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Introduction

Conceptualizing the Spatialities of Social Movements

Walter Nicholls, Byron Miller and Justin Beaumont

Virtually every day we witness a range of powerful movements challenging the privileges and power of governing elites. Early in the second decade of the new millennium we have seen the successful mobilization of democratic movements in North Africa and Burma, and anti-neoliberal movements worldwide, most notably the Occupy movement. These movements demonstrate the continued importance of challenging established orders, as well as the ability of movements to topple long-standing power structures. Forged in the context of particular political opportunities, organizational resources, and discursive frames, the dynamics of these movements reveal the centrality of spatial relations. In a great many cases streets and public squares became the vortices through which radically different groups connected and assembled to protest against, or wrest control from, those holding the reins of power. Many of the people who flooded into public spaces to protest did so spontaneously, prompted only by a tweet, a Facebook post, a phone call, a flyer, or word of mouth. But behind much of the seemingly spontaneous mobilization lay the work of long-standing communities and organizations that developed strategies and tactics to activate pre-existing networks, prompting members, allies, acquaintances and strangers to come out in support. In some cases apparently local mobilizations had transnational organizational connections, such as the links between the Egyptian revolution and the Serbian Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (Rosenberg 2011).

The processes of assembling thousands of different individuals and groups – with their own distinctive worldviews and political imaginaries – for defiant acts of spatial appropriation not only affirmed activists' commitment to horizontal and democratic modes of political action, it also demonstrated very clever spatial strategies and tactics. They reminded people and organizations across countries and continents that another world is indeed possible, instilling courage and changing the calculus of future acts of collective action. The multitude's expressions of dissent and solidarity through the occupation of highly symbolic public spaces were critical, not only because they breached the order of things and revealed the frailties and blind spots of state power. Images of mass public demonstrations – and knowledge of the strategies and tactics employed – were diffused through personal and organizational networks and mass media, with actors close and far discovering possibilities where none had previously been perceived. States responded with a

range of techniques in attempts to repress mobilization and assert their claims to territorial sovereignty – from blocking the diffusion of information by censoring and shutting down the internet to forcibly removing protesters from protest sites. Yet, as some of the spatial channels of mobilization were disrupted, others were created. Networked and mobile activists have shown a remarkable capacity to overcome state barriers, though of course there are limits and exceptions to this, as evidenced by the repression of dissent in Iran and North Korea, among other countries.

Shared outrage, solidarity, and hope are fundamental prerequisites for virtually all mass mobilizations. But before people will flood the public squares they must understand that they are not alone. Feelings of isolation must be vanquished and fear must be replaced with hope. Hope and solidarity require the building of relationships that assure protestors that their views are shared, that their fellow activists can be trusted, that resources – however meagre – will be available, and that the collective force to change society can be rallied. These relationships – and all social relationships – are fundamentally, inextricably spatial. That social relations are spatial relations has long been recognized (Hagerstrand 1970; Lefebvre 1974 [1991 translation]; Soja 1980; Giddens 1984), but the way in which this ontological fact has been conceptualized and operationalized has frequently fallen short. Conceptualizations of space as simply a container of social action, such as a nation-state or city, or as a distance variable to be considered among other variables, can still be found in the contemporary literature.

But more commonly a particular spatiality, e.g., place, scale, networks, mobility, is selected as the epistemological lens through which analysis proceeds. Such analyses are often sharp and insightful, yet provide only partial accounts of the spatial constitution of the social processes under consideration. The discipline of Geography has undergone a sequence of spatial emphases: regions in the 1930s, '40s and '50s; space in the 1960s and '70s; place in the 1980s; scale in the 1990s and 2000s; and networks and mobility more recently. From time to time major debates erupt among scholars emphasizing different spatialities, e.g., the 'scale debate' in which some scholars sought to expunge the notion of scale from geographic research and replace it with a flat ontology focusing on networks (Marston et al. 2005; Leitner and Miller 2007; Jonas 2006; Leitner, Sheppard and Sziarto 2008). From our perspective these debates are both enlightening and frustrating. Enlightening, because they point out the weaknesses and blind spots in dominant epistemologies and research agendas. Frustrating, because they often present us with an either/or zero-sum intellectual choice: if we are to consider a new spatial epistemology we must discard what we have learned in the past – or so we are told. While recognizing that some spatial ontologies and epistemologies may be irreconcilable, we contend that there is actually considerable complementarity among the spatial ontologies and epistemologies employed in the spatial research of recent years (Lefebvre 1991/1974; Soja 1989, 1996; Harvey 2006; Jessop et al. 2008). All spatialities, properly conceived, are relational. These relational spatialities, e.g., place, space, scale, territory, networks, mobility, play distinctive

yet interlocking roles in shaping the structures, strategies, dynamics and power of social movements.

