THE PHYSICALITY OF CITIZENSHIP: THE BUILT ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATIONS OF INSURGENT URBANISM IN CITIES AROUND THE GLOBE

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People use violence to make claims upon the city and use the city to make violent claims
(Holston, Appadurai, 1996, p. 202)

Both the global Occupy movement and the large number of protests sweeping through Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and other parts of North Africa and the Middle East have captured world imagination not just because of their seemingly momentous political import, but also because they literally show the enactment of democratic sentiments in the form of bustling bodies physically clamoring for rights and recognition in the face of power. Without news cameras, such insurgent urbanism would neither be accessible to the world at large, nor understood as violently disrupting the status quo. Even a Tweet cannot render legible the same intensity of emotions as do images of people physically encamped at the seats of political and economic power, or of angry mobs marching towards a phalanx of armed police. But it is not merely the pictures that inspire. It is also the mass physical concentration of bodies in open and highly symbolic spatial locations that sparks an interest in the geographies of rebellion. Recent events suggest that the public square has become the proverbial "center stage" upon which collective action is both possible and symbolically meaningful. Like Tiananmen Square, the mere mention of Tahrir Square, Pearl Square, Green Square, and now Zuccotti Park will evoke images of people whose power to confront an autocratic system needs only the proper physical venue. Such possibilities suggest that when people enact and voice their rights as citizens in public spaces, they indeed have the collective capacity to speak truth to power. In the most literal sense, this also means that citizenship is physical as much as political. And it is the physicality of citizenship as a form of insurgent urbanism – as well as its origins, limits, and possibilities – that concerns us here.

1. Geographies of protest: where in the city is citizenship enacted?

Precisely because physical space matters in insurgent collective action, regimes have long sought heavy-handed and subtle measures to control or limit citizen congregation, particularly in cities. Even in the United States, most major cities require a public permit to hold a demonstration. In non-democratic urban settings, a much larger array of tactics is used to curtail public gatherings, ranging from military containment of public sites to proactive monitoring and the strategic interception of communications used to plan mobilization. The grand redesign of Paris boulevards by the renowned Baron Haussmann was crafted with an eye to thwarting mass urban rebellions associated with the 1848 uprising. In the contemporary world, we see the state's continued efforts to control mobility and seal off open spaces as a central response to the challenges imposed by collective action.

Yet it is important to remember that the idea of public space, and its starring role in social protest or democratic

struggle, is grounded in much more than the physical. Even as a preferred site of mobilization, spaces become "public" not just because they are materially constructed as such, but because they are willfully appropriated by citizens for public purposes. Tahrir Square in Cairo, Pearl Square in Manama, and Zuccotti Park in New York City have been elevated to the status of iconic public spaces not because they were built by prescient urban planners to accommodate political revolutions, but because they have become highly accessible focal points whose character and function owe to a city's own urban and political history, which in turn is interpreted and re-written by its own citizens. The history of political and economic power was built on elite efforts to control vibrant cities and their hinterlands, as well as to monopolize the markets, governing institutions, and symbols of their predecessors. Big cosmopolitan locales tend to host all three of these functions, and in many locations the iconic public squares that characterize central areas of most major metropolises around the world have been protected and celebrated because they represent the larger society's most critical economic, political, and cultural conquests.

It is no surprise then that capital cities of nations hold one or two monumental public squares that serve as symbolic sites for the principal institutions of power, whether political, religious, or cultural. And it is no surprise that these locations draw the critical or dissatisfied masses, whose very presence makes a statement that a country's status quo institutions must be opened to include the very people whose bodies inhabit that space. Any link between the right to protest for a better life, on the one hand, and the occupation of those institutional and physical spaces associated with governing power on the other, will recall French urban philosopher Henri Lefebvre's "right to the city" oratory as a plea for more general social inclusion. Who does the city belong to in terms of space and

socio-economic benefits, and how might a physical "retaking" of certain spatial sites become the first step in challenging the larger social and political order? The distances between the actual, intended, and ideal rights to the city are often mediated by protest, and even by violence as enacted in public performances on public squares (Davis, 1999). Still, the fact is that the more autocratic the regime and the more violent the protest, the less an identifiable public square or clearly defined public space is actually needed. Moreover, if there is no agreement on the symbolic and actual act of sharing public space, the unrest is more likely to spill beyond the familiar or easily managed spatial bounds of the public square.

As such, the uses of space in social protests unfold dialectically: the occupation of public squares and parks as a means of social protest will both reflect citizen dissatisfaction and serve as the catalyst for social and political negotiations between citizens and the state, with the hope that the latter will ultimately accommodate or respond to physically expressed dissatisfaction. When public squares are *not* routinely occupied, however, we also know something about citizenship. Either there is no claim-making and the status quo is not under fundamental challenge, whether literally or figuratively; or, conversely the depth, critique, and extent of citizen dissatisfaction with existing power structures is so great that claim-making and negotiation are bypassed and efforts are directed towards more rebellious and unconstrained insurgent action. In such settings, citizens will turn not to the public squares but to the streets or the underground. In this sense, both citizenship and insurgency have a physicality, but they may suggest a different spatiality: the former is more likely to be enacted in public squares and other physically bounded spaces that are recognized by states as appropriate sites for claim-making, while the latter unfolds in interstitial, marginal, peripheral, dispersed,

and less easily controllable spaces where the state's power and authority is less easily wielded.

