies we gain a strong sense of how important geographies and spatialities are to the outcomes of struggle, and to the notion of what just cities and just societies might look like.

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