The aim of this edited volume is to provide readers with a state-of-the-art analysis of how space plays a constituting role in social movement mobilization. The contributing authors identify a variety of ways in which this occurs, stressing that multiple spatialities are implicated and, indeed, co-implicated in contentious politics (Sheppard 2002; Leitner and Miller 2007; Jessop et al. 2008; Leitner et al. 2008; Leitner and Sheppard 2009; Nicholls 2009; Jones and Jessop 2010). Multiple spatialities intersect and shape social movements, but which spatialities are most relevant is a context-dependent question, dependent upon the positionality of movement actors as well as of the researcher. Most scale-focused research, for example, tends to concentrate on questions of relational state structures and political economy, while network-focused work tends to concentrate on actors and the relations they build. While the questions asked and the positionalities of researchers may be very different, to represent these bodies of research as irreconcilable is to pose a false antithesis (Castree 2002). Each spatiality has implications for the constitution of social movements (e.g., mobilization capacities, internal cohesion, frames, internal conflicts, etc.). In some cases particular spatialities may not be immediately evident or relevant, such as the role of a multi-scalar state in a highly localized movement against the exploitive practices of a local business. But social movements are always dynamic: the significance of scalar relations may not be immediately present, but emerge as events unfold and tactics and strategies evolve.

Our intention is not to make a broad statement that all social movements reflect an endlessly complex entanglement of spatialities and end it there. Rather, our analytical aim is to first disentangle the spatial complexity of social movements by identifying some of the distinctive roles spatialities may have – while acknowledging that complete disentanglement is impossible. Then, in keeping with current debates around an assemblage perspective on social movements (see Davies 2012; Legg 2009; McFarlane 2009; McCann and Ward 2010), as well as long-standing critical realist perspectives that combine ontological realism with epistemological relativism (e.g., Archer et al. 1998; Sayer 2010), we assess some of the ways in which spatialities may be implicated and co-implicated in the dynamics and pathways of social movements.

(Dis)entangling the spatialities of social movements

Place: enabling – disabling social movements

John Agnew (1987, 2002) has forcefully argued that places are sites where wider economic and political process are played out (*locations*), social and organizational relations develop to mediate micro responses to macro level processes (*locale*), and spatial imaginaries form to give people a sense of meaning in their particular worlds (*sense of place*) (Agnew 1987: 28). These qualities of place overlap within one

another and form the contexts through which people experience and live out their everyday worlds. Agnew maintains that general social processes (e.g., formation of class, gender, 'race', etc.) intersect with one another in concrete places, serving as fields through which ongoing processes become inscribed into social habitus, identities, relations of trust and belonging, and political dispositions. People do not become familiar with their social positions by situating their locations in abstract structures, but through everyday interactions with other people, things and images that make up their *locale*. Significantly, place is not to be equated with 'the local'. As nodes of social interaction, places may be locations where geographically extensive processes, even global processes, intersect and play out. Indeed, Doreen Massey (1994) explicitly addresses myriad ways in which global movement and intermixing can give rise to specific local characteristics, including 'a global sense of place'. Places are where social relations are bundled or 'condensed', regardless of the territorial extent of those relations.

Places shape political subjectivities of people and provide them with frameworks for interpreting whether injustices have been done and whether collective and contentious responses are merited. Within locales people form 'epistemic communities' to interpret whether the abuse they face amounts to a violation of the 'social contract' and merits a forceful and collective response. For example, in France all nineteenth-century artisans faced similar threats by the forces of increased industrialization, but their interpretations of the nature of these threats varied sharply according to the cultures and relations found in different places across the country (Tilly 1964, 1986). While artisans in Paris interpreted structural changes as meriting a forceful collective response in 1848, artisans in the Vendée region had an entirely different interpretation of their changing structural position which precipitated a counter-mobilization to support the old regime.

While place has been shown to play an important role in shaping the basic political dispositions of people, scholars have also shown that place plays a vital role in helping disparate actors form into a cohesive political force. Sustained and proximate interaction over time can create strong trusting relations among actors, which can then be drawn on to enable collective action (Granovetter 1983; Coleman 1988; Diani 1997; Routledge 1997; Miller 2000; Tarrow and McAdam 2005; Tilly 2005; Nicholls 2008). Relations of trust are critical because they provide certainty that when actors contribute their scarce resources to high risk political enterprises, their contributions will not be squandered because of the malfeasance or incompetence of others (Tilly 2005). Trust and knowledge lowers uncertainties and increases the willingness of actors to risk their lives, resources, and freedom for different political enterprises. Strong relations not only help generate greater trust in others but also a sense of obligation to contribute to the struggles of fellow comrades. Strong emotional bonds knit actors together while obligations are enforced through collective surveillance (Coleman 1988).

In his now classic discussion of the Paris Commune, Roger Gould (1993; 1995) demonstrates that strong ties developed in working class neighbourhoods provided the social solidarity that permitted residents to risk their lives to protect

the Commune. ‘What tied workers from different occupations together in the Commune were the *tangible bonds they experienced as neighbors, not the abstract bonds of joint structural position in the capitalist mode of production*’ (1993: 751, emphasis added). Although proximity is not the only condition for securing strong ties (kin networks, religious affiliations, and common history are also important), geographic stability increases the likelihood of repeated contact and bonding experiences among people, which in turn favours stronger ties (Coleman 1988; Collins 2004).

Place therefore helps generate strong relations among activists within a social movement network. These types of relations ultimately lower the uncertainties of high risk mobilizations, helping compel people to contribute their scarce resources to these mobilizations in spite of the risks. Thus, place plays a crucial role in producing the kinds of intensive relations needed to facilitate the mobilization of high end resources to high stakes struggles.

The relational interdependencies discussed here are also constituted through what Deborah Martin has called ‘place frames’, which function to provide activists with a common sense of who they are, their difference from adversaries, and the merits of their cause. Activists draw on the common symbolic repertoires found in places to assemble mobilizing frames and harness collective emotions (Miller 2000; Martin 2003; Bosco 2006). By contributing to the production of solidarity networks and these symbolic frames, ‘place’ makes it possible for marginalized people to contribute scarce resources to high risk political movements.