2. The possibilities and limits of public squares: Tahrir Square and the Occupy Movements compared

The Occupy protests in the United States, which are primarily focused on dismantling a fundamentally unequal political and economic system, are examples of relatively non-violent protests of relatively conventional citizenship given life through the occupation of parks and other public spaces near financial districts. The desired permanence of these protests through the erection of fixed encampments (and in some places, the establishment of insurgent infrastructure like toilets and wooden shelters) is intended not just as a visual

and conceptual juxtaposition to the Wall Street-type buildings that often surround these locations, but also aims to celebrate and institutionalize the use of public squares as spaces of citizen dissent. But in light of the ways that the American legal system both enables and constrains the physicality of citizenship in public spaces, in most American cities Occupy strategists have been prevented from making these public sites their own autonomous urban villages, with protesters and their tents forcibly removed when the courts and the police ruled against their right to remain. Some of this owed to the pure physicality of these citizenship claims – the fact that many of the Occupy protesters both derived and found their political agenda within the physical act of occupying public space. Unlike Tahrir Square, where the deliberation between the organizers of the movement occurred as much in private residences and online as in the plaza itself, and where the motivation

for protest built on a sustained critique that permeated all aspects of life, not just the right to gather publically, many of the Occupy protestors saw the taking of public space as the primary object and focal point of political deliberation and opposition. That is, the preoccupation with the physical site of the protest was so great that it at times served to sideline some of the larger injustices that inspired indignation in the first place, with the more fundamental political goals of societal transformation falling to the wayside in the struggle to remain physically ensconced in the formally-designated Occupy spaces.

Moreover, different cities hosted very different types of protests, depending on the nature of the spaces under occupation. The Occupy Boston movement congregated in a public park called Dewey Square, on one hand, while the original Occupy Wall Street targeted a privately owned public space named Zuccotti Park. These two sets of protests also convened two different groups of people whose relationships to the physical space suggested very different forms of politics and citizenship. The first built its visibility around a permanent core group that spent all its time at the Dewey Square Occupy site, strategizing and planning protests while also engaging in a committed media campaign to legitimize their physical presence and build support in a larger circle of citizens. The second, in Zuccotti Park, hosted a permanent encampment but gained its greatest visibility by drawing weekend protesters who lent their voices to the actual protests but did not remain committed to protecting or colonizing the Occupy spaces on a daily schedule. Sometimes the aims of the permanent occupiers clashed with the weekend protestors. Moreover, in both the Boston and New York cases, the divergent relationships to physical space established by the protesters reflected the limits and possibilities of

the movement's capacities to both keep visible and engage a larger audience of supporters nation-wide. By building a movement that focused on actual public space, the Occupy movements did indeed evolve a new form of articulating citizenship by strategically deploying public spaces in the construction of a larger movement for democratic citizenship. But the ambiguous role that the commitment to physically occupying space played within the different urban factions of the larger movement, and the failure of these simultaneously-enacted, city-based protests to link larger citizenship concerns to social or legal rights to permanently occupy physical spaces, also limited the power of the movement both locally and nationally, further reflecting divisions within the movement about its larger political purpose.

The Occupy movement and the limits of its spatial strategies can be contrasted against those deployed in the Egyptian case, where Tahrir Square became the single strategic and symbolic site for a variety of claims from various competing groups, all sharing a desire for large-scale political change but not agreeing on its component elements. Whether from anti-Mubarak, anti-military, pro-Islamic, or pro-democratic forces, all Egyptians appear to have agreed that Tahrir Square should symbolize the necessity of a fundamental socio-political transformation in forms of governance in Egypt, thus explaining why a small group of protesters grew into a mass mobilization, energizing thousands in a short amount of time and keeping them committed for days on end. In this sense, it stands almost as the obverse of the Occupy movement, where there may have been unity of purpose among those initially visiting or camping at the site in, but greater disunity over time as questions emerged about whether and how the symbolic appropriation of the site should be linked to a larger movement for change. Part of the difference

here rests in the divergent political contexts. In Egypt the "physicality of citizenship", as enacted through protests in an iconic public space associated with government power, can be understood as a call for recognition of the rights of citizenship in an urban and national context where such forms of claim-making have been controlled, monitored, or repressed by the state for decades. In such an environment, any actions on the part of people to lay claim to public space will be seen as a direct challenge to the power and legitimacy of the government. In the Occupy movement in the United States, the use of public space for protest has become a relatively routine form of enacting citizenship, and it usually unfolds in a political and spatial environment where such actions are legally tolerated (if not in fact implicitly invited, as in Zuccotti Park, which was purposely designated as a privately-owned public space in order to offer tax advantages to real estate developers).