While place can enhance the mobilization powers of activists by strengthening relations and building common mobilizing frames and identities, states may attempt to short-circuit and disrupt movements by enacting a range of place-based strategies (Castells 1983; for a historical account, see Mann 1993). Through the development and enhancement of local political and administrative institutions, states can channel political grievances away from the central state and other oppressive institutions, toward more proximate and readily identifiable targets (Katznelson 1981; Castells 1983; Purcell 2006; Miller 2007). They can also channel aggrieved activists into thousands of particularistic battles. Moreover, each of these administrative and political units provides public officials with information and means to monitor and discipline the conduct of the activist communities within them. For example, David Harvey (2003) recounts that one of the most important measures to ensure social and political control by the French state in the years after the 1848 revolution was to create administrative districts (*arrondissements*) in Paris to monitor and disrupt activities within micro-insurgent spaces. The rollout of countless new local political and administrative spaces has only been accelerated in recent years with decentralized and ‘participatory’ urban development projects (Raco and Imrie 2000; Beaumont 2003; Nicholls 2006; Dikec 2007; Beaumont and Nicholls 2008; Uitermark 2010). While some of these new administrative spaces may actually provide new opportunities for empowered citizenship (Fung 2006), it appears that most are consistent with a long and well

established state tradition of penetrating the places where insurgent networks arise and disrupting them before they evolve into anti-systemic movements.

Place matters for social movements because it empowers activists, but also it ensnares them in thousands of local traps (Purcell 2006). David Harvey (2001) cuts to the heart of the modalities of place through the concepts of 'place in itself' and 'place for itself'. Place in itself refers to the enabling effects of place-based relations which are, for him, the essential building blocks for assembling scattered individuals into a cohesive force for social and political change. Place for itself, by contrast, is exemplified by efforts to turn the geographic defence of places and territories against all outsiders, undermining the ability of such mobilizations to connect to distant others and present a unified front in the face of new geometries of capitalist power.

Territory and region: inclusion/exclusion

If place can be understood primarily as a locus of social interaction, meaning construction, and collective action calculation, the spatialities of 'territory' and 'region' address the areal constitution of social and political life. Territory and region are difficult to define, with numerous definitions and strands of analysis found in the geographical literature. Indeed, in his comprehensive overview of the concept of territory, Elden (2010) refuses to provide a definition. Likewise 'region' is difficult to pin down, and the two concepts are frequently used interchangeably (MacLeod and Jones 2007; Jonas 2012). If 'region' is to be differentiated from 'territory', it is likely to be on the basis of the mechanisms by which geographical areas are constructed and claimed. The notion of region is less likely to be directly associated with state action and, arguably, more likely to be associated with the geographical patterns of everyday life and the claims made in praise and defence of such patterns. Nonetheless, states may also promote the construction of regions and regionalism. Both concepts represent claims to geographical areas, claims of coherence within those areas, and claims of authority over the populations and resources of those areas, including the ability to include or exclude actors based on how the territory/region is defined.

While problematic, a common definition of territory can be offered: a 'bounded space' associated with the constitution of the modern state. The concept of territory typically implies state sovereignty over a bounded area, including the population and resources within. John Agnew, in his work on the 'territorial trap' (1994, 2009a), has pointed out the flaws in this conception: state sovereignty need not be inextricably linked to exclusive bounded territory, there is no clear distinction between foreign and domestic relations, and modern societies should not be viewed as territorially contained. Much of Agnew's argument resonates in the work of Massey (1994, 2005) and many poststructuralists who go a step further to argue that coherent spatial 'containers' are implausible and indefensible in the postmodern globalized world. Indeed, some poststructuralists have argued that scalar and territorial concepts be jettisoned in favour of attention to 'bordering

practices' (Marston et al. 2005). Yet the fluidity and permeability of borders can neither be equated with, nor entirely account for, social and political relations within a geographical territory. As Elden (2010) explains, 'Focusing on the determination of space that makes boundaries possible, and in particular the role of calculation, opens up the idea of seeing boundaries not as a primary distinction that separates territory from other ways of understanding political control of land, but as a second-order problem founded upon a particular sense of calculation and concomitant grasp of space' (2010: 811). For Elden territory is not something fixed and ahistorical, but rather a 'political technology' employed in the exercise of power. Elden's notion of territory as political technology is consistent with Agnew's (2009b) explanation of the way modern territorial states function, i.e., through exclusion (of entities that cannot claim territorial sovereignty) and mutual recognition (of entities that effectively exercise territorial sovereignty).

The ability to exclude others and exercise control over populations and resources within an area is the essence of territory as political technology. While globalization and compromised bordering practices may undermine this technology, they by no means eliminate it. According to Agnew (2009b):

Territories and networks exist relationally rather than mutually exclusively. If territorial regulation is all about tying flows to places, territories have never been zero-sum entities in which the sharing of power or the existence of external linkages totally undermines their capacity to regulate. If at one time territorial states did severely limit the local powers of trans-territorial agencies, that this is no longer the case does not signify that the states have lost all of their powers (2009b: 747).

Territorial (or regional) regulation has clear implications for collective action. The ability to control and marshal resources within a territory, as well as ability to regulate the flow of resources across borders, is of critical importance to social movements and states alike. 'Regions and territorial organization [operate] at the nexus of tensions between fixity and flow' (Jonas 2012: 266) and these tensions are resolved, if temporarily, through struggle.

The construction of territory, moreover, can provide the basis for territorial identity, an extremely powerful form of identity and solidarity in collective action (Paasi 2009). When effective, the state territorial discourses are capable of legitimating the existing order. When they fail to achieve legitimation, however, aggrieved actors may mobilize against the institutions of the central state. Or they may mobilize but nonetheless target local state institutions, seeking to advance particularistic concerns. Interests may be couched in terms of the protection of local regions from forces that threaten a group's status, privileges, or way of life. Many secessionist mobilizations, gated communities, Nimbyisms, and regionalist movements are rooted in such dynamics (Boudreau and Keil 2001). In these instances, mobilization is not only channelled away from the central organs of

state power, but may also target marginalized social groups rather than structural forces or political and economic elites.

Castells (1997) adds that localizing state discourses and strategies, under conditions of advanced globalization, have intensified the disjuncture between global elites and local activists. According to Castells, as power has concentrated in global networks ('spaces of flows'), associational and representational institutions are increasingly circumscribed in localities ('spaces of places'). Global elites have been able to position themselves at the intersection of these global and local spaces, developing 'reflexive dispositions' that allow them to maximize their power in both. Non-elites, by contrast, may lack access to global networks and have few options but to use local associational and representational institutions in defensive manoeuvres. In other words, networks are themselves regionalized, in ways that frequently favour global elites. Massey (2007) adds that political imaginaries fuelled by nostalgia for a past undisrupted by 'outsiders' may energize such localized struggles.

Scaling the geometries of power

Territorial power is unevenly articulated across a range of relational geographic scales. Social movements often unfold at the intersection of a series of overlapping and hierarchical state spaces (municipality, regions, nation state, international agencies), each providing a complex yet malleable mix of opportunities and constraints (Miller 1994, 2004; Sikkink 2005). In her discussion of transnational social movements, Sikkink (2005) maintains that political opportunities and constraints can vary sharply between national and international scales depending on countries, international institutions, and the nature of political issues. In certain instances, movements may have strong political alliances at the national scale but regulatory levers concerning an issue reside in international institutions with few openings. In other instances the situation may be reversed, with national institutions charged with a particular issue remaining closed and international institutions displaying greater degrees of openness. Miller (2000) makes a similar observation regarding municipal, regional, and nation-state institutions.

Others have shown how elites employ a range of techniques to transmit the rationalities of neoliberalism across the scalar landscape of the socio-political body (Rose 1999; Larner 2000; Raco and Imrie 2000; Sparke 2006; Huxley 2008; McCann and Ward 2011). Capital, states, and intellectuals have succeeded in producing discourses that not only advocate neoliberalism as an economic strategy, but also as a moral system whose categories, codes, and values are superior to all others (Larner 2000; Ong 2006; Peck 2010). These discourses have been disseminated through variously scaled circuits (e.g., media, schools, public institutions, etc.). Quasi-state international institutions like the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund play strategic roles in supporting neoliberal understandings through policy recommendations that shape the disciplining and development of nation-states, regions, localities, and bodies

(Ong 2006; Sparke 2006). Other governing institutions, like nation-states, operate in similar ways and diffuse their own neoliberal discourses through various institutional circuits. A new set of constraints, as well as some opportunities, exist for activists operating within this mesh of overlapping neoliberal discourses and disciplinary powers, with neoliberal discourses often becoming incorporated into 'normal' ways of thinking and addressing social problems. For example, Ong (2006) suggests that many non-governmental organizations in Asia have embraced conceptions of 'human rights' based on a particularly neoliberal understanding of humanity, values, and rights. In these instances, rather than NGOs contesting the existing order and proposing radical alternatives, they become important vehicles for reinforcing neoliberal values and producing new neoliberal subjectivities in Asia and elsewhere.

The uneven scaling of power, resources, and opportunities has important implications for the geographical strategies of activists and elites in the pursuit of their respective goals. It must be stressed that scale is not a spatiality simply to be 'found' in the political landscape, but rather is actively and relationally produced through struggle. Proponents of the state, capital, social movements, and other collectivities continually reshape scalar relations in an ongoing process of asserting and contesting power (Peck and Tickell 1994; Brenner 2004; Miller 2007). As Smith (1992: 74) puts it, 'the scale of struggle and the struggle over scale are two sides of the same coin'. States often rescale policy and decision-making processes to those scales where popular pressure can be muted or diffused, and where state resources are insufficient to implement democratic decisions (Peck and Tickell 1994; Miller 2007). When central state officials transfer responsibility for labour regulations to regional or international institutions, they reduce the ability of national labour unions to influence labour policy (Herod 2001; Keck and Sikkink 1998). Devolving welfare policies to local scales of government diffuses targets by requiring social movements to make claims in countless local bodies rather than a single national one. While politically astute elites have shown great ability to rescale administrative and policy making process to evade pressures from below, social movements have also effectively pursued multi-scalar strategies. Sikkink (2005), for instance, shows that movements exploit opportunities on one scale to open up opportunities on others. In the campaign to have Pinochet tried in Chile, activists used opportunities and alliances developed on the international scale to pressure national institutions to bring the former dictator to justice – an example of one of several possible multi-scalar strategies employed by social movements to achieve their objectives. To counter the efforts of elites to spatially contain or fragment activists, the latter can respond by rescaling conflict and engaging in complex multi-scalar strategies.