All this means that while showing the physicality of citizenship, the Occupy protests in the United States were far from radical or system altering (as in Egypt), and their appearance served as just another form of pluralist politics. Public spaces in American cities may offer a physical venue for voices not readily heard within the halls of legislative power, but as a platform for dissent they often fail to fundamentally challenge the status quo, serving instead as a format for giving voice to those who seek to join, reform, in or redirect – rather than overturn – the existent structures of politics. This surely is citizenship, but citizenship in a democracy is relatively stabilizing, whereas citizenship marshaled in the call for revolutionary transformation is a more de-stabilizing form of political insurgency. In the latter conditions, public squares and concrete spaces for physical protest are absolutely necessary precisely because the ballot boxes as sites of change are likely to be closed off.

3. Roads, intersections, bridges, and roundabouts: from spaces of citizenship to infrastructures of insurgency

The distinction between citizenship and insurgency is relevant not just for political theorists, but also for those who seek to understand geographies of protest and to assess whether there are established spatialities that are associated with particular forms of collective action and opposition politics. One way to pursue this line of thought is to consider the socio-spatial dynamics of different aspects of the urban built environment, and to contrast the forms, meaning, and strategies of protest that are deployed in public squares with those that unfold in other types of urban spaces. How do the physical attributes of built environment mold citizen action? How can spatial forms or modes of territorial connection be seen as a relatively autonomous element in the construction and study of urban protest or its origins, nature, and impact?

As discussed above, protest in a public square conjures up images of democracy at work – concerned and proactive citizens gathering together peacefully to voice their opinions to a benevolent government. Famous revolutions staged in public squares, like the February Revolution and the May Day demonstrations, have helped elevate such spaces to the higher realm of mythology even as they have inspired everyday citizens to try to accomplish similarly democratic feats. But this may be because public squares and central plazas are usually cavernous sites that concentrate large numbers of people in a single location, providing collective interaction that in its form will reflect a mass – rather than class or hierarchically stratified – society. As noted, there is often a state logic involved in the construction of public squares, or a market logic involved in the creation of central plazas, with both

such spaces being easily monitored by the state. To be sure, public squares can be the sites of potential insurgency, especially when the collection and display of mass protest becomes so unwieldy that even armed police cannot control the tumultuous crowds. In such instances, governing officials often seek other forms of spatial control or physical intervention to minimize the collective power emanating from these places. Among these techniques, the erection of walls and barricades are among the most common. In Egypt, in fact, the recent resurgence of riots and protests centered in Tahrir Square (albeit inspired in part by a deadly riot after a soccer match that brought out nascent tensions within and among divergent political forces competing to guide the post-Mubarak political transition) pushed authorities to erect walls and place heavy concrete blocks around key government buildings. In order to undermine the protesters, police strategically positioned several "24-foot tall concrete barriers bisecting streets leading from the symbolic center of the protests, Tahrir Square, to their most despised target, the Interior Ministry" (Kirkpatrick, 2012, p. 1).

Such actions not only show both the possibilities and limits of enacting citizenship through protest in a single public square. They also remind us that public squares are not the only actionable spaces in cities, nor are they the only sites of protest. Indeed, the types of protests that emerge in streets and in lateral spaces leading to and from public squares may have an entirely different ethos and political logic than those focused on public squares. Frequently, central plazas become visible in the first place not just because of their closeness to the symbols of power, but also because they stand at the intersection of a city's main transport routes. Indeed, many so-called public squares are merely traffic intersections masquerading as public spaces. Although they sometimes serve the same function, traffic intersections are not as easily walled or controlled without impeding the flows of citizens and goods that provide the economic and social lifeblood of a city. Thus they not only may invite more insurgent politics, they may also enable more disruptive and effective revolutionary action. After all, there is much to be risked when authorities put key transport nodes on lockdown, or when the city's transport grid comes to a standstill in the effort to squelch political protest. The intersection of roads and different modes of transportation may trace their history to engineering logics, but whatever their original design they enable the coming together of different classes of people from all parts of the city, and often to a single site to protest a united cause. More prosaically, large traffic intersections and roundabouts (which as a more category would include Tahrir and Pearl Squares) allow different groups of people to gather efficiently. Because these intersections and roundabouts transform into sites of greater historical weight when they are used as glorified soapboxes to air public grievances, they remind us that *both function and form* define a public square.

So why is there so little emphasis on the analysis of major confluences in transportation networks and their impacts on protests or the physicality of citizenship, and so much attention focused on the romanticized notion of public squares? Is it merely sexier to see civic centers and public squares as emblematic democratic spaces? To a degree, yes, it is much simpler to frame the world in terms of "democratic" and "undemocratic" spaces than to articulate what such spaces actually look like or to explain what about their physical form and urban social function makes them democratic. It also may be easier for observers in the democratic West to identify with common spatial and political symbols

like public squares, as they try to make sense of the mysterious or "exotic" foreign locales that are now awash in protest, than to link mass mobilization in physical space to the complicated social, political, and economic dynamics that run beneath the surfaces of rebellion. For example, the Sidi Bouzid protests in Tunisia sparked the greater North African and Middle Eastern revolution not just because of protest but because the outrage was inspired by the political repression of an informal street vendor – a type of activity that relies free movement in public space and is ubiquitous in the plazas and streets in cities in this and other regions of the world. Even so, the everyday repression on the street that sparked the Tunisian uprising was almost immediately overshadowed in the Western media by a focus on the monumentality of mobilizations in Cairo's Tahrir Square, Green Square, and Zuccotti Park. Has this happened because we as outside observers equate a successful revolt with a concentration of violence in yet another iconic public square?