Rescaling and multi-scalar strategies strongly affect the relational dynamics of social movements. Employment of such strategies is by necessity relational, requiring the development and reconfiguration of social networks and power relations across geographical and institutional boundaries (Routledge 2003; Sikkink 2005; Cumbers et al. 2008; Nicholls 2009). Tarrow and McAdam (2005)

have identified two general mechanisms by which social movements shift scales. 'Relational diffusion' refers to the extension of a movement through pre-existing relational ties, i.e., social networks. The existence of trust and shared identities contained in existing relational ties not only facilitates the spread of social movements, it also provides a durable relational base for sustainable mobilizations. The limitation of this mechanism is its dependence upon *existing* relational ties: the social and geographical reach of this scale shift tends to be limited and localized, which reduces the impact of these types of mobilizations on wider political spheres of influence. The second of these mechanisms is 'brokerage': the spread of mobilization resulting from linking two or more actors who were previously unconnected (Tarrow and McAdam 2005: 127). Brokerage results in new relations across traditional geographical and social boundaries, enhancing the potential reach and effect of collective actors. Though brokerage can expand the scope of social movements, alliances resulting from brokerage are, according to Tarrow and McAdam, more fragile because they are comprised of many different groups and possess weak mechanisms of social integration.

Scale-shifting strategies not only complicate the networking structures and dynamics of social movements, they also affect their framing and messaging strategies. Activists modulate their framing strategies according to the circumstances present on different geographic scales. For example, the recent immigrant rights movement in the United States employs different messages depending on the geographic scale of their audience (Nicholls forthcoming). When activists are pitching their message in localities where they have a strong organizational base, they stress frames and messages that resonate with immigrants. The aim in these instances is not necessarily to build broad support for their cause. Instead, the aim of discourse production is to strengthen internal identity, cohesion, and commitment of core activists. Consequently, lead discursive producers will stress themes, values, and symbols with great meaning for these core activists. However, when mobilization shifts to the national scale, the primary aim is to win over the support of large segments of the public. On this scale, activists must employ frames and messages that resonate with the values of a rather hostile public (flags, immigrants as extensions of the American Dream, etc.) rather than speak to the emotions and imaginaries of their core constituencies.

Scale-shifting strategies strongly affect who participates in social movements, participants' relations to one another, their capacities to achieve goals, and the ways in which they frame their struggles. Rather than this particular spatiality operating as an exogenous variable affecting social movements, scalar strategies play a direct and constituting role in their growth, development, and decline.

Networks and flows

Some sociologists and geographers have argued that heavy emphasis on the institutional forces that structure social movements has come at the expense of attention to the networks that permit the flow of information, ideas, and

emotions among activists in different places (Diani 2005; Cumbers et al. 2008; Featherstone 2003; 2008). The geographical literature on networks is distinct from the sociological literature and begins from a very different problematic. Some geographers have questioned the assumptions underlying the traditional conceptions of place, territory, and scale (Amin and Thrift 2002; Amin 2004; Massey 1994, 2004, 2005, 2007; Marston et al. 2005). It is argued that people who reside within a common location have very different sociological attributes, histories, geographical ties and mobilities. Cohabitation and proximity do not by necessity produce strong ties, similar political dispositions, or feelings of solidarity. Moreover, structured places and scales are constantly undone and remade by global flows of people, capital, and ideas. Traditional conceptions of place, territory, and scale may overemphasize their stability and underemphasize their mobility and flux (Amin 2004: 33). Lastly, traditional conceptions of place, territory, and scale may feed into imaginaries of nostalgia rather than those of progressive change (Massey 1994, 2004; also see Duyvendak 2011). Indeed, Massey argues that territorial conceptions of place fuel ‘... localist or nationalist claims to place based on eternal essential, and in consequence exclusive, characteristics of belonging’ (2004: 6).

Featherstone (2003, 2005, 2008) has applied these general critiques to the study of social movements. He suggests that geographers are bound by binaries that ‘counterpose local and global, of space and place’ (2003: 405). These binaries are problematic because they privilege local relations over distant ones, with the former assumed to be more *authentic* and therefore more politically legitimate than distant relations and forces. Such views may reinforce reactionary, localist, and nationalist claims to power. Moreover, the use of binaries project fixed interests and identities on the actors we study, with certain actors being essentially ‘local’, ‘global’, or bound to particularistic territories. This results in representations of actors as essentially different from one another and engaged in zero-sum negotiations with others. Featherstone’s critique echoes Eric Wolff’s warning not to ‘create a model of the world as a global pool hall in which the entities spin off each other like so many hard and round billiard balls’ (Wolf 1982: 6). Identities and interests are not established prior to power struggles with multiple others (near and far) but through these struggles, with relational exchanges through struggles becoming the driving force for shaping the dispositions and outlooks of different subjects. A ‘global sense of place’ (Massey 1994) for Featherstone means that locations are traversed by a wide range of power networks, with actors in different sites engaging with one another through multiple relations. Employing a more fluid and networked understanding of place allows us to open up the study of activism and better understand the complex mechanisms that shape the identities and subjectivities of actors.

Attempting to reconcile these different positions in human geography, Nicholls (2009, 2011) has argued that urban places are unique sites for networking in social movements because they favour the formation of strong-tie relations and they permit fleeting and contingent weak ties among mobile actors. Fleeting

interactions allow actors in strong-tie relations to regularly interact and share ideas with the diverse others that make up a local activist milieu. The qualities of place therefore favour a network structure that is both internally well structured and open to contacts with multiple others in the vicinity. When activists in these messy places connect to activists elsewhere, they form a distinctive 'social movement space' constituted by and through uneven networks. Because certain places within this networked space are more powerful than others in terms of their material and symbolic power, they become a structuring and driving force (i.e. hub) within the broader social movement network. While these places may provide the movement with a degree of cohesion and focus that enhances its powers to achieve collective goals, they also introduce powerful cleavages between centralizing hubs and multiple peripheries. Thus, while Nicholls largely agrees with the general theoretical spirit of the 'relational approach' to geography, he also argues that networks come together and form distinctive sociospatial structures with their own logics of inequality and conflict.

Entangling spatialities

The growing prominence of network and relational approaches to geography has resulted in efforts to identify the ways in which networks are co-implicated with other spatialities like place, territory, and scale (Jessop et al. 2008; Leitner et al. 2008). Most geographers implicitly recognize that multiple spatialities produce overlapping yet distinctive effects on politics and social movements. However, these same geographers often employ one spatiality over others because it provides a useful entry point to analyse complex geopolitical processes (Jessop et al. 2008).

Leitner and her colleagues (2008) argue that human beings are positioned simultaneously in multiple spatialities. By identifying these spatialities and their distinctive yet overlapping effects on social movements, we are in a stronger position to examine how space in general plays a constituting role in social movements. Using the case of the Immigrant Workers' Freedom Ride in the United States, they show how mobility and trans-local networks were instrumental in circulating alternative imaginaries and catalyzing a series of locally situated but nationally connected immigrant rights coalitions. The theoretical task at hand is therefore not to demonstrate which spatiality is more important than another but rather to identify the various roles of different spatialities in social movements and how they intersect with one another to affect social movement dynamics.

While in broad agreement with this line of analysis, we wish to also stress that different spatialities may matter in different ways, that different spatialities will be of greater or lesser importance at different times and in different places, and that how different spatialities become co-implicated and entangled affects the mobilization capacities, resources, frames, and internal conflicts found in movements. We therefore agree that all spatialities are important, but they are not always equally important at all times and in all kinds of conflict.

Structure of the book

Three major conceptual affinities form the organizational framework of the book.

Place and Space: Sites of Mobilization

The first section examines how the characteristics of place and space influence the abilities of insurgents to mount collective challenges to their political opponents. This section illustrates how political actors nourish solidarities, deepen bonds, and forge collective identities with recruits in their various *places* of socialization, all through socially regulated practices of mobility, assembly, and interaction. Place-based ties provide the relational and cultural building blocks that make robust systemic challenges possible. As insurgents build their powers unevenly across different places, states frequently respond by employing a range of spatially sensitive techniques to survey and repress these efforts.

The first chapter on *Place and Space*, Chapter 1 by Donatella della Porta, Maria Fabbri and Gianni Piazza, presents results from their research on three infrastructure protest campaigns – No Tav, No Bridge, No Dal Molin – in Italy. After an introduction to the three campaigns, the authors show how these protests around the construction of large infrastructures not only demonstrate contestation of the use of specific spaces, with the elaboration of an alternative conception of those spaces, but also how new spaces were created as terrains of resistance. The symbolic contestation of the conception of space interacted with the physical occupation of particular places that not only acquired high symbolic meaning but also had strong effects on the protests, allowing for the development of intense relations up to the formation of shared (territorially based) identities. If the sense of place influenced the protests, the protests produced new definitions of places as collective identities developed in ‘liberated’ as well as ‘contested’ spaces.

In Chapter 2 Don Mitchell addresses the paradox of free speech in liberal democracies and how regulatory practices in the latter have, in effect, rendered politically dissident speech ineffectual. These practices, Mitchell argues, are primarily spatial in nature: they govern the regulation of space, not the regulation of political speech or action *per se*. The nature of this regulatory regime – and its effects – are profoundly important for contemporary social movements, especially those who seek to radically transform the established political and economic order. It is increasingly apparent that spatial regulation is the means by which dissident speech and dissident groups are silenced and suppressed. Through an examination of significant Supreme Court decisions and three case studies, Mitchell shows that the regulation-cum-suppression of dissident speech relies less and less on *what* is said than *where* it is said. Silencing speech – silencing protest – is a function of geography. And free speech law in the United States, the case studies show, is increasingly geographically astute.

In Chapter 3 Jan Willem Duyvendak and Loes Verplanke examine social movements explicitly aiming at a sense of belonging or a new sense of ‘home’,

in particular the movement fighting against ‘total institutions’ for people with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities and the parallel story of the gay and lesbian movement. Distinguishing conceptually between ‘heaven’, ‘haven’ and ‘hell’, the authors argue that these two movements demonstrate quite different struggles for new practices of home making in place. The new home making practices at the community level were far less successful for people with disabilities than for gays. In practice, the former moved from their big institutions (‘hell’) to small, independent housing (‘havens’ at best) – which was quite an improvement in itself – but with no integration in the community, no public home. The home making practices of gays, on the other hand, were intimately linked to social movements and collective action, resulting in public places for themselves, characterized by all elements of what the authors claim as a ‘heaven’, providing space for identity and visibility.