Such assumptions belie a causality that must be subject to interrogation: do public squares make revolutions or do revolutions make public squares? There may be no clear answer to this question, but it should force more thoughtful discussion of why so many observers are pre-occupied with public squares. It should also inspire expanded deliberation over what form the physicality of citizenship takes, as well as a more nuanced assessment of the role of variegated urban spaces in the social construction of a continuum of political actions, ranging from expressing citizenship to enacting protest to undertaking insurgency to fomenting revolution. It may be that, in contrast to public squares, urban infrastructure like roads and bridges provide a network for sustained social and spatial interaction, and these sites may be just as

central to protest outcomes because they are less likely to be controlled by the authorities even as they offer an infrastructure for an engaged yet mobile insurgency. Conversely, when the unencumbered free flow of people is blocked and when collective mobility in space – within and between public squares, roads, bridges, and other types of infrastructure are completely blocked off – then it is likely that one is witnessing a full-blown insurgency, if not a revolution.

The 2010 clashes in central Bangkok between the Red Shirts and the Thai army highlight the importance of mobility in space and its significance for 21st century urban protests. Two primary locations in Bangkok occupied by the Red Shirts included the Phan Fa bridge, a major intersection, and the Rajaprasong intersection, the heart of the city's commercial district (BBC, 2010). These street fights were especially dependent on key transportation nodes because the Red Shirts arrived from outside Bangkok in buses, trucks, and boats. Claiming and defending key intersections in the city ensured that the protests gained momentum as the crowds swelled, and facilitated the Red Shirts' abilities to attack and occupy politically significant buildings like the Interior Ministry in their quest to overthrow Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva (BBC, 2010). Controlling major intersections also meant shutting down access to large swathes of commercial activities, aggressive acts which intensified the pressure on the government. Bangkok's famously crowded streets were empty during the clashes as a visible reminder of the Red Shirts' ability to majorly disrupt economic, political, and social life if their demand for change was not met. There were no Public Squares or ordered civic spaces the Red Shirts occupied. The streets functioned as the tools, symbol, and platform of protests.

Figure 1. The Red Shirts taking over the streets in Bangkok
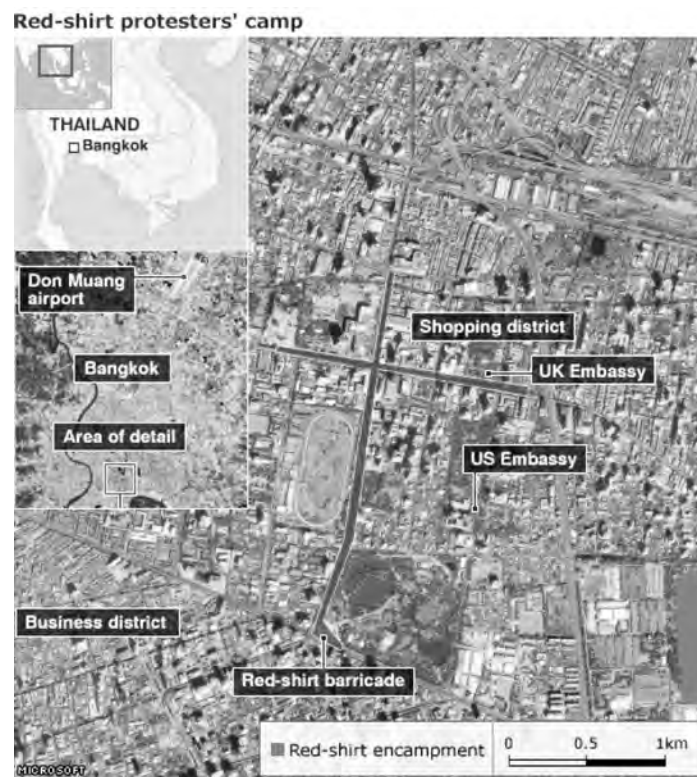
Source: BBC (2010).

The street was also a key unit of analysis in the revolution in Libya. Anti-government protesters were flooding urban roadways, alongside the police and the military, trying to take back Libya one street at a time, one city at a time. In spite of Qaddafi's brutal use of air strikes and imported mercenaries, in the initial months of the struggle, protesters transformed the geography of Libya into a giant public square. Oddly enough, Green Square in Tripoli, a city almost entirely controlled by Qaddafi until his death, remained peaceful because tanks blocked the roads into the city and the army pro-actively shot any protester attempting to move towards the square. Turning Green Square into Tahrir Square was the dream of Libyan protesters, but such objectives were continually thwarted by the authorities, who had programmed counter-uses of the space to undermine

such a possibility. During much of the conflict, Green Square remained in the hands of Qaddafi, who used it to celebrate Jamahiriya Day with elaborate parades that manifest his iron grip on the city's streets and open spaces (Lee, 2011).

The unfortunate Libyan example demonstrates the futility of public squares as driving forces of political change without a true public to articulate and physically access such spaces for their own democratic purposes. And precisely for this reason, the streets of towns like Benghazi and Brega became the real sites of dissent, because they were not so easily colonized by the authorities. Even in the Tahrir Square case, citizen access to the square through existent roads and intersections was as central to protest outcomes as were the wide-open spaces downtown that received the peripatetic masses. This was well-reflected by the circulation in the oppositional blogosphere of a map that laid out a physical plan for citizen movement, showing how residents of Cairo's urban periphery might best access the city's downtown streets, and pinpointing preferred routes for arrival at the Tahrir Square. This map was accompanied by a script offering suggestions as to exactly where to start assembling, what to chant, whether to congregate on major streets – and which ones, and how to direct these activities towards the takeover of government buildings with maximum effect.

4. Geographies of "distance" and their role in urban protest

Although increased mobility in space can enable acts of protest, just as public spaces can serve as symbolic sites for enacting citizenship, the question of whether these and other built environmental factors will motivate – rather than just mediate – political dissatisfaction remains an open question. To what extent does the built environment, itself, structure the nature of protest or citizenship claims? Preliminary studies on social movements have shown that groups of citizens who feel most institutionally, culturally, politically, and geographically distant from governing institutions and/or the ruling classes tend to be a main source of rebellion, while those with social, spatial, and political proximity to sources of power and authority may be less likely to mobilize, rebel, or revolt (Davis, 1999). Such findings help explain why the occupation of public spaces near centers of political and financial power can both symbolize and bridge the distance between citizens and the government. This in essence is what protest is all about: reducing the gap between ruler and ruled, have and have not, rich and poor. Sometimes the simultaneous enactment of citizenship in both center and peripheral urban spaces is all that is needed to call attention to these gaps at the level of the city, and to set the engines of change in motion.

The concepts of *proximity and distance* do more than explain why we often see physical demonstrations of citizenship in locations closest to the physical institutions of the governing elite, or why citizens furthest from the halls of power might undertake such acts. It also makes clear how and why the selection of certain sites for protest itself serves as a technique intended to bridge power distances – both literally and figuratively – by seeking new forms of social and spatial proximity. To be sure, activists' strategies to overcome such patterns frequently take into account the fact that citizens in all locations of a city have a stake (and a potential role) in protest outcomes, not merely those with the physical access or geographic wherewithal to journey to public squares to speak truth to power. In some of the most successful rebellions, in fact, people and ideas emanating from the political, social, or spatial "periphery" merge with those mobilizing in the "core" of a city to bring life to a standstill, thus decisively

pushing forward the movement for political change, as discussed in the case of Bangkok in 2010. Uniting core and peripheral populations and in physical space is no easy feat, in part because the physical layout of cities usually reflects or reinforces social and class distinctions. In highly unequal societies with autocratic institutions, such patterns may be even more severe, even as the state's control over urban spaces is even more airtight. Both conditions will factor into the nature of protest.

Figure 2. Tahrir Square
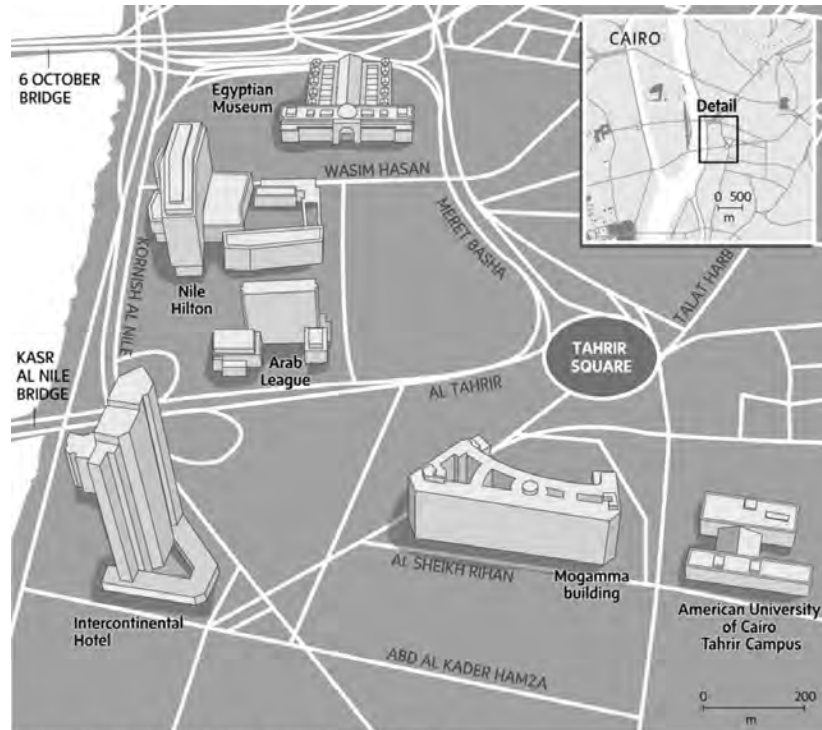
Source: The Globe and Mail (2011).