In Chapter 4 Deborah Martin revisits her earlier work on ‘place framing’ to consider how it functions in different contexts and in translation with public policy, especially legal discourses. Place framing draws from social movement theory to articulate how neighbourhood organizations portray activism as grounded in a particular place and scale. Martin considers in this chapter how the concept applies in Athens, Georgia in the US. Furthermore, she explores how the neighbourhood-identifying and mobilizing function of place frames encounter the legal and political discourses of public policy. The translation of place frames into political discourse reflects strategic decision-making, formal negotiation, and shifting scales of neighbourhood activism. The chapter considers those shifts and the actors influencing them, and their importance for the forms and outcomes of urban activism.

Scale, Territory and Region: Structuring Collective Interests, Identities and Resources

The second section – dealing with the related spatialities of scale, territory, and region – examines the dynamic interaction among these areal/hierarchical spatialities and social movement mobilization. Social movements develop within overlapping institutional and socio-cultural territories (e.g. neighbourhoods, cities, regions, nation-states, transnational). Territorially constituted institutions and actors typically relate to other such institutions and actors in complex and dynamic ways. These dynamic relations present particular movements with ever-changing sets of opportunities and constraints, with social movements often ‘jumping’ to those scales where they find the greatest opportunities and resources to advance their cause. The section stresses the dialectical relations between political territories and social movements: as geopolitical institutions establish ‘rules of the game’, the strategies and practices developed by movements in response to these rules may influence the ways in which states restructure and reform their territorial institutions.

The first chapter on *Scale, Territory and Region*, Chapter 5 by Martin Jones, offers both an empirical exploration and theoretical reflection on English regionalism and 'polymorphic spatial politics'. This chapter is centrally concerned with uncovering varieties of English regionalism, which have emerged through the spaces of devolution and constitutional change between 1997 and 2004. Jones discusses official and grassroots regional social movements, both from the position of those advocating territorial modes of empowerment and those resisting such spatial strategies. The chapter blends work being undertaken on the geography of regions with writings on social movements to develop the concept of 'regional social relations', i.e. connections between state forms, state actions and the social processes/practices operating through and in the shadow of the contemporary capitalist state. Key here is the dynamic between power relations, social groups and the spaces of opportunity created by state activity. Theoretically, Jones picks up from and expands upon the work he contributed to the development of the TPSN framework, reminding us that regional movements cannot be understood simply by focusing on the construction of regions, but must be understood through a polymorphic spatial framework that accounts for multiple spatialities and the complex political geometry they form.

In Chapter 6 John Agnew and Ulrich Oslender embrace recent debates in political geography that point to a key inadequacy in international relation theories, and in particular the Westphalian model of state sovereignty assumed by most, in positing the existence of new 'regimes of sovereignty' that are closely associated with ongoing processes of globalization. The idealized sovereignty of the nation-state is still, according to the authors, rigidly linked in dominant theories to the notion of a transparent territoriality or the control over a national territory clearly marked in space by established borders. In this chapter the authors propose the notion of 'overlapping territorialities' to examine sources of territorial authority other than that of the nation-state with reference to Latin America. In this context, a number of social movements (indigenous and Afrodescendent, for example) have achieved legal recognition of collective land ownership, with local communities establishing themselves as differential territorial authorities within the nation-state. Agnew and Oslender argue that empirical lessons from Latin America importantly contribute to a necessary re-thinking of the links between state sovereignty and territoriality as mediated, in this case, by the role of active social movements challenging the established spatial fabric of state-based politics.

Johan Moyersoén and Erik Swyngedouw argue in Chapter 7 that cities, social movements, activists and community organizations have often found ways to avoid conventional ways of political protest and to challenge norms and laws of the urban elite in a radical (democratic) way – for example squatter movements, critical arts movements, direct actions (such as reclaim the streets etc.). Such activism is often instigated by processes of uneven development (for example gentrification, biased tax policies, social exclusion) that create a polarized political landscape in the social as well as physical space in the city. The current dynamics of polarization and unevenness in the built environment and in the social spaces of

people's everyday life have generated innovative strategies and alternatives at the local level. In addition, these social actions have instigated groups to 'jump scales' and to challenge the power constellations that (re-)produce these inequalities at the overall urban level. Although cracks in the city are expressions of uneven development and social disparity, they open up new possibilities for social, political, economic or cultural experimentation outside of the conventional modes of political participation. They often generate spaces for political empowerment, radical democracy and social innovation. However, the antagonistic nature of cracks do not set the dissenter completely free in his or her actions. This chapter unravels the social and institutional dynamics of how a small group of pioneering urban activists engaged with some of the key actors in a deprived neighbourhood of Brussels in a process of urban renewal.