In Tripoli's Green Square, even citizens mobilized from all parts of the city failed to oust the Qaddafi regime because the power of the state was stronger than that of the people, and because the Libyan government was able to use violent force to control both the streets and public squares, effectively restricting mobility and thus fragmenting any potential unity among citizens. Qaddafi's death may have re-opened possibilities for

change because the Libyan government now lacks a central figure, and the struggle of the politically distanced and socially marginalized may have greater chance of success. At the same time, however, because it remains unclear who represents the political core and who constitutes the peripheral periphery – or who is close to or far from power in social, spatial, or political terms – the question emerges as to who is the appropriate object of protest. Signs suggest that both protesters and ex-government officials are floating within an ill-defined political terrain, flowing throughout all regions of the country without an eye only on the capital city, and still seeking a way forward and a territorial platform from which to mobilize and guide future protests.

While the train of political change has departed the station in many cities of North Africa and the Middle East (Syria being an important exception), what remains unclear is the extent to which the social fissures that may lay beneath the surface of the highly celebrated and visualized political unity of the past will derail the struggle for the future. The masses photographed in Tahrir Square during the initial weeks of the Arab Spring were undoubtedly much more diverse and heterogeneous in political, cultural, and social class terms than may have originally met the eye. Because of this, it is difficult to know where the train of protest is headed, or upon which track it will reach a final destination, at least until we have a sense of the "multiple publics" that now constitute Egyptian society and who first occupied the streets of Cairo (Dewey, 1927).

To figure this out, the concepts of distance and proximity can provide some clues. Indeed, it could very well be that the vast majority of protesters in Tahrir Square shared a common sense of political distance from the repressive state, but in social terms were far from united, with some sharing more proximity to the ruling elite in social outlook even if not in institutional terms. Conversely, while some of the protesters may have been distanced from the halls of power, others may have been connected to the political institutions and social organizations that governed Egyptian society in the past or that now seek to drive the post-conflict path of reform and change, including those dominated by citizens who did not originally participate in the protests. Moreover, in order to understand the broad array of urban publics that have a stake in future change in Egypt and elsewhere, and to ascertain whether and how they might work with both Tahrir Square protesters and other publics, it would be necessary to have a better understanding of the socio-political geography of Cairo even before the rebellion, and to see how social conflicts within and between citizens themselves might enable or constrain future political change.

Not unlike many of the cities participating in the Arab Spring, Cairo is a city of extremes, whether understood in terms of income, Westernization, ideology, or another fault line of cultural, social, or political difference. In such settings, social tensions – or distances – among citizens are frequently the norm, and city spaces have often been the territorial domain around which they unfold, recalling Holston's and Appadurai's (1996) remark at the start of the paper on the relationship between violence and the city. Thus, if we want to understand the relationships between citizenship, space, social protest, and political change, we also must factor into our account a closer understanding of social distances and how they may produce identity conflicts, as well as how these tensions themselves can be brought to the surface by changes in and struggles over the urban built environment, whether in public squares or elsewhere.

5. Hybrid social spaces: Istanbul Art Galleries and the Islamic Center in New York City

Such an approach seems particularly relevant for understanding a spate of recent protests – and

subsequent violent attack on an art gallery – in a gentrifying neighborhood of Istanbul where "multiple publics" claiming the same space through violence clashed over their rights to publicly assert their identities in the built environment of the city. Artist-led gentrification in the Istanbul suburb of Tophane pitted culturally conservative residents against the liberal art-loving crowds, with divergent views of secularism, nationalism, and fundamentalism weaving through the protests. During the Tophane Art Walk in September 2010, a mob attacked partygoers in the galleries, smashing windows and throwing rocks in indignation at the art gallery owners and their guests (Goldsmith, 2010). Interestingly, the contemporary art was not the issue but the artist-led gentrification in the neighborhood and the liberalization of culture that followed. Each side blames the other for the hostilities. Art gallery owners

claimed that the residents wanted them to leave so they can comfortably conduct their illicit activities in the shadows. For their part, traditional residents argued that higher rents as a result of the galleries' location in their longstanding neighborhood are undermining quality of life and sense of community, and that the new artist-residents are mocking their conservative culture while also displacing them (Daraghai, 2010). This conflict raises the question of who has the right to space in Tophane, and how citizenship should be defined at the level of the neighborhood? On one side of the controversy stand art gallery owners and their artist clients, who are contributing to the economic revival of the suburb; on the other side we see longstanding residents, many of whom are occupying houses belonging to Greeks and Jews who left Turkey in prior conflicts over citizenship and nationality.

Figure 3. A sign in Tophane

Source: Lewis (2011).

To a certain degree, the Tophane case serves as a microcosm of the social distances among Istanbul's multicultural residents and their uneasy relationship to each other and to Turkey as a nation, raising such tough questions as whether Istanbul and its constituent urban spaces "belong" to the new cosmopolitan elite of the city, to its prior residents, or to all Turks? It also reminds us that socio-spatial conflict and protest may be inevitable when groups use control of certain city spaces to exclude "others", or to reinforce their own cultural or nationalist identities by laying competing claims to public spaces (Davis, Libertun de Duren, 2011).

The controversy over the Islamic Center in New York City also demonstrated a similar dynamic, albeit one that was mediated by fights over the regulation of private development and land use as well as over the public display of citizenship in physical space. Efforts to build an Islamic cultural center near the former World Trade Center generated vicious protests and a debate over the uses and abuses of urban space to symbolically empower certain cultural groups who were considered "national enemies" by a small but vocal extreme of the United States population (Susman, 2011). Still, there was little agreement over who would be culturally empowered by building this center in lower Manhattan, how and why. For some, the center would stand as a constant visual symbol of moderate Islam's presence in the city, helping observers distinguish between law-abiding Muslims and terrorists. For others, this cultural center would serve as a provocative reminder of 9/11, inciting hatred and constant repudiation from among those who would not care to make the distinction between al-Qaeda and Islam. It would become an architectural symbol of either the usefulness or uselessness of the so-called War on Terror and other abstract nouns, depending on the narrative framing deployed by citizens.

Either way, the controversy over this cultural center says less about land use, urban design principles or the urban planning process (given the fact that the zoning board had approved the project months before the controversy) and more about how citizenship and identity conflicts play out in physical space, as well as about who has a right to the city in either material or symbolic terms. In the face of declining unity at the local scale, and with states controlling streets and public squares in contested cities, it becomes tempting to find replacements in the world of the symbolic. For those entering this realm, logical arguments hold little currency, while it is precisely in the world of symbolism that rage and zealous self-righteousness often find common cause. Such pluralisms in culture and space are inherent to global cities like New York and aspiring global cities like Istanbul. This may be precisely why the built environment has become central to the search for a national symbol, and why the conflation of city and nation has led to protests and violence in both New York City and Istanbul (Vale, 2011). As Turkey's cultural megaproject, Istanbul is the country's passport to the European Union to the detriment of everyone in the city except for the global urban elite. In this sense, both New York and Istanbul may represent the future of global cities caught between the needs of diverse populations and national duties. A just city and a city reflective of its nation's aspirations are not mutually exclusive but we have yet to construct an urban reality in which differences help create a more resilient national identity, with a fully inclusive and democratic citizenship for all, made tangible by equally granting the "right to the city" to everyone from the city's own inhabitants to the country's citizens.

To be sure, sharing nationality or a common claim to citizenship is no guarantee of sharing a common cultural milieu, even for those who live in the same city let alone at a national scale; and the fact that the proposed Islamic Center was a local project promoted by a US citizen and approved by the New York City zoning board

did not stop its opponents from taking to the streets in protest. Crucially, some of the most violent and divisive protests came from far-flung places thousands of miles from New York, as perhaps best reflected in a Florida preacher's call for a mass public burnings of the Qur'ans, across the nation, to protest the building of the Islamic Center. Historically, questions about who has the right to the city and the legitimacy to determine its built environment have remained at the local scale. But as the world becomes more global, and as major cities like New York have increased their presence in the national and global imagination, the question of what is "local" and who should be involved in urban decision making for these cities is now under challenge. Cities have always served as sites for both diversity and cosmopolitanism. But now, the territorial glue that holds diverse populations together in a given city may be buckling under the weight of larger national – and even global – claims to physical sites in those very same cities.

This is what ties together the examples of the Tophane art attacks and the controversy over the Islamic Center in Manhattan, and which raises new questions about who has "rights" to a city and whether virtual versus real geographies of distance and proximity are equally relevant in such queries. New York, not unlike Istanbul, is one of the world's most diverse locales, and home to transnational flows of information, goods, and people. It is in many ways a quintessential global city with an economy and lifestyle that reflect its well-connected global character. In the present global era with new technologies available, many New Yorkers' daily life is more likely to be tied to activities abroad than to the nation's hinterland. And for this reason, along with the poor New York City also hosts a concentrated portion of the economically privileged classes, whose wealth traces back to the same globalizing tendencies that also bring foreign nationals to our shores, and whose

consumption patterns generate employment for the very same poor. As seen from the far reaches of the overly mortgaged American heartland or shuttered factory sites in the crumbling rustbelt, New York seems not just "foreign" in all senses of the term, but also privileged. Accordingly, the controversy about the Muslim cultural center is nestled within this larger set of developments. The fact that citizenship is being enacted through protests over the Muslim Cultural Center in Manhattan owes not just to anti-Islamic sentiments, seemingly making the controversy in New York the flip side of the revolution in Cairo. Also lurking behind the scenes is the unspoken sense that shared national values are slipping out of reach, and that the weakest link in this chain may lie in the country's most global city, where the use and control of public – and even private— space has become the latest frontline of war in the struggle over legitimate authority and how widely it spans across the American spatial, social, and political landscapes. Framed through the lens of distance and proximity, lower Manhattan is the privileged or elite "core" from which average residents – in the periphery of the United States, if you will – feel distanced. Or, to use the language of the Occupy movement, Manhattan is the 1%, while the 99% are those residents in the rest of the country who still feel emboldened to make claims on its physical spaces, despite their geographic distance.

The shifting sense of political geography that sustained national protests over the Islamic Center in New York City is a function not just of globalization, but also of technology, two trends which also have made their mark on the Arab Spring. Globalization of the economy and of lifestyles has given citizens everywhere an array of information technologies and communication gadgets that allow greater knowledge of political abuses even as it offers new ways of expressing dissatisfaction and mobilizing. In this sense, technology can enable the physicality of citizenship, particularly when cell phones,

Tweets, internet-based mobilizing strategies, and other forms of virtual connection are used to inspire crowds to gather at a public square or to help them flee on a certain bridge rather than another so as to avoid police attack. This certainly was the case in Egypt, Tunisia, and elsewhere over the course of last spring's protests. But if such technologies are the only venues where citizenship is enacted, the "publicity" of protest will not match that which is produced when people physically gather in streets, squares, and other tangible venues. That is, only when new technologies are used to enable protest in concrete physical spaces will the promise of "virtual citizenship" get translated into more visible and effectively transformative political action.