Margit Mayer, in Chapter 8, looks at local activities of movements critical of neoliberal globalization and their interactions and coalitions with other, locally based, movements. Drawing on observations of recent urban mobilizations and community-based activism particularly in the US and Germany, she focuses on the ways in which these movements address the shifting scalar organization of statehood. The chapter explores the added value the 'politics of scale' debate might bring to the problems emancipatory movements are facing in dealing with the reconfiguring scalar architecture of governance. Two types of protest movements serve as empirical objects of study: on the one hand the mobilizations against the neoliberalization of social and labour market policies, against the dismantling of the welfare state, and for social and environmental justice, which have come to the forefront of urban activism over the last decade; on the other hand, a transnationally active so-called anti-globalization movement which increasingly sees localities as the scale where global neoliberalism 'touches down', where global issues become localized. Networks that are part of this transnational movement have been importing repertoires and goals from the global protest, often in collaboration with the social justice alliances characteristic of the first-mentioned type of (local) protest movements. The chapter evaluates both dilemmas and opportunities these 'glocal' movements experience, thereby contributing to the explanatory power of the 'politics of scale'.

Networks: Connecting Actors and Resources Across Space

While the concepts of scale, territory and region have gained great prominence in geography, a number of prominent scholars have argued that these concepts underemphasize the diverse connections made among political actors across space. They often advocate replacing a scalar or territorial approach to politics with one based in networks, whereby the pluralism of local actors and their intimate connections with distant others are emphasized. Without abandoning the insights of scalar/territorial approaches, the last section of the book highlights recent efforts to analyse the network dimensions of social movements through the use of a variety of forms of network theory.

The first chapter in the *Networks* section, Chapter 9 by Dingxin Zhao, addresses the relations between the built environment and organization in anti-US protest mobilization in Beijing. Zhao treats built-environment-based and organization-based mobilization as two factors of participant mobilization and tries to understand the relationships between them. By examining different styles of student mobilization during the 1999 anti-US protests in three Beijing universities, each with a similar built environment and spatial routines of the students, the chapter shows that the built environment played a crucial role in mobilization in cases where there was less organizational involvement. In short, less-organized protests may be compelled to mobilize relying upon built-environment-based mobilization tactics.

In Chapter 10 Ted Rutland examines how the movement responsible for the Portland, Oregon energy policy was formed and structured. Recent attempts to explore the relationship between networks and social movements have encountered significant problems, including: (1) difficulties in distinguishing between pre-existing social networks and the movements generated as a result; (2) inattention to what it is that forms and binds social ties over time and space; and (3) unexamined assumptions about the (inherent and timeless) character of human agency in forging and joining social networks and movements. Rutland's chapter suggests new directions for social movement studies by drawing on the 'material-semiotic' approach of science studies theorists such as Donna Haraway, Andrew Pickering and Bruno Latour. After a brief review of the approach, which stresses the co-constitution of societies and natures through networks of associations, the chapter demonstrates its analytic potential through an examination of the emergence of a remarkably effective environmental movement in Portland, Oregon.

In Chapter 11 Andrew Davies and David Featherstone argue that the prominence and visibility of transnational forms of organizing is a defining feature of contemporary contentious politics. The authors claim that there are significant histories of transnational forms of contention and organizing, and they are by no means new, despite being frequently depicted as such. The growing prominence of and interest in such transnational forms of organizing has unsettled some of the key ways of understanding the geographies of contentious politics. This has opened up a challenge to the ways that both social movement theory and political geography have been structured by an implicit assumption that the national arena is the most obvious container for political activity.

Paul Routledge, Andrew Cumbers, and Corine Nativel, in Chapter 12, pull together several of the themes of spatially attuned social movements research, arguing that movements have increased their spatial reach over the past 20 years by constructing multi-scalar networks of support and solidarity for their particular struggles, and also by participating with other movements in broader campaign networks (e.g. to resist neoliberal globalization). Rather than a monolithic and coherent 'global justice movement', the authors' findings support a conception of a series of overlapping, interacting, competing, and differentially placed and resourced networks that they term Global Justice Networks (GJNs). Routledge,

Cumbers, and Nativel argue that through such networks, different place-based movements are becoming linked up to much more spatially extensive coalitions of interest. In order to analyse how such operational logics become entangled within the workings of GJNs, the chapter analyses two particular networks, People's Global Action, an international network of grassroots peasant movements, and the International Federation for Chemical Energy Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM), a global union federation (GUF) which brings together around 400 affiliate trade unions.

Conclusion

In the conclusion, Byron Miller takes stock of the diverse contributions to this volume, developing a framework for analysing the ways in which multiple spatialities are co-implicated in the mobilization and suppression of social movements. He argues that social movement research in geography, like much of human geography generally, is fragmented into different approaches to sociospatial analysis based in different spatial ontologies and theories of sociospatial struggle. While all commonly employed conceptions of spatiality are relational, there remain significant debates and differences among scholars over how best, spatially speaking, to approach the study of social movements. Given that many of these differences stem from different ontological foundations – most commonly critical realist versus poststructuralist – this is not a trivial issue. Yet, the diversity of the spatially oriented social movement research has yielded a wealth of complementary insights. Is it possible to integrate or reconcile different sociospatial approaches in social movement research? Without claiming to definitively resolve this dilemma, one way forward may be to treat the production of spatialities as themselves the product of social and political struggle rather than ontologically given, with spatialities to be regarded as spatial technologies of power that are strategically and contextually employed as a central component of the 'game' of contentious politics. Attempts to transform power relations are simultaneously attempts to transform spatial relations: social and political struggle is simultaneously a struggle to transform, shift, and/or fix spatialities. Understanding the production of spatialities as both a product and a technology of struggle allows us to understand spatialities, and their co-implications, as contextual and dynamic.

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