6. Can urban design create democracy? Some concluding remarks

The use of technology in mounting protest demonstrations and inspiring dissent online have implications for urban designers and others interested in creating or strategically utilizing spaces in the city for citizens to publically voice their concerns. But whether such technologies will make the Hyde Parks of the world disappear, or whether parks, streets, sidewalks, and public squares will be replaced by the Internet, still remains to be seen. Perhaps the blackout of popular websites like Wikipedia and Google during the SOPA/PIPA protests represents the limited future of virtual citizenship, thus reinforcing the importance of physical citizenship and the role of urban design in insuring that such spaces continue to flower in cities of the future. One of the most effective aspects of a protest is its capacity to disrupt quotidian activities in order to draw attention to pressing problems, and it will be interesting to see if "occupying" Google is more disruptive to everyday life than the physical occupation of a public square, even if a million people are involved.

In this climate where venues for the enactment of physical and virtual citizenship are shifting or in flux, we must return to the question of whether and how urban design can enable democracy and/or citizenship,

insurgent or otherwise. To be sure, a prior question might be whether planners and urban designers should be involved in the construction of protest landscapes in the first place? The history of Tahrir Square shows that it was precisely the failure of urban planning that in fact led to the unintended construction of the public square, which eventually became the physical launching pad and international face of Arab Spring (Rabbat, 2011). As such, the protesting citizens who articulated Cairo's central city plaza as a site for insurgency, thus elevating it to the status of a Public Square, are the real protagonists in the struggle for change. Think of it as the irate citizen as inadvertent yet insurgent designer. Likewise, the case of Bangkok highlights how demonstrators themselves re-cast the formal use of roads and bridges in order to capture political visibility, while the Occupy Movements in the United States can be considered a challenge to the safely conventional programming of open sites around financial districts, with protesters turning publically-accessible parks into insurgent spaces by voicing their claims.

In all of these examples, protest spaces were not formally designed so much as articulated and created by citizens. Such insurgent actions are perhaps the most valuable tool for making effective claims on the city and for actively using the city to make claims on the state. If Tahrir Square had been intentionally constructed as a protest landscape by the state and/or urban planners, a Hyde Park of sorts, would Egypt's democratic revolution have been as successful? Possibly. But it may be that the sheer act of challenging the gap between the "design from above" and "citizen claims from below" that is the most effective strategy for fomenting revolt, a sort of "insurgent design" that builds on the formal properties of place but creates something new in the process. Whether cast from above or below, urban design is political, as are the planning decisions that give life to design projects, particularly when they

empower citizens to express their grievances and make public their sentiments. The design of space must be considered a central protagonist in the struggle to create a new social order.

But urban design is only one element in the construction of a democratically inclusive public sphere. The notion that through proactive urban design one can induce or govern the spatiality of political gatherings and protest is flawed, because when the will to gather and protest is strong enough, anywhere will do, as the cases of Bangkok and Istanbul have shown. The pictures of Tahrir and Pearl Squares filled with protesters are impressive because they convey a sense of limitlessness to people power. And in this regard, the street is as good or even better than pre-planned public squares, while public squares will remain empty and the streets silent if the public itself is not on the move. Moreover, public squares are usually static spaces, and as such are unlikely to capture the dynamism of large-scale protests or organized social movements that find themselves capable of entering all spheres of public life, not merely public squares. It is for this reason that transportation networks and hubs become essential to designing protests as cities haphazardly expand, particularly in settings where the state has learned to crack down or control open public squares, as with Tiananmen Square. When physical space for protest becomes a rare commodity, a city's democratic and civic spheres are also under threat. And when the desire for rebellion is strong enough, public squares are not required; a street is sufficient to effect change.

We conclude with a set of questions about the role of formal urban design in creating democracy, whether in terms of spatial integration, political inclusion, or other common manifestations of such ideals. If any urban artery and clearing can be used for demonstrations, are well-designed public squares as sites of protests actually necessary? If people wishing to exercise their physical

and political citizenship become accidental insurgent designers, is the role of professional urban design redundant, at least in the creation of public spaces? And if so, what then are the roles of urban design and planning in the creation of socially just cities and in enabling urban citizenship? Perhaps the value of design professionals lies not in the explicit construction of protest landscapes, but in the response to and recording of physical claims to citizenship in the already built environment. For example, after the rebels took Tripoli, they renamed Green Square to Martyrs' Square, as a symbol of respect to those who had lost their lives in the fight to reclaim Libya from Gaddafi and his forces. Among other things, urban designers can help preserve the spatial history and memory of the battle for Libya and other sites of insurgency by building monuments and iconic architecture that reflect the symbolism of the square and the importance of it in a country's history. Perhaps urban designers can best serve the city and democratic ideals by being urban spatial scribes, using their professional skills and legitimacy to make public the battles won and lost in the hard-fought struggle to make the world a better place.